

**IDEOLOGICAL REPRESENTATIONS OF HERDSMEN-FARMERS' CONFLICT  
IN SELECTED NIGERIAN NEWSPAPERS**

**BY**

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## **CERTIFICATION**

I certify that this work was carried out by **Joshua Sunday AYANTAYO** in the Department of Linguistics and African Languages, University of Ibadan, under my supervision.

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## **DEDICATION**

This work is dedicated to the memories of my late parents, Mr. Joseph Ayanbusola Ayantayo and Mrs. Comfort Mojirola Ayantayo. I owe whatever I have accomplished to both of you.

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## ABSTRACT

Herdsmen-farmers' conflict (HFC) is one of the major conflicts that has been widely reported in Nigeria. Extant linguistic studies on HFC in Nigerian newspapers focused mainly on linguistic framing, as well as discursive and lexical strategies used in HFC, with scant attention paid to the deployment of linguistic resources in projecting the ideologies around the conflict. This study was, therefore, designed to investigate the ideological representation of HFC, with a view to describing the social actors, discourse strategies, contextual variables, and the ideologies in the reports.

Teun van Dijk's socio-cognitive approach to Critical Discourse Analysis and Theo van Leeuwen's Representation of Social Actors served as the framework. The descriptive design was used. Four Nigerian newspapers were purposively selected based on their circulation and reportage of the conflict. The *Punch* and the *Vanguard* were selected because of their national outlook, while *Triumph* and *The Voice* were chosen because of their regional appeal. The sampled editions of the newspapers were published between March, 2018 and March, 2021. This period recorded a surge in HFC as well as legislation and advocacy against violence. The data were subjected to critical discourse analysis.

Eight representations of the herdsmen were identified: militants, marauders, invaders, killers, attackers, armed men, threats, and terrorists (*Punch, Vanguard, and the Voice*); invaders, attackers, innocent citizens and foreigners (*Triumph*). Three representations of farmers were observed: law-abiding people, displaced people and victims (*Punch, Vanguard, Triumph and The Voice*). Miyetti Allah Cattle Breeders' Association of Nigeria is represented using two discourse identities: mouthpiece and killers; government is constructed as law-enforcer, biased institution, pretender, and weak institution; and religious leaders are represented as mouthpiece, agents of peace, and victims (*Punch, Vanguard, Triumph and The Voice*). Victimhood is contextually negotiated as vulnerability, powerlessness and inadequate socio-economic and political empowerment. Eight discourse strategies are deployed to negotiate ideologies: passivisation, presuppositions, labelling, nominalisation, pronominal references, evidentiality, voice management and penchant for figures (*Punch, Vanguard, Triumph and The Voice*). The strategies are enhanced with six contextual variables to show that the media engagement of HFC is characterised by different ideologies: participants and their roles, setting, shared knowledge, and background knowledge (*Punch, Vanguard, Triumph and The Voice*). Six ideologies are projected: pacifist, humanist, egalitarian, religious, ethnic and political (*Punch, Vanguard, Triumph and The Voice*). While pacifist ideology calls for peace between the herdsmen and farmers, humanist ideology projects respect for human lives and egalitarian ideology echoes equality between herdsmen and farmers. Religious ideology stresses the supremacy of one religion over the other in the country, ethnic ideology foregrounds favouritism of one region in HFC, while political ideology reflects the political angle of HFC. These ideologies connect inherent mistrust and hatred to promote HFC.

Ideological representations of herdsmen-farmers' conflict in Nigerian newspapers echo the distinctive roles of specific social actors in the conflict. Thus, the Nigerian government and other stakeholders managing the crisis should pay adequate attention to the media reportage of the crisis in order to understand its ideological dimension.

**Keywords:** Herdsmen-Farmers' Conflict, Newspapers Representation, Ideology, Discourse  
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## **LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS**

CDA	Critical discourse analysis
DA	Discourse analysis
HFC	Herdsmen farmers' conflict
HFD	Herdsmen farmers' discourse
MACBAN	Miyyetti Allah Cattle Breeders' Association of Nigeria
SFG	Systemic Functional Grammar

## **CHAPTER ONE**

### **INTRODUCTION**

#### **1.1. Background to the study**

Nigeria is beset with myriads of security challenges. These challenges, which cut-across the six geopolitical zones, assume various dimensions. While the challenges of Boko Haram are entrenched in the Northeastern zone, the menace of armed banditry and cattle rustling, dominate the Northwestern zone. However, different shades of agitations for resource control exist in the Southern part of the country. Notable among the agitations is the Niger Delta crisis prevalent in the Southsouth geopolitical zone. Herder/farmer conflict (henceforth HFC) constitutes another worrisome challenge that spreads across Nigeria. The Fulani are known for their nomadic farming, and their nomadic culture is visible across the regions. From time immemorial, Fulani herdsmen and farmers have co-habited in the past peacefully in several parts of Nigeria (Arowosegbe, 2019). Stride and Ifeka (1973) explains that the Fulani people relocated to Nigeria between 6th and 7th centuries AD. They are said to have migrated from the Futa-Toro area of Senegal, the modern-day Guinea Republic and settled in towns and villages of the Northwestern part of Nigeria (Davidson 1977, Robinson, 2004). They migrated, according to Iloeje (1972), through the North to invade other parts of the country on different occasions between the 13th and the 19th century. Fulani herdsmen are known for roaming to pasture in the moister Guinea savanna with their animals during the dry season and thereafter lived peacefully with their host villagers. They usually return northwards at the commencement of the rainy season and also to run from the danger of tsetse fly.

The conflict between farmers and herdsmen started when cattle began to graze on the farmers' crops. Such grazing attracted violent responses from farmers who earn their means of livelihood from their crops. As if that was not enough, the Fulani herders were also alleged to have been involved in cattle rustling. According to Dominic (2017) grazing is a destructive mechanism by herdsmen to farmers because animals, in the process of

grazing, destroy crops in an unacceptable ways to discourage farming activities. Farmers continue to count their losses each time the herders invade their farms. These unwholesome acts continued unabated, and eventually resulted in conflicts between the cattle rearers and crop farmers. In another development, the Fulani herdsmen also affirmed that cattle rustlers are also stealing their animals. Herdsmen reported for examples that over 3.5 million cattle were lost to cattle rustlers between 2001 and 2010 (*Punch*, Thursday, May 13, 2013, p. 22). Consequently, the relative peace enjoyed between these two groups of people in their various settlements has been seriously threatened, as evident in the incessant cases of maiming, killing and violent attack that have characterised the interaction between farmers and the herdsmen. This is particularly witnessed in states such as Taraba, Nasarawa, Plateau, Ondo, Oyo, Delta, Kaduna and Benue States (*Vanguard* 22nd June 2016, *Sahara Reporters*, 20th February 2017, *New Telegraph*, 9th September 2017, *PM News*, 28th February 2018, *the Guardian Newspaper*, 16th March 2018, and *The Punch Newspaper*, 17th October 2016 and 3rd January 2018). The conflict in these states is aggravated because the villagers are predominantly crop farmers whose farm produce are destroyed by cattle grazing. Although there are established governmental grazing laws, but such laws are not tailored towards addressing the peculiarities of herder/farmer conflicts. As a result, the state government's anti-grazing laws also continue to fuel the aggravated conflicts. The conflicts come with grave consequences; when conflicts strike between the two parties, the statistics of loss of lives and properties are staggering.

Herdsmen and farmers conflict, especially in the Nigerian North-central states such as Taraba, Nasarawa, Plateau and Benue have been a recurring issue for decades (McGregor, 2014). Moritz (2010) observes that in 2004, HFC has led to 'near genocide' of the two major religious (Islam and Christianity) in Plateau State. This made over 20,000 Nigerians to migrate to Cameroon as refugees. In a similar account, Fasona and Omojola (2005) report that, of all crises reported by the media between 1991 and 2005 in Nigeria, 35% is from HFC. Specifically, Olayoku (2014) states that, there is significant increase in the reported incidents of HFC between 2011 and 2012. He explains further that the media report 111 cases of attack believed to be carried out by the herders in all the states of the federation, with seven (7) incidents in 2006, nine (9) in 2007, six (6) in 2008, thirteen (13) in 2009, nine (9) in 2010, fifteen (15) in 2011, seventeen (17) in 2012, twenty-seven (27) in

2013 and eight (8) as at early May 2014. The menace of herdsmen attacks is so high that one may not be able to give an accurate count of the statistics. It is on the increase with different dimensions to the attack on a daily basis. The attack, according to Olayoku (2014), has assumed new dimensions and involved the use of sophisticated weapons and new communication devices. In 2017, former Nigerian Head of State, General Abdulsalami Abubakar, in a lecture delivered at a lecture states that in the year 2016 alone, 2,500 people were killed by herdsmen, 62,000 displaced and 13.7 billion dollars was lost. He also explains further that in 2015, herders terminated 880 lives, destroyed 53 houses, and burnt 18 churches (*Guardian 3rd November 2017*).

The conflict is threatening the peace and security of the nation. Hence, there have been reactions and counter-reactions across the country. Popular among the notions held by Nigerians on this disturbing situation is the fact that the federal government of Nigeria, by her 'body language' is not proactive in dealing with the nefarious acts of killing believed to be perpetrated by Fulani herdsmen. In fact, there are insinuations that these herdsmen have been empowered to achieve some agenda.

In performing its role, the Nigerian media has been actively involved in the reportage of events and public sensitisation on this development, projecting certain ideological positions in their reports. The present study interrogates newspaper reports as a form of the media with bias for their online versions because of their depth of coverage, strength of their readership, engagement of linguistic features of representation and ideological practices in crisis-related contexts. News reports and editorials are used by newspapers to project ideologies in discourse. They have the power to influence society through their reports. Foregrounding and/or backgrounding are a useful instrument in their (media) hands on any issue of national interest, depending on their area of interest. They set agenda and form ideologies for society on which beliefs and assumptions are hung. People believe whatever they read or hear from the media, and this influences their thinking and behaviour. Language is a powerful tool of engagement in media reportage. The involvement of the media in the presentation of the conflict to society can either aggravate or ameliorate conflict, depending on their choice of words.

The crux of this study is to interrogate the representations of herders-farmers' conflicts through the Critical Discourse Analytical lens. The concern of Critical Discourse

Analysis (CDA) is to investigate synergy between social happenings, language use and human mind. The goal of this study, therefore, is to identify and discuss the roles of social actors in HFD as presented in the selected newspapers and reveal inherent ideologies of social actor that are promoted by the newspapers while reporting HFC.

## **1.2. Statement of the problem**

Although the subject of HFC is not a recent development in Nigeria, the conflict has, however, assumed a relative dimension in recent times. Herders/farmers' crisis has assumed a hydra-headed dimension to such an extent that the media has hijacked the situation to attract readers attention. Before now, the herdsman/farmers' crisis was amicably resolved by traditional village heads. It is disappointing to note that the cordial relationship that used to exist between the two groups have been punctuated with daily reports of gruesome killings, destruction of crops and other properties, displacement of villagers, and so on by the media. This unfortunate development has affected very adversely the socio-economic, political, cultural and ecological growth in Nigeria (Arowosegbe, 2019). The relative peace enjoyed by the two groups has been adversely punctuated by incessant conflicts. The right to free movement that should be enjoyed by citizens has also been punctuated. Economic activities have also suffered set back because herders and crop farmers can no longer carry out their economic activities with peace of mind. In addition, freedom of association is also affected negatively as religious centres and other socio-cultural organisations cannot freely associate as they used to do. These and many other negative influences of the HFC have become a source of serious concern to Nigerian citizens.

Studies on the activities of herdsman cut across the social, political, ecological and economic perspectives. Considering the network of social relations of herdsman with their host communities, the studies that have investigated the social impact of herdsman in their respective host communities include those of Dimelu et al. (2017), Ibrahim et al. (2015), Ciboh (2017), Bello (2013), Adisa and Adekunle (2010), and so on. These studies have advanced the significance of social relation of herdsman and its effects on communal development. In addition, there are existing studies that have engaged the role of ecological factors as the bane of the crisis between herdsman and farmers. For example, Tenuche, (2006), Abbass (2014), Okoli and Atelhe (2014) Akale et al. (2018) have submitted that

there is the need to address ecological problems in the affected areas to curb the menace of herdsmen-farmers' crisis. Okwor (2016), Ahmed-Gamgum (2018), Ogo-Oluwa (2017) and Olayoku (2014) also examine the herdsmen/farmers' relation from a political perspective. They opined that there are political influences in the conflict that need to be addressed. There are also existing studies that have investigated the punctured social relationship between herdsmen and farmers from an economic perspective. Scholars like Akinyetun (2016), Ajibefun (2018), Bassey and Ella (2018) traced the conflict to economic crisis. These studies have significantly contributed to the study of herdsmen/farmers' relations.

In addition, some studies have explored CDA to engage media discourse. Existing studies (Ayoola, 2006, 2008, 2010; Taiwo, 2007; Chilwa, 2011; Abdullah, 2014; Asiru, 2016) have shown the resourcefulness of CDA in revealing overt and covert ideologies in media discourse. However, such studies are not extended to the study of HFD in Nigerian newspapers.

The media remains a viable platform for reporting the incessant horrific happening between farmers and herdsmen. As an independent unit, the media has particular ideologies and these ideologies are covertly or overtly expressed in their reports. Studies on HFC are very scanty. Existing studies have only commented and reviewed isolated occurrences of HFC. Apart from the fact that the aforesaid studies are not linguistic in orientation, the role of language in coding and decoding inherent ideologies of social actors involved in the conflicts are not investigated. The dearth of studies from the discourse-analytical viewpoint has prevented an understanding of the role of context in handling meaning in HFCs' reports. Such research gap has equally undermined the linguistic and discursive practices involved in newspaper reportage of HFC. Also, inadequate studies from the linguistic perspective have underestimated the way newspapers represent participants in the discourse. It is against this backdrop that this study attempts a discourse analytical engagement of herdsmen/farmers' discourse (HFD) to describe how discourse tools of newspapers reveal inherent ideologies of the various stakeholders involved in the HFC. The study interrogates HFD to demonstrate how language is resourceful in coding and decoding meaning and thereby used to manipulate human minds. It also interrogates the discourse to show how linguistic and discursive practices are capable of influencing the conflict

between herdsmen and farmers. The study identifies and describes Nigerian media deployment of discursive tools of engaging different ideologies in HFC.

### **1.3. Aim and objectives of the study**

The aim of the study is to reveal ideologies in media reportage of herdsmen/farmers' crises in Nigeria. The following are the objectives of the study:

1. to describe how social actors are represented in Nigerian newspapers;
2. to discuss different discourse strategies used by Nigerian newspapers to negotiate ideologies;
3. to identify contextual variables that aid the ideological formation in HFD;
4. to examine various ideologies in the Nigerian newspapers' reports of herdsmen/farmers' conflicts;
5. to discuss the socio-economic and political implications of Nigerian newspapers reportage of herdsmen/farmers' conflict

### **1.4. Research questions**

The study answered the following questions:

1. How are the social actors in the herdsmen/farmer discourse represented in Nigerian newspapers?
2. What are the discourse strategies used by newspapers in reporting herdsmen/farmers' conflict?
3. What are the contextual variables that aid meaning to generate different ideologies in HFD?
4. What are the ideologies inherent in newspapers reports of herdsmen/farmers' conflict?
5. What are the socio-economic and political implications of newspapers reportage of herdsmen/farmers' conflict?

### **1.5. Scope of the study**

This study was limited to the discourse on the herdsmen-farmers' crisis between March, 2018 and March, 2021 in Nigerian newspapers. Although the conflict did not just start during this period, the period under review experienced high profiles killings through herdsmen-farmers' conflicts. There are insinuations that it was aggravated in recent years because of the freedom enjoyed through democracy coupled with insinuation and allegation



that the Federal government is not active in tackling the menace. The data consist news reports and editorial opinions that are related to the subject of this research.

#### **1.6. Significance of the study**

This work critically interrogates newspaper representations of the HFC in Nigerian newspapers. It adopts Critical Discourse Analysis model to unravel the ideological representation of herdsmen discourse in Nigerian newspaper. Existing studies have engaged HFD from sociological, political, economical, ecological, and so on perspectives. However, enough scholarly efforts have not been invested in investigating the negotiation of ideologies in the HFC. This study, therefore, helps to expand the study of sociolinguistics in general and CDA theory in specific, and also shows the role of language in media representation of herder/farmer crises.

To put an end to a war or conflict, it is essential to understand its source and the ideology of people about it. It is also imperative to understand its representation in the media because the media helps in ideology formation. Thus, this work will demonstrate how power and opinion moulding, through the instrumentality of language, operates in newspaper reportage to project certain norms, assumptions, and ideologies. It is important to study newspaper representation of the HFC because the forum is used to manipulate the belief and ideology of the people about the herdsmen-farmers' relation. For example, it is believed that Fulani herdsmen only direct their cattle using rods. The reality presented in the newspapers has changed the ideology of the people about the nomads. In the present time, they are seen as terrorists, killers, kidnappers, and agents of religious and ethnic cleansing. The orientation of people about them has changed dramatically through the media representation and presentation

There are scanty studies that have engaged newspaper representation of different ideologies in HFC using CDA. This dearth necessitates the present study. The study is not only relevant but also timely as it provokes an understanding of how newspapers use linguistic tools (such as lexicalisation, proposition, presuppositions and implicatures) to represent participants and promote different ideologies that may aggravate the situation. It also reveals the resourcefulness of the newspapers use of discourse strategies to construct

meanings and actors in the discourse. This study promises a great inclusion into the study of CDA.

This study situates HFD within the pragmatic frame; it shows how pragmatic features such as presuppositions, implicature, proposition, metaphor, labelling, and qualifier are relevant to ideology formation. The study is expected to be a useful material for researchers and students in Discourse Analysis, Sociolinguistics and Applied Linguistics, as well as security experts, and Peace and Conflict Resolution experts. Policy makers will also find this study useful, media practitioners and other participants in the discourse to identify the influence of the newspaper in spiraling the conflict and thereby helping them to proffer solution to the conflict.

### **1.7. Summary**

This chapter gives a general overview of the study. It provides information about the herdsmen and farmers, reveals the gaps in the academics, and states the objectives and research questions. It also provides the scope and justification for the study.

## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

#### **2.0. Preamble**

A review of existing studies that are relevant to the present research and the chosen theoretical frameworks are presented in this chapter. The chapter examines salient concepts such as discourse analysis, discourse and media, discourse and power, discourse and ideology, the language and conflict resolution, and language of identity and ethnicity and also contextualises herdsmen and farmers and their roles in the country. We also review existing studies on HFD and identify the strengths and weaknesses in existing studies.

#### **2.1. Conceptual review**

##### **2.1.1. Discourse analysis**

Discourse analysis (DA, henceforth) is the study of language beyond sentence or clause. According to Taiwo (2010), it is the linguistic study of speakers' ways of enacting meaning in communicative event as against ordinary focus on grammatical units. It studies meanings in discourse, rather than in a single sentence. A study of speeches, broadcasts, news headlines and reports are discourse analysis. In doing this, researchers look beyond the sentence. They investigate how meanings are generated in connected speeches. Analysts in this field make effort to expose the use of linguistic tools to enact meaning. Discourse analysts examine the way speakers/writers construct information, using linguistic tools for addressees and how addressees interpret the message of speakers/writers. Analysts use social context to generate meaning in discourse. For example, the study of news reports in newspapers to derive intended meaning may be regarded as discourse analysis. When analysts study the use of a particular sentence in relation to others in news reports, the analyst is analysing discourse. In this case, news reports constitute the discourse. Text (discourse) is related to the context to infer intention and also produce feedback. The

linguistic elements in the text are employed to understand the social practice which aided the analyst to understand the mind of the addresser.

It is imperative to note that every linguistic activity is situated in a social context. This social context usually determines the type of meaning derived from the language instances. Different contextual features shape meaning in communicative acts. This, according to Taiwo (2010), includes contextual variables such as participants, participants' roles, background knowledge, settings, and so on. The contextual features in the case under review will include the reporters, farmers, herdsmen, farming activities and so on. These influence the interpretation of linguistic constructions. DA uses these features to analyse language to interpret the meaning. Scholars in this field analyse conversations, speeches, written discourse and so on. Examples of these may include but are not limited to; telephone conversation, campaigns, formal speeches, plays, novels, editorials, news, media discourse, posts on social media, and readers' response on social media. The aim of doing DA is to explain how participants in interaction use and construct meaning in language.

The two major concepts of DA are: text and context. A text is a linguistic event: utterances text, a chapter of a text, paragraph, or news report. Context is the environment that is involved in generating meaning (Taiwo, 2010). In the study of language, context means every event around communicative act. This context mostly influences meanings in communication. Context in this sense includes: physical situation, the interlocutors, knowledge of the cultural norms of participants, and worldview of the participants. These features assist participants in communicative acts to interpret meaning appropriately. Context is of significant interest to linguists because it helps them to analyse discourse and understand different inherent meanings. In this work, context may include the participants in the discourse (the reporter, opinion writers, and readers), actors in the conflict (herdsmen and farmers), social actors (Miyetti Allah, Religious leaders, IPOB, Afenifere, and so on), the government, the profession (farming and herding) involved, the situation itself (conflict) and so on. These influence the use of language and help to generate various meanings.

### **2.1.2. Discourse and power relation**

Power is exercised by stronger individuals or authorities to manipulate weaker individuals or authorities. Power is the ability of an individual or group of individual to influence others for a specific goal, (Fowler, 1991), Fairclough (1989 and 1995). Power is the ability or influence of a state, group of individuals or individual to make others do what they would not do ordinarily. It is the ability to achieve personal or institutional interest. Power has different faces, depending on the individual bias. There are economic, political, social, spiritual, and even linguistic powers and so on. It is a natural phenomenon in human society to struggle for power and dominance. Nobody wants to be dominated but rather wants to dominate. This reflects in the way we relate and interact. Power is inherent in human discourse.

Naturally, power is integrated with knowledge. Therefore, power is situated in knowledge not necessarily in the physical force. It is inherent in the use of language in different discourse and at different levels depending on the individual's ability to manipulate language to reflect such power and evoke action. This is seen mostly in media headlines and reports. Media participants use language in their headlines and reports to manipulate readers' minds and persuade them to react, positively or negatively to societal issues. Pecheux (1982:111) explains that the meaning of words or expressions may change depending on the status and the mode of the user of such words or group of words. The context and the participant in discourse dictate the meaning and power attached to the discourse. The mode of transmission is also very essential in the allocation of meaning. For example, a statement by a police commissioner is more powerful than a statement by an ordinary citizen in a security situation. Power is also inherent in individuals and institutions. These powers are mostly expressed or exercised in their discourse. Power is inherent in government, individuals with state apparatus, individuals with institutional apparatus such as the king, and the editors and reporters of news. This is why the media can form ideology and set an agenda for readers. The media most times dictate what people discuss about any event through foregrounding.

Fairclough, however, argues that power is not limited to language use, rather it is the ideology that is the main way consent and acquiescence is manufactured. Media participants use language to exercise power by creating boundaries between them and other

participants. This is made possible through different representations. Words then becomes instrument which can be used to validate weapons as shown in works like Fairclough (1989); Chilton (2004); Wodak (2009a). Holzschelter (2005) identifies three dimensions of power. They are 'power in discourse', 'power over discourse', and 'power of discourse'. To him, power in discourse can be interpreted as the struggle to get meaning and interpretation of registers in discourse. In this, the user controls the meaning and thereby exercise power in discourse. On the other hand, Power over discourse is interpreted as access to public, that is, the extent to which a participant is visible in the use of language. This is the perception of the general public about the language user. What the public infer from the discourse is regarded as his/her power in discourse. The media enjoy power in discourse because they dictate the meaning. And the 'power of discourse' means the influence of historically grown macro-structures of meaning, of the conventions of the language game in which actors find themselves (Holzschelter, 2005). This has to do with the existing general knowledge of the code used in the discourse, the mutual knowledge of the participants. Struggle for power is sometimes not on the surface. Struggle for power is borne out of agitation for superiority over resources and positions. It usually leads to conflict between the parties involved or the general public. Power struggle gives room for dominance between the seemingly powerful and powerless. The power of discourse is seen in the media representation of individual participants. Different representations impose participants over one another.

### **2.1.3. Discourse and ideology**

As mentioned earlier, discourse is language in use. Since the use of language is not neutral, it is easy to opine that ideology is the basis of any linguistic exploit. Following Eagleton (1991:20), an ideology is a way of thinking and acting in the society that make the society a natural in its operation. To every society, there are peculiar beliefs and ways of life. Every human society upholds a kind of belief that guides their behaviour, reaction and worldview. This determines their response to societal issues.

In every social institution or individual, there are a set of commonly held beliefs or common-sense assumptions. These commonly held beliefs or assumptions are referred to as ideology. Following Gee (1999) discourse as a practice (textual, discursive and social) plays a major part in (re)production of social inequalities, and thus in the ideological-

political dimension in media and society as a larger context. Discourse is language in use. It is, therefore, possible to argue that ideology is represented in the linguistic expression of any text. Birhanu (2016) argues that ideologies are produced and reflected in the use of discourse. Discourse is the basis of social representations (using linguistic instruments) shared by members of a group. Language becomes an essential instrument in this case. This is because it is used to express the belief and assumption of an individual or group of individuals.

Ideology and language are closely related. Language is used to express ideas, thoughts and beliefs. Ideology is a gradual process that is not formed in a single day but over a period of time. It is formed based on human experience and belief. Ideology may be influenced by what we use, hear, read, see or experience through whatever means. The way we greet others, react to our professions, perceive others within and outside our ethnic group form our ideology. For example, there are different perceptions from different ethnic groups in Nigeria towards one another. Ideology is capable of redefining or interpreting the already existing mindset based on the present experience or belief. For example, the way people perceived the herdsmen before has changed through a newly held ideology about them. They were merely a nomad in the past, today, the group is seen as an agent of ethnic and religious agenda. Ideology reflects in the way we dress, behave, and talk/comment on issues around us. Ideological division usually brings power relations where parties involved are seen as either powerful or powerless (Taiwo, 2007). This is usually expressed through language in our daily discourse and express in the media when the media is involved. For example, in the media discourse of herdsmen, as we shall see later, some participants are presented as offenders while some are presented as victims. The offenders are perceived to be powerful while the victims are powerless.

Ideology is defined based on the background knowledge of the individual. Individual's discipline influences their ideology. Taiwo (2007) explains that ideology contrast based of discipline but with overlapping interpretation. We can, therefore, define ideology based on its relationship to language use. Amer (2015) states that ideology involves peoples way of life which include their religion, ethnic affiliation, cultural beliefs and their perception of life which help to define their lifestyle. Language is used to construct reality in human interaction. In the media, there are different ideologies formed

based on the media presentation of the discourse under review (herdsmen-farmer conflict). This is in tandem with Birhanu (2016) who states that media discourse is characterised by texture, ideology, meaning and values worth unveiling the preventing fact.

Discourse, as human ways of expressing their feelings, experiences, ways of life, reflects a human belief in society. Human discourse is one of his social structures that are closely related to ideology. Beliefs and assumptions of an individual are noticed in his/her discourse. The way a man reacts to issues and addresses issues is a reflection of his/her belief and assumption about the issue. Discourse is therefore used to express individual ideological beliefs. The way and manner people view and regard one another in society is a reflection of their experience and exposure. The media also contribute to human experience and exposure through their news reports and opinion news. This helps to modify and restructure individual ideology concerning any event. Repetition and emphasis by the media are useful instruments in moulding societal beliefs and assumptions. This is because media reports and opinion news form part of the discourse. In the herdsmen discourse in Nigerian newspapers for instance, certain beliefs and assumptions have been created through repetition and constant report. Words like attack, kill, invade, kidnap and so on are common lexicon anytime the media reports herdsmen activities with farmers. These are not without inherent meanings which shall be discussed subsequently.

#### **2.1.4. Ideological representation**

Ideology shapes the way people behave and react to their environment. It affects how people react to others in the same vicinity. Ideological belief affects people's worldview and human relations. van Dijk (1998a) explains that ideology is explained by how language use accounts for the expression and production of ideology in society.

Representation means the way people and events are presented to society. The media is active in doing this. People, ideas, values, beliefs and the world are presented to the society by the media the way they want the society to see them. Choice of words used by the media determines what people will believe and hold to about happenings in society. It could be negative or positive. Following Asiru (2011:26) the choice of words foregrounds by newspapers have the capacity of influencing the thoughts of readers with ideological variants. Choice of words is an important tool in ideology formation. A man may be a pastor, a teacher, a father, and a student. He will be seen the way he is presented.



For example, he may be introduced as a pastor for him to be honoured as a man of God. This mirrors media representation of events which helps mould the thinking and belief of people about any event. News production manipulates and moulds the beliefs and assumptions of the people about an issue of discourse or an individual in the society.

Ideology is presented in the media through different linguistic tools and strategies. They may include naming and referencing, labelling, rhetoric tropes, presupposition, pronominal and other strategies. These strategies are used consciously by the media but consumed consciously or unconsciously by readers. When it is consumed consciously, it means media presentation suits the expectations of society. However, the belief of the society may be manipulated to create inequality (Fairclough, 2000). This situation is consumed unconsciously. Such a situation either promotes peace or aggravate crisis, depending on the presentation. It is important to state that the ideology may be formed by the media and consumed unconsciously by society but the society's reaction may be conscious. Presentation of herdsmen in the media is not without some inherent ideologies. Reactions to the HFD are promoting negative results in society. This study explores different ideological strategies used in the media to present herdsmen to the society. This study agrees with van Dijk (1998a) who states that ideology is the understanding of social construction shared by members of the same group with specific roles. We agree with van Dijk because this study considered media representation of herdsmen discourse as a social event. It is a social event because it affects human relations.

#### **2.1.5. Discourse and ethnic identity**

Belonging to a particular group of people may imply that one can speak the language, eat the food, wear the dress and so on. of the group. One important attribute of a member of a group is the ability to share the same linguistic experience and being able to communicate comfortably with the same language. Speaking a particular language means the person also belong to a particular speech community. Ethnic identity, therefore, is the recognition of an individual as a part of a particular ethnic. It is the feeling an individual has about a particular ethnic group as 'ours' as against 'theirs'. This reflects in daily interaction.

While discussing ethnicity from a psychological point of view, Padilla (1999:115) refers to ethnicity as an individual member of a particular social group that shared similar heritage.” Ethnic identity is reflected in our interaction with people. Understanding discourse as language in use, it is rather difficult for an individual to interact with others without reflecting his/her ethnic identity through text or context. Text here means the use of language in writing or speaking while context means the reflection of ethnicity through physical appearance. Media headlines, reports, opinion news and readers’ responses are text while the participants (herdsmen, farmers, socio-cultural organisations, government and so on.), event (conflict) and so on constitute the context in the subject of this study.

#### **2.1.6. Language of conflict and conflict resolution**

Conflict is an inevitable aspect of human existence. It is a natural phenomenon that cannot easily be ignored but can be managed. Language plays a pivotal role in spiraling or ameliorating conflict in human society. Following Adejimiola (2009), to promote, prevent and resolving conflict, language and communication are relevant instrument. Insults, abuse, confrontational languages lead to conflict. Praises, apologies, humour are languages that can ameliorate or discourage conflict. In the study of the language of conflict and conflict resolution, the issue of politeness and impoliteness is an issue that cannot be ignored. When participants in a conversation are polite in interaction, there will not be any conflict but when they are impolite, there is the possibility of conflict. Language of cooperation reduces conflict while language of disagreement or argument induces conflict.

Taylor (2014) explains that the focus of the social psychology approach to the study of language and conflicts are to differentiate between competitive and cooperative communication. Olekalns and Smith (2003) explain that the core of competitive language include human behaviour such as face threatening, personal attack, insult, unnecessary argument, and so on. However, cooperative languages include human behaviour such as agreement, proposal and counter-proposal, expressing and appreciating the ability of other people, humour, and so on. (Donohue and Roberto, 1996). The use of competitive and cooperative languages is context dependent and the knowledge of conflict and the ability to manage conflict by the participants. Taylor (2014) opines that a person using a competitive form of language is self-centred because they are only concerned about self without

consideration for others concern. In interaction, an individual tends to be conscious of self in discourse. This is classified as pro-self-orientation in the use of language. It shows that using competitive language is self-centered and without consideration for others. It mostly results in conflict as the other parties involved may react. If however, they refuse to react, the user has initiated conflict because of his/her self-motivated discourse. Taylor states further that a person using a cooperative form of language initiate conflict resolution. The use of competitive language promotes fairness and ensures equality for all participants. It reflects a language of friendliness and conflict resolution. In the media representation of herdsmen, there are pieces of evidence that promote positive self-representation and representation of others negatively. These are capable of aggravating conflict because positive self-representation is an instance of competitive communication that focuses on self.

Adair and Brett (2005), Park, and Antonioni, (2007), Giebels, De Dreu, and Van de Vliert (2000) and van Kleef, De Dreu, and Manstead, (2004) have identified some factors on which the degree of which the belief and ideology that underline communication during conflict relies. The factors include culture (Adair and Brett, 2005), individual differences (Park, and Antonioni, 2007), situational factors such as power differences (Giebels, De Dreu, and Van de Vliert, 2000) and emotions (for examples, van Kleef, De Dreu, and Manstead, 2004). The need for herdsmen to feed their animals usually makes them trample on the resources of the farmers, and this unavoidably leads to the conflict between the two sects. Their professional and cultural differences are factors that contribute to the unabated conflict.

The two forms of discourse influence the output of conflict. The choice influences the outcome. If competitive is selected, the outcome will be initiation and aggravation of conflict while the outcome of cooperative will ameliorate or prevent conflict in the society. Consequently, cooperative discourse tends to aggravate how a conflict will be resolved and may increase the efforts that may be beneficial to participants and society. Murnigham et al. (1999) however state that, cooperative language may have negative result, where other participants abuse the goodwill of the cooperators.

### **2.1.7. Media in Nigeria**

Nwodu (2015) reports that mass media in Nigeria started in 1859 by a European missionary, Rev. Henry Townsend who published *Iwe Irohin*, which is the first newspaper in Nigeria. This paved way for further publication of newspapers in the country. Robert Campell complements this and published Anglo African newspaper between 1863 and 1865. This was later followed by the effort of the colonial government that established the Nigerian Broadcasting Corporation (NBC) as a means of rapid development agent. The colonial government was “believing that the development of the media would help to transform the society and encourage self-rule” (Potter 2012: 151). Shortly after, newspapers began to spring up during the colonial rule in Nigeria. The early indigenous newspapers are the *Nigerian Tribune*, the *Lagos Daily News*. The newspapers were owned by young Nigerians who just returned from America. The *Nigerian Tribune* was established by Chief Obafemi Awolowo in 1949 while the *West African Pilot* was established by Nnamdi Azikwe in 1937. These young Nigerians according to Agbaje (1992) denounced the colonial government. They engaged the tabloids as an instrument for the attainment of Nigerian nationalism (Omoera, 2014). The newspapers were also used for political agenda by the owners. The papers were used to sensitise the people and prepare for the final exit of the British government in the country when they (Nigeria nationalists) wish to take over. Shaw (2009) states that, the returnees engaged the media as a political instrument during campaign; they prepared to take over power after the exit of the colonial masters.

In 1960, Nigeria got her freedom from colonial rule. Although the newspapers played significant roles, they were unable to promote the national agenda thereafter. Rather, they were used to promote personal and regional ideologies. This is because the owners were using the newspapers based on their different ideologies and to promote their region at the expense of national interest. According to Okoro (2012: 7), ‘these newspapers failed to achieve the desire goals of uniting the nation’. This led to different regional and national crises in the country. Notably among these is the civil war. After the civil war, the military government under General Yakubu Gowon, established a program to unite the country, tagged “Go On With One Nigeria” the media was targeted as instrument to achieve the goal (Tar Tsaaior 2015:15). The government thereafter banned the private media outfit and permitted only government-owned media outfits among which are the Nigeria Television

Authority, Radio Nigeria, and the News Agency of Nigeria with the mandate to unify the country and promote federal government agenda. They are news wire with the main aim to protect the honour of the Nigeria government, using education and information to sustain

unity among Nigeria ethnic groups (Kur and Nyekwere 2015).

As a control measure on the print media, subsequently, the government promulgated a law regulating them. In 1967, a decree named Newspaper Prohibition of Circulation was promulgated to serve the interest of the federal government and sanction any newspaper that promote anything against the government (Daramola, 2006). This was the beginning of the media practice in Nigeria.

#### **2.1.8. The electronic media**

Electronic media did not have an early beginning in Nigeria like print media. According Nwodu (2015), the history of radio in Nigeria started in 1932. It started as a subsidiary of the British colonial government. Among the British colonies, the colonial government located radio signals and re-transmission to Nigerian audiences in Lagos. Okunna and Uzokwe (2006:75) report that:

Between 1932 and 1950, the BBC monitoring station in Lagos was developed into an extensive radio distribution service (RDS) to cater for some dense population centres of the colonial government through re-diffusion stations located in Ibadan, Abeokuta, Ijebu Ode, Kano, Kaduna, Enugu, Port Harcourt, Calabar, Jos, and Zaria; these were converted into fully operative radio stations by the Federal Government to form the media of the Nigerian Broadcasting Service (NBS) which was established in 1951.

Nwodu (2015) explains further that the NBS was renamed Nigeria broadcasting cooperation (NBC). This was transformed to Radio Nigeria in 1978. At the moment, all states of the federation and the federal capital territory have a radio station. The deregulation of the broadcasting industry in 1992 gave opportunities to private individuals to establish radio and television stations in the country, (Nwodu, 2015). In Nigeria today, privately own radio stations have taken the centre stage in radio broadcasting. This has paved the way for more politics in the media operation.

The history of television operations in Nigeria dated back to 1959 when the then western government established Western Nigeria Television (WNTV). Other regions in the country followed the trend with the establishment of Eastern Television (ENTV) in 1960 by the Eastern government and the Radio Television Kaduna (RTK) in 1962. The Nigeria Television (NTV) was also established in Lagos by the federal government in 1962. The federal government also founded Nigeria Television Authority (NTA) in 1976. In 1979 when other states show interest in operating television stations, NTA was licenced to preside over television broadcasting in the country. Today there are public and private television stations in the country promoting different ideologies as dictated by the proprietor/proprietress. Public televisions are owned by the government while private stations are owned by private individuals. Among the private televisions in the country are Africa Independent Television (AIT), Channels Television, Silverbird Television, Galaxy Television, and so on.

Subsequently, Nigeria media has witnessed a dynamic growth, ranging from electronic media (radio and television) to print media (newspapers and magazines) and now to the new media (internet media). Nigeria's media is growing in leaps and bounds. It is witnessing a great effect with the advent of internets. The likes of Sahara Reporters, Daily Trust, and the internet version of all the electronic and print media outfits have added value to the activities and business of the media in Nigeria. The internet version is now competitive in that all media outfits patronizing online media where people can read and react to their news. Media outfits have been engaging the internet to promote their ideologies, depending on the belief of the founder. The Freedom of Information (FOI) bill which was passed on the 24th of May, 2011 and assented to by President Goodluck Jonathan on the 28th May, 2011 is a great plus to the practice of media business in Nigeria. The bill has since become an act that makes public records and information more freely available to citizens.

Nigeria Broadcasting Corporation (NBC) is responsible for the regulation of broadcasting affairs in the country through decree No. 38 of 1992 by Gen. Ibrahim Babangida (Rtd) (Nwodu, 2015). The regulation includes the issuance of the license to qualified individuals or government to run a media outfit, monitoring and controlling the content of the broadcast. Broadcasting in Nigeria however emphasizes local content in

which locally produced news and events are given higher priority (Tar Tsaaior 2015). There was a law which mandate televisions to ensure that its productions must be 60% of local content and 80% of local content for radios (Okoro, 2012). As noted by Herman and Chomsky, (1988) content of media production is hugely influenced by the ideology of the proprietor. This according to Jibo and Okoosi-Simbine (2003) plays out in Nigeria extremely as tribe/culture and religion influence owners' choices. This has a lot of influence in Nigeria as media is now being used to promote different ideologies, political, cultural, and religious beliefs. From the North to East and West different media outfits are formed along regional lines and they promote different regional ideologies. This is showcased in the languages used in the media. Except for the internet media, there are electronic media that broadcast in the dominant language of the region which is mainly the language of the owner. Some are established along with their political bias and used to promote their political ideologies.

One of the challenges of the media is the challenge of how to balance news reports as a social responsibility with business interest. Consequently, the media have been accused of deficient in ethical standards. They are accused of trading ethical standards for commercial interest. This also influences the way they present news to society and persuade their readers along with a particular ideology. Personal and regional differences have influenced the way media outfits present their news reports and editorials. It also influences who contribute to their pages. This will also strengthen the bias in the presentation of news about others thereby promoting the “us” and “them”, “we” and “they” phenomena. The media represents a key constituent of contemporary life and thereby influences societal views of events. This reflects in the media presentation of herdsmen discourse. It is now fashionable to read news about herdsmen/farmers' relationships in the media with varying ideological representations.

#### **2.1.9. Language and media discourse**

Media possesses a stronger power in bringing societal issues to the people. Irrespective of the status, people will be reached by the media. From urban centres to rural areas, the media find a means to reach out to their audience. Television and radio were the

only available media that were easily accessible to everyone in the past because of the financial implication. Today, everyone can access news through the internet.

The media now employ and exploit the contribution of technology through different online platforms. Every media outlet today has an online version with which people can be reached. They even take the advantage of the new media to add to their social services. Media has been used in the past to cause pandemonium in society. It has been used to preach peace and also used to create awareness. Media has also been a glorious avenue to educate people on public issues. These express the major functions of the media as a means of information dissemination. Language is an instrument that is used by the media to ensure the possibility of their assignments. According to Johnstone (2002: 2) discourse is the exact communication in the channel of language. The media present discourse with a language that is sensational. Knowing the power of language, media select their words to suit their desires and win society. The language determines the acceptability or otherwise of a news report. Media through language present their ideology and view about an event. When the language is pro-people, the news is generally accepted but when it is anti-people, the news is generally rejected. Language, therefore, becomes a major factor in news presentation.

The media presentation of news is usually the correct and factual version of the news, at least to their audience. Jorgensen and Phillips (2002) state that the media news interpretations real, partly by using categorical modalities and partly by choosing objective rather than subjective modalities. This is a powerful weapon used by the media that makes people rely on their reports. The media may through their use of language create tension and consequently conflict or even war in society. It is therefore good for the media to choose the language of peace rather than a language of conflict. Whenever the media make use of the competitive language in their discourse, it results in war. However, whenever the media use cooperative language, society is at peace. As much as the role of media is important in the society, the choice of language can never be over-emphasized. Competitive language is evident in the newspaper report of herdsmen/farmers' conflict through the different representations of social actors which has resulted in polarizing society and encouraging crisis.



### **2.1.10. Discourse and society**

The world we live in influences our thinking and discourse. Society is involved in the context of communication which CDA analyses. Discourse cannot be said to be neutral of happenings in society. Ideology formation is informed by the happenings in a human environment. There are different forms of discourse based on the environment we lived in. There is a medical, educational, advertisement, military, media discourse, and so on.

Our communicative act reflects the belief that our society holds. Taiwo (2007) states that, our communication reflects our ways of life. It means what we say aligns with the normal way we should say it according to the societal norm; however, there are certain things we resist from saying because the society forbids them in our communication. There are things we say in a coded manner because of societal beliefs. For example, there are words regarded as taboo or profane in society (see Oyetade, 1994). Society does not permit such to be said in the public and if it must be said, it must be coded. Yoruba, for example, have taboo for every aspect of their social life (Oyetade, 1994). What one society sees as taboo may not be seen as taboo in the other. Taboo expressions are usually avoided in society for different reasons. According to Oyetade (1994), Taboo expressions are avoided for reasons other than propriety. He explains further that taboo expressions are avoided for reasons such as fear of the supernatural, to avert ominous consequences, and so on. These are used or avoided according to societal dictates. There are different ways societies express their value system. For example, Yoruba will speak with proverbs and use coded language to express certain discourse. There are general beliefs and opinions about a particular event. Whatever context we are, determines the ideology we form. Consequently, economy, education, religion, medicine, media, and so on are some of the contexts in the society that aided ideological formation. Hence, we have economic discourse, educational discourse, religious discourse, medical discourse, and so on. Based on these contexts, ideologies are formed. To form ideology based on society and discourse, discussants need to share some background knowledge without which, according to Oyetade (1994) there will be a communication breakdown between the speaker and the addressee. In the herdsmen discourse in Nigerian media, there is shared knowledge about the herdsmen discourse and their activities within and among discussants. This enables ideological formation in the discourse. Choices of words in the media suit the belief of the society

about the herdsmen and their relationship with their host farmers. This makes manipulation of people's minds easy.

#### **2.1.11. Who are herdsmen?**

Herdsmen are those people that watch over and take care of animals like cattle, goats and sheep for personal and commercial use. According to Brooks (2003), a herder is a person who cares for animals, especially domestic animals, maintain a semi-nomadic life and ensure the animals are fed. Herdsmen roam around in search of grass for grazing according to the season. Their movement is motivated by the availability of food for their animals. Sugh et al. (2017) state that minor herdsperson is called a herdboys while a male herder is called herdsman and female named herdswoman.

In Nigeria, herdsmen are mainly believed to have come from the Northern part of the country. However, since they migrate according to seasons, they can be found in any part of the country at any season. Anywhere they find grass for their animals, they usually settle down with their herds. According to Fabusoro (2007), the traditional and unique Fulani encampment (*ruga*), consists temporary structures made of stalks. They usually build their houses with grass and therefore presumed to be temporary. According to a respondent in an interaction I had with a farmer, the herders build houses on land without the consent of the owners. Most land owners accept them with the spirit of hospitality and belief that they would leave shortly after. As time goes on, they reside permanently on the land and make friends with their supposed landlords. This is the reason they are mostly found in any part of the country. This contributes to the reason their disagreement with the crop farmers (land owners) is more dangerous than any other conflict or civil unrest in the country. They are country-spread. The conflict is wide spread because the actors can be found in virtually all the communities in the country. Herdsmen travel wide as long as they can find grazing for their animals.

#### **2.1.12. Nigerian perception of herdsmen**

Fulanis are generally regarded as herdsmen in Nigeria. According to Fabusoro (2007), Fulani in Nigeria owns 90% of the commercial animals totaling 3.2% of the gross domestic product. To an average Nigerian, the name Fulani is synonymous with herdsmen. This is because they dominate the cattle rearing profession. They are the ethnic group of the West African savannah region. A sizeable population of the Fulani lives in major cities.

They specialise in cattle herding for private and commercial use. Horton (1972), Adeleye (1971) and Last (1967) explain that through the Fulani jihads between 1804 and 1810, the Fulani were able to take over the northern part of the country. However, they were unable to take over the central north of the country which include Plateau, Benue, Taraba, Nasarawa and Kogi states. Perhaps, this forms the reason they are aggressively facing this part of the country, especially Benue State.

Their perceived resilience and love for revenge forms part of the reasons people are sceptical of their crisis. The reason that they are nomads and lovers of war makes their hostility with the farmers a national concern. In Nigeria today, the name Fulani is almost synonymous with killers, terrorists, kidnappers and invaders (Daily Trust 20 May, 2017; Vanguard 9th April, 2014; the Nation 30 March, 2014; Daily Trust 15th October, 2016).

While many Nigerians agree that the Fulani are the herdsmen, many have argued that they are not the only herdsmen. Some have argued that some important and rich persons from the South also engage in cattle business. Some argued that the rich acquire cattle and hire a Fulani person to oversee it for them. This is premised on the fact that they are professionals in the business. It is in the general domain that the earlier Fulani, known to the farmers, do not carry sophisticated weapons like AK-47 unlike the present-day Fulani (see, for example, the News Nigeria 2nd May, 2016; the Nigerianeye.com 25th June, 2017; TVC 13th December, 2017; the Guardian 18th March, 2018 and so on.). They are known for their use of a rod to direct their cattle. The use of rod by Fulani herders prompts the Yoruba aphorism that *‘òpá kan ni Fúlàní fì n da igba màálù’* (with one rod, the Fulani man controls two hundred cattle). Some claim that they are usually moving with dangerous weapons which they use to fight any dangerous animal(s) or person(s) that wish to attack them or their animals while grazing. Consequently, some people believe that those Fulani with sophisticated weapons are the dreaded Boko Haram in disguise. Others believed they are strangers and invaders from neighbouring countries such as Niger, Chad and Cameroon. This has, however, not gone down well with some people who want them proscribed as terrorists. Whatever the insinuation is, whatever the name given, the fact remains that they are still exterminating lives and destroying properties.

The failure of the Federal government to proscribe them has made people to accuse the Federal government, under President Buhari, of nepotism (see, for example, Vanguard

12 June 2016; Nairaland.com 25 April 2016; the Sun 29th April 2016). People believed that it is because President Buhari is from the Fulani extraction. Some also believed that this is the reason the killings by the Fulani herdsmen are unabated. The accusers of the Federal government claim that the IPOB and the Boko Haram are vehemently attacked by the military apparatus because they do not belong to the president's ethnic group. While some see the killings as political agenda, some see it as a religious agenda and others see it as ethnic cleansing agenda. These perspectives have been held by individuals and group of individuals. For example, the Christians see it as an attempt to Islamise Nigeria. The Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN), the umbrella body of the Christians recently instructed all Christians to stage a protest against the killings in Benue as they see it as an Islamic agenda (*see, for example, New Telegraph 16th January 2018; Daily Post 25th April 2018; Punch 29th April 2018*). The opposition parties also see it as a political agenda for the North to get back to power come 2023. The Igbo, Yoruba, Tiv, Idoma and several other ethnic groups see herdsmen rampage as ethnic agenda. The Eastern part has given a warning against the attack. The Yoruba had also held several meetings that gave birth to the revival of Àgbékòyà. The Ààrè Ònà Kakanfò of Yoruba (Ààrè Ònàkakanfò is the traditional Yoruba generalissimo) has also spoken against the killings (*The Punch 9th February 2018; Daily Post 8th February 2018 and so on.*). It has also gave birth to ethnic agitators such as Sunday Igboho in Ibarapa area of Oyo State.

The herdsmen are united under the umbrella of Miyetti Allah Cattle Breeders Association (MACBAN). The association was formed to promote the welfare of Fulani pastoralists in Nigeria. The activities of the organisation include forming an alliance with the government to protect their members and provide relevant education. The group also fights for the fundamental human rights of members as enshrined in the constitution of the country (Adeniyi in Realnews Magazine, 20th March 2017).

### **2.1.13. The herdsmen's contributions to the Nigerian economy**

The herdsmen contribute immensely to the growth of the economy. Thousands of Nigerians are beneficiaries of the herdsmen's production. Their contribution ranges from the payment of tax to the creation of employment opportunities. According to Fabusoro (2007), they pay taxes to every community market and local government authority. The tax

is paid per head of the animals they have. At every abattoir, tax is paid on every animal brought in for slaughter. There are a lot of meat sellers benefitting from the product. Apart from the fact that these sellers depend on the job to survive, they also pay tax to the government. This is a huge contribution to the GDP of the country. Additionally, numerous Nigerians rely on the sales and transportation of meat from the cattle for their survival. Hides from the animals are also raw materials to industries. Products such as shoe and bag are made from animal skin. The raw materials are sources of income to the owners.

Goat and cattle are sources of food for man. Meat, milk and meat skin (Pònmò) are sources of delicious food from goat and cattle. Meat and milk are sources of protein to the human body. Almost every household eats meat from cattle (beef) at regular intervals. Both the meat and the skin of the animal are delicious food for human consumption.

One third of Nigeria Agricultural Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and 3.2% of the national GDP are derived from Livestock production (Nuru, 1984; Fabusoro and Oyegbami, 2009). According to Okello (2014) Nigeria Federal Capital Territory (FCT) supplies 4,000 goats, and of the cattle slaughtered daily in the territory, the Fulbe supplies 400. According to Nigeria Observer of 4th May 2015, the commissioner of agriculture in Lagos announced that 6000 cattle are being slaughtered in Lagos abattoir daily. The News Agency of Nigeria (NAN) also reports on August 27th, 2017 that 2,245 animals are slaughtered daily in Kano for consumption. This is an indication that the herdsmen are contributing positively to the growth of Nigeria economy. Their activities are threatened by weather which affects grazing negatively and cattle rustling. These are the banes of their aggression towards their host farmers and villagers. It is, therefore, imperative to proffer a solution that will end the conflict.

#### **2.1.14. Farmers' contribution to the economy**

In this work, our focus is on crop farmers. This is because they are the farmers having problems with the herders. Prior to colonialism, Nigeria and Nigerians have been benefitting from the contribution of farmer's to the national GDP. Crop farmers provide food for the entire population. The country is feeding and exporting the products of the crop farmers. They have been contributing to the national GDP through the sales (locally and internationally) of their products. Staple foods like rice, beans, maize, millet, yam,

melon, cassava and so on are produced by the farmers. They are, therefore, relevant to the survival of the country.

Apart from consumption, Nigeria also exports food and cash crops to other countries of the world, including Europe. The Channels Television reports on the 29th of June, 2017 that Mr. Audu Ogbeh (the then Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development) says that Nigeria exported 72 tons of yam in 2017. This shows how crop production is contributing to the growth of Nigeria economy. It is also boosting our economy directly and creating jobs for people. Crop farming is a massive employer of labour. Thousands of Nigerians are engaging in crop production. It is obvious that larger per cent of our (Nigeria) land is fertile and good for the production of crops. Transporters also benefit from this because they help in transporting the product from farms and thereby creating jobs for them.

Crop farmers also produce raw materials for industries. Industries like feed mills, fruit juice and flour mills depend on the products from the crop farmers. As earlier said, agriculture has been one of the major sources of income to Nigeria. CBN in 2012 states that nothing less than 83.5% of Nigeria agricultural GDP was got from crop production between 1960 and 2011. To this end, crop production becomes a major source of income to the national GDP. Consequently, the sector must not be ignored but rather protected from any attack.

The recent herdsmen attack on the farmers and their crops compounds the existing problems such as diseases, pests, robbery, drought and poor farm implements that are confronting farmers. These problems have been hindering their productivity.

#### **2.1.15. Herdsmen-farmers' relationship in Nigeria**

That there is hostility between the herders and crop farmers in Nigeria is no longer news. Mwamfupe (2015), opines that farmers-herders' relationships are characterised by both conflict and complementarity and are two faces of the same coin. According to Hussein (1998), the relationship has always moved among cooperation, competition and conflicts. Herders graze on farmlands that belong to crop farmers, and farmers depend on animal dugs for improving soil fertility. Also, pastoralists require the calories produced by crop farmers, much as the crop farmers often require the protein and dairy products

produced by pastoralists (Abba and Usman, 2008). These are the evidences of the complementarity life. They are, to some extent, dependent on each other.

From time immemorial, herders have been known to be nomadic and can settle harmoniously in any village irrespective of their differences. Crisis usually erupts when they graze on the crop of the hosting community. This has been a serious issue for ages. However, it is not well pronounced until the recent time when they (herdsmen) decided to be using firearms to exterminate communities at any slight misunderstanding and retaliation. The relationship between the two groups of people has gone sour such that they do not want to sight each other. The conflict between them has claimed several lives and properties. The relationship has generated a discourse that is characterised with killings, maiming, destruction, and so on. As earlier mentioned, while farmers claim that they have lost crops worth millions of naira, herders also claim that they have lost cattle worth millions of naira to cattle rustlers. The relationship between them has now generated hostilities to the extent that villagers no longer wanted to accommodate herders as they used to do. In most villages such as Benue State, Oyo State, there are several clash between the villagers and the herders. In Oyo State for example, there are several clash in Oke-Ogun area that led to agitation led by Chief Sunday Igboho. The agitation is as a result of the hostile relationship that emerge between the two groups of people.

The hostile relationship between herdsmen and farmers has therefore led to ethnic and religious bigotry. According to Atobatele and Maliki (2002), the relationship between herdsmen and farmers has generated several religious and ethnic conflicts. The hostility has led to superiority and ownership claim between different religious and ethnic groups in the country. The Fulani herdsmen claimed that the farmers are encroaching their grazing route while the farmers are claiming ownership of the land. The government has made efforts to resolve this crisis to no avail. This is also evident in the relationship between Fulani and the Yoruba in the Ibarapa areas of Oyo state. There have been several attack between the Yoruba and Fulani ethnic groups in Ibarapa side of Oyo State. In the same manner, the Christians and Muslims in Jos, Plateau State of Nigeria. The hostility between herdsmen and farmers culminated into all these crisis. Today, herdsmen are no longer welcome in the southern part of the country as they used to experience.

### **2.1.16. Role of media in conflict management**

In any human society, the role of the media cannot be ignored. In fact, they have been tagged the fourth estate of the realm in society. They help to inform and educate people about happenings in society. This same role should not be downplayed in a conflict situation. They may foreground the conflict or undermine it. When conflict lingers, the role of the media will be obvious and when otherwise, their role can never be jettisoned. The media play a significant role in conflict situation. Conflict situation, to the media, is also a time of market boom. It is time to show their potential and make their money.

Beyond that, they have significant roles to play in society; they are to either fuel the conflict or extinguish it. This is dependent on various factors and roles they play during the period of any crisis. Their choice of words and representation of actors carry serious weight in aggravating or suppressing a conflict. They make serious publicity and connection during crises. Conflict constitutes a significant news item for the media (Aho, 2004; Himelfarb and Chabalowski, 2008). Media participation in the form, intensity and aftermath of conflicts cannot be overemphasised (Pate and Dauda, 2015) and inevitable in evaluating, reducing and discouraging conflict (Eytan, 2006: 596). The role of the media in conflict situations may be destructive when their presentation of news fuels the conflict and it may be constructive when their presentation prevents the conflict. The media has been accused of negative contributions to sustain war and conflicts in the past because of their method of presenting war and conflict situations. They sensationalise crises situations to make more profit and remain relevant in society. Conflict period now becomes a period of market boom for the media. The Ife-Modakeke crisis, Niger Delta crisis, Kaduna killings, Kano crisis, the Hausa-Yoruba crisis in Lagos, Sagamu and Ife are some examples that readily come to mind when discussing crisis and the place of the press in the country. This is also obvious in the farmers' conflict.

Important instrument of the media is language. They are often accused of being biased in news presentation and report writing when it comes to a conflict situation. For example, Chilwa (2011:207) asserts that the Nigerian media is biased in favour of the Joint Military Task Force (JMTF) in spite of their condemnable killings of the insurgents and harmless civilians in the Nigerian Niger Delta. It is important to state that media presentation, with their choice of language, can escalate or deescalate conflict. When news



is presented to suit ‘us’ as against ‘them’, it is usually biased and capable of creating more avenues for aggravation of the event. Such representation is capable of elongating crisis rather than de-escalating it. The media also adopts discursive strategies in news presentations to background participant(s) and hide meaning from other participants in discourse. Discursive strategies are engaged to form ideology in the media. The media employed the strategies to background or foreground the ‘good’ or ‘bad’ of participants in the discourse depending on their prejudices. Media construction of herdsmen discourse contributes to the proliferation of HFC. This is made possible through different labelling and representation of social actors in the discourse.

## **2.2. Empirical review**

This section engages existing researches that are relevant to the present study. This will enable us critique the studies, identify the gap and state the goal of the study.

### **2.2.1. Herdsmen-farmers’ conflict and other conflict-related studies**

For several decades, Fulani herdsmen and farmers have peacefully lived together in several parts of Nigeria. The relative peace enjoyed between these two groups in their various settlements has been seriously threatened. The recent threat to the age-long peaceful coexistence has attracted attention from different scholarly perspectives.

Scholars have engaged the discourse from different perspectives. John (2014) investigates how media frames HFC headlines in Nigerian newspapers and blames the media for their subjectivity in their reports of the herdsmen conflict. He argues that media is biased in reporting the menace of herdsmen. The study shows that the media is one-sided because they only harp on the accusation of herdsmen against the crop farmers but background the concerns of crop farmers. The study concludes that the subjectivity of the media in reporting the crisis between herders and crop farmers also escalates the crisis because farmers were not happy with the media method of reportage, and their displeased state informed revenge of the herdsmen attack. Ciboh (2017) also partially agrees with this when he states that news report in Nigeria is characterised by unprofessional acts of sensationalism, and consideration of context, accuracy, and fairness, balance and completeness integrity and responsibility. The duo (John and Ciboh) investigate the media

contribution to the conflict. They approach the investigation through textual analysis. Their works reveal the importance of the media in conflict management. John (2014) and Ciboh (2017) establish the contribution of media framing to conflict resolution or aggravation. Ciboh also opines that media report contributes to public understanding of any social problem and plays a significant role in peace building. These works are relevant to our work as they expose us to the significance of media framing to conflict resolution. They also serve as good guide to our work because they lead us towards analysis of the media reports.

The works are limited to textual analysis of newspaper headlines. The present study uses Critical Discourse Analysis, which looks beyond what is written or said in any text and also considers what is implied through the use of language. John (2014) and Ciboh (2017), for example, only look at the framing of headlines and ignore hidden ideologies in language use and social relation. The present work considers news reports and editorial opinions as against ordinary headlines, which may not be enough to understand the ideologies of newspapers about the HFD.

In an attempt to know the effort of the media reports of the herders attack in Nigeria, Olomjobi (2017) examines the patterns of the conflict between herdsmen and farmers as reported in the media. The study is a textual analysis of news reports related to HFD. It adopts agenda setting, framing, and social responsibility theory in the analysis. The work is similar to the present study because it also relies on newspaper reports and editorial opinions for data analysis. However, the present study embarks on critical discourse analysis to reveal ideologies in newspaper representation of herdsmen attacks in herdsmen discourse. This is also a guide to ideology formation in the media. It is, however, not an analysis of how ideologies are formed in the media. Olomjobi does not also consider role allocation in a media discourse of herdsmen conflict. The present study considers editorial opinions, which are believed to reflect the ideologies of the selected newspapers.

While trying to trace the origin of the herdsmen-farmers' conflict, Olayoku (2014) relies on data from the Nigeria Watch database. The author collected his data from the database from June 2006 to May 2014. He uses the historical, political and socio-economic contexts to trace the origin, dynamics, evolution and politics involved in herdsmen-farmers' conflict in the country. The research identifies the actors in the conflict and shows that

farmers, herders, community members, vigilantes, security operatives, government officials and religious leaders, in rare cases, are the key actors. This is good for our research as it points out the key actors in the conflict. This has helped us identify social actors in the discourse and see how newspapers present them to society. The present work identifies and discusses how they are represented using different discourse strategies. Olayoku (2014) states that, the conflict exists in the North-central region of Nigeria. This identification of location is also good for us because it points to the contextual variables used to influence discourse strategies in the discourse. Our concern is to use linguistic tools to trace how contexts affect the presentation of the HFD in Nigerian media. We use this to investigate how the conflict affects the social relations, socio-economic and political situation of the country. This study, therefore, adopts CDA theory to critically interrogate power abuse and inequalities and role allocations in the discourse which was not used in Olayoku (2014).

There are studies on the Boko Haram attack in the country. Olagunju and Ajadi (2014) investigate the faceoff between the Federal government and Boko Haram. CDA was used to reveal how media represent the ideology of insecurity and how they aggravate or ameliorate the situation. The study relies on newspaper reports as the source of data. The study submits that lexis, phrases and clauses are significant instruments in discourse for editorials to present raging insecurity problems as insuperable. The study holds that the media position Boko Haram insurgency as more ideologically powerful than the government. Olagunju and Ajadi (2014) conclude that the media have to be more sensitive to their choice of words to prevent national disintegration. Osisanwo (2016) maintains that previous studies on Boko Haram are non-linguistic in approach. He investigates linguistic and discourse strategies in media representation of the insurgency of Boko Haram in the country. Osisanwo adopts CDA and SFG to analyse headlines and overline stories purposively selected from four Nigerian newspapers between 2011 and 2014. It highlights 13 representational strategies in the discourse and 15 tools from van Leeuwen's categorisations used in representing social actors. The study concludes that the media employ discourse strategies to manage the voices of social actors and identify specified social actors and their actions. The newspapers negatively label and condemn Boko Haram activities.

These two studies are based on Boko Haram insurgents in Nigeria. The two have identified different linguistic features that are used by the media to promote different ideologies about the insurgent. While Olagunju and Ajadi adopt CDA alone, Osisanwo complements CDA by SFG. These works are good and relevant to the present study, as they have revealed how CDA is relevant in identifying linguistic features that reveal social practices and ideological stances. They are relevant in contextualising insurgents within the study of CDA. However, their focus is on Boko Haram and not herdsmen. Herdsmen are believed to be widely spread compared to Boko haram in the country because they can be found in any part of the country. Their presence in virtually every city, town and village makes their representation in the newspapers relevant and worthy of scholarly investigation. Their works are different from the present study in terms of domain and period. The present study focuses on herdsmen activities between 2018 and 2021. This study is of importance because of the geographical spread of the actors. However, we will also use insights from CDA in this study to reveal hidden ideologies in the discourse. This study considers editorial reports in addition to news reports because it is believed that editorials represent the position of the newspapers on any issue of national concern.

Another scholars have engaged newspaper headlines of Boko Haram attack. Alfred and Oyebola (2019) examine six editorials of Nigerian newspapers spread across the country, South, North and East to show the social attitudes of the media outlet toward the operations of Boko Haram and herdsmen in the country. The editorials were drawn from newspapers between 2014 and 2016. The study adopts a transitivity model for the analysis. It shows that Boko Haram and herdsmen are syntactically positioned by the newspapers as the destroyer and killers while the farmers and other Nigerians are portrayed as victims. The study concludes that the editorials do not attempt to hide the activities of the Boko Haram and herdsmen but criticise their actions. The implications of the media representation of Fulani herdsmen crises in Nigerian media are the focus of Saheed (2019). The study adopts van Leeuwen's approach to CDA and transitivity mode. Data were collected from newspaper headlines and news reports. The study reveals that the media engage in similar discursive techniques and transitivity patterns in their reports. The study further shows that the herdsmen are labeled negatively in the media report. It concludes that most of the media reports are purposely framed to provoke violence in society. Saheed

recommends that government and media regulators should endeavour to censor conflict reports before publication.

These studies are very significant to the present study. They have contextualised both Boko Haram and herdsmen within CDA and transitivity. With this, we could see and understand how newspapers represent herdsmen in the media. However, there is a departure between the studies and the present study in terms of approach and focus. While Alfred and Oyebola adopt quantitative analysis, the present work adopts qualitative which will help us to interrogate the use of words in context. Qualitative analysis will help us to understand inherent meaning of words and linguistic constructions with the use of CDA and Transitivity. The present study considers context and intention in the analysis, hence the use of CDA. Saheed (2019) uses CDA and Transitivity to examine the newspapers representation of the herdsmen to evaluate its impact on education. The present study evaluates newspapers representation of herdsmen discourse to identify different ideologies in the discourse and its implication for the general society. Dearth of studies in newspapers' representation of herdsmen and farmers' conflict is one of the motivations for this work. The present study also spans three years, between 2018 and 2012.

The management of conflict in the media also attract the attention of scholars. Zachary (2014) examines the role of the media in the management of conflicts. The author takes instances from the post-election conflict in Uasin Gishu County, Kenya. He observes that the influence of the media is enormous in conflict management. The research focuses on the 2007/2008 election crisis in Kenya. It examines the media accessibility and coverage level among others. The study also determines the way media influence men to escalate the conflict. The study adopts libertarian and social responsibility theories and a descriptive research design and random stratified sampling method to analyse 373 respondents. Questionnaires and in-depth interviews analysed with Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) software version 14.0 were used for the analysis. Tables, charts and graphs were also used to present the result for elucidation. The result shows that media play a significant role in escalating and de-escalating of crisis in the post-election crisis of the 2007 election in Kenya. The work recommends that stringent measures should be taken against negative reporting while normal moderate and positive reporting should be encouraged. This is relevant to our work as it guides us through the role of media in conflict management. The

study collected data from newspaper reports and editorials to understand newspapers' ideologies about HFD which we believed are capable of influencing society and aggravating the conflict. The study also adopts CDA, a theoretical framework that helps to interrogate power abuse and inequality in discourse.

Social-political ideologies were also examined by scholars. Igwebuike (2018) investigates discursive strategies in the Nigerian and Cameroonian media presentation of social-political ideologies the conflict across Bakassi Peninsula border. The study adopts van Dijk's CDA to analyse data from 2 Nigerian and 2 Cameroonian English medium newspapers. The study reveals that the two newspapers' reports foreground positive in-group and negative out-group ideology. It submits that discursive strategies such as slanted heading, negative labelling, victimisation and depersonalisation aid positive self-representation and negative others representation. Ononye (2017) investigates the choices of lexico-stylistic of the media in reporting the Niger Delta conflict and its ideological stances. The study selected forty reports on the conflict in the media between 2003 and 2007. The study adopted structural semantics and aspects of discourse stylistic as the model of analysis. It identifies two broad lexical stylistic choices in the reports; paradigmatic and syntagmatic. The paradigmatic includes synonymy, antonymy, hyponymy, colloquial, register and coinage while the syntagmatic includes: collocation, metaphors, pleonasms and lexical fields. The study uses the identified linguistic elements to reveal three ideological beliefs, Niger Delta militants as the perpetrator of violence, evaluation of specific entities and their roles in the conflicts. The study concludes that ideological goals are the motivation for newspaper reports to manipulate readers on the issues of the Niger Delta.

Different discursive strategies that may aid ideological formation in the media were identified. Igwebuike (2018) is relevant in contextualising border conflicts between Nigeria and Cameroon within CDA. This has provided insights as to how media form ideologies through manipulative dimensions in their report of conflict situations. The study is, however, limited to the border conflict between Nigeria and Cameroon. The present work focuses on herdsmen who are widely spread across Nigeria. The focus is also on local newspapers and no cross border newspaper is involved. This will reveal how news is managed within the country. The present study interrogates newspaper reports and editorial opinions to understand the ideologies of newspapers about the HFD, and it discusses how

they may influence escalation or de-escalation of the conflict. The study also spans four years under the government of President Buhari who is believed to be aiding the aggravation of the conflict through his 'body language'. Ononye (2017) uses lexicostylistics to discuss media representation of the Niger Delta crisis. The study identifies ideological stances in the media presentation of the Niger delta using lexicostylistic analysis. It is of great insight to the present work as it aids ideological representations in conflict situations. However, the present study focuses on herdsmen discourse as against Niger delta discourse. The present study adopts CDA and not lexicostylistic analysis. CDA helps to identify social actors and inherent meanings in the discourse. Newspaper reports and editorial opinions constitute data for this study because it forms agenda for society discourse and thereby influence their attitude towards different ethnic groups in the country.

The aforementioned works are contributions to the discussion of conflict discourse in the academia. Conflict discourse is usually a serious issue that deserves serious attention and participation of everyone. Previous studies have focused on the Niger Delta crisis, Boko Haram insurgents and the Bakassi Penusela crisis in media reports. Enough attention has not been devoted to the use of linguistic elements to code and decode ideologies in HFD. The works have identified different strategies of ideological formation using different approaches. Different approaches have been used, ranging from CDA, Transitivity, lexicostylistic, qualitative, quantitative, and so on. The focus of the present study is to interrogate news reports and editorials to understand the ideologies of selected newspapers, using CDA to discuss how they influence and promote or reduce conflicts in society.

Most of the previous studies on herdsmen are non-linguistic in orientation. Those that have linguistic orientation are scanty. Other studies on crises in Nigeria have identified different approaches to the ideological formation and discursive dimensions in the media report of conflicts. Previous studies have identified the use of lexis, phrases, clauses, and other linguistic and sociolinguistic tools used in making meaning and promoting ideologies. The works, however, do not treat the newspapers presentation of participants in the conflict, especially using CDA approach. Also, the discourse devices that are used by the newspapers to negotiate ideologies are not accounted for. The studies equally also downplay the role of the newspapers' use of language in conflict situations to escalate or

de-escalate the conflict. The works are silent on what the discursive tools of herdsmen/farmers' conflict reveal about media reportage in Nigeria. Lastly, they ignored the discursive practices inherent in herdsmen/farmers' conflict.

Consequently, the present study interrogates newspaper reports and editorial opinions related to HFD between 2018 and 2021 to understand their ideologies behind the discourse. This study uses CDA to interrogate the newspapers' presentation of the conflict in an attempt to reveal ideologies in the representation of the conflict in the newspapers. With CDA, the study can make transparent what is opaque in language use in the newspaper's presentation of the conflict through the explanation of different discourse strategies used by the newspapers. The study also engages different discourse devices employed by the selected newspapers to enact meaning, represent social actors and form ideologies in HFD. The theory helps us to reveal how the newspapers have been able to background some actions and foreground some. Consequently, we point out various effects of the conflict on the social relations, economic situation, security operations and political situations of the country.

### **2.2.2. Studies on CDA and media discourse**

In the previous section, we examined previous contributions to the study of herdsmen-farmers' conflict and other conflicts represented in the media. In this section, we shall review existing studies that have engaged critical discourse analysis in analyzing media discourse.

Media use of language also attracts the attention of experts. Ayoola (2011) focuses on some manipulative dimensions of newspaper reports of the Niger Delta in Nigeria. The study uses CDA to highlight and examine pieces of evidence of bias and manipulation in the media report of the Niger Delta crisis. The researcher sources data from three national newspapers. The findings revealed that both individuals and group participants in the discourse employed different manipulative strategies to positively present self and negatively present others. This work reveals the strength of CDA in revealing inherent ideologies in media discourse. It further shows that CDA is relevant in media discourse to reveal social practices. The study, however, focused on the Niger Delta crisis. The Niger Delta crisis is based in a geopolitical zone whereas the herdsmen discourse is widespread



throughout the country. Using CDA to analyse HFD will help to unravel manipulative strategies in the discourse and serve as a good approach to reveal power abuse and inequality in the discourse.

This study also reviews existing studies on the Niger Delta crisis. Chilwa (2011) applies CDA to examine the media representation of Nigeria's Joint Task Force (JTF) in the Niger Delta crisis. The research shows that media manipulate language to shape people's worldview on the roles and activities of the JTF. The study further reveals that the media positively represent the JTF but negatively represent the Niger Delta agitators. This work, like others, reveals the usefulness of CDA in discourse analysis by revealing the intention of participants in the discourse to manipulate readers. However, the work focuses on the representation of the interaction between Niger delta agitators and the JTF in Nigerian media. It also collected data from six Nigerian newspapers which are limited to Niger Delta reports. The work is different from the present study in terms of scope and approach. The present work adopts CDA to understand the roles of participants and see how their roles influence ideological formation. The present study also focuses on herdsmen who are more geographically spread in the country than the Niger Delta crisis. The study of Niger Delta crisis is good but the study of herdsmen with CDA is also relevant considering the role of newspapers in presenting their activities to the public.

In addition to the previous review, there are others that engage Niger Delta crisis. Ayoola (2010) again uses CDA to examine media engage linguistic elements to construct different ideological issues in Niger Delta discourse. The study reveals positive self-presentation and negative others presentation of participants in the discourse. There is also evidence of bias and partisanship in media reports. The author submits that it is possible to resolve the Niger Delta crisis without bloodletting. This study confirms the efficacy of CDA in revealing ideological stances in the media reports. It also reveals that a study of this nature is capable of settling the conflict in any society. These make the work useful and relevant to our research as it shows how CDA can be used to reveal ideology in discourse. However, the work is based on the Niger Delta crisis that concentrates on a particular political region of the country and only adopts CDA. A study of herdsmen discourse in the newspapers will also help to understand their representation in the media and proffer possible solutions.

Another research discusses some use of language and literature by politicians and political players to win elections. Ayoola (2008) uses CDA to evaluate objectivity and balance in media political discourse. The author gathered data from both Nigerian and American newspapers and two literary texts by American and Nigerian writers. The study shows that manipulative languages were used to conceal the truth about situations to oppress the weak, deceive the general public and trivialise lives. The study concludes that the use of provocative language, deliberate omission and unbalanced public presentation of conflict is capable of hindering progress. The study is political discourse in the media. It is not a tribal/ethnic and professional conflict like the herdsmen/farmers conflict. The study also reveals the strength of CDA to analyse human discourse. The present study is limited to the news reports and editorial opinions in Nigerian newspapers. These are believed to be appropriate representations of newspaper ideologies toward any issue of national interest.

There are other author that uses CDA to examine the circumstances that surround the oral presentation and linguistic devices used by the speaker. Ayoola (2006) interprets political discourse in president Obasanjo's 2005 address to the National Assembly. Parameters such as political background, personal deixis, emotive deixis and structures of Nigerian English political lexicon and semantic field of war were used to achieve the aims of the study. The study submits that the socio-political environment, military background and personality are the factors that aided the speaker's choice of linguistic devices in the speech. He concludes that CDA is a relevant tool to reveal meanings that have political orientations in the use of English as a second language. The work is good and relevant to our work as it exposes us to how CDA can be used to elicit meaning in discourse. The work dwells on political discourse and not on conflict discourse in the media. The work also concentrates on the use of CDA to interrogate HFD.

Another relevant study selected Three hundred news headlines from six Nigeria dailies to interrogate power and ideology in newspapers. Taiwo (2007) uses critical discourse analysis to examine ideology and power in the headlines of newspapers. The data were examined based on vocabulary and rhetorical device peculiarities to reveal hidden ideologies in the headlines. The research reveals that news headlines reflect hidden ideologies that favoured different interests. The researcher concludes that headlines are emotion-inducing strategies in the hand of the editor. According to the author, the strategies

are used to manipulate readers. The study is limited to news headlines. The present study dwells on news reports and editorial opinions which we believed are more relevant in understanding the ideologies of newspapers on any national discourse because it expresses the opinion of the newspaper rather than headlines that may be sensational. The present uses CDA to understand the different roles of participants.

ISIS crisis is also engaged by scholars to reveal media representations of the crisis. Birhanu (2016) investigates the coverage of mass protest against ISIS in the capital, Addis Ababa in 2014 by the media. He selects the discourses of different media organisations and identifies their ideological views. He also identifies media representations of participants in their reports. The work is a qualitative research and the author adopts the three models of Fairclough's approach to CDA. He also complements it with the Hallidayan systemic functional grammar. The work reveals that language use in the news report has hidden ideologies. He submits that language reflects ideologies of the proprietors. This is also in line with the previously reviewed works on media discourse that used CDA. It is, therefore, relevant to our work. This is because the present work is on the herdsmen-farmer discourse in the media as against the protest against ISIS. HFC is a serious security challenge in Nigeria that deserves the attention of everyone. The present study also takes instances from news reports and editorials to discuss the ideological position of the newspapers about the conflict.

A comparative analysis of media representation of crisis is interrogated by scholars. El-Nashar (2014) uses CDA to compare New York's media representation of the Egyptian army's action in Middle East seismic changes between January 25th and February 25th, 2011; and from June 30 and July 30, 2013. His analysis covers the news reports published within the two periods. He got his data from print media. According to the author, CDA was chosen because it gives a vivid description of various textual analytical techniques such as labelling, noun-pairing, lexical choices and collocations. The author explores discursive practices that reflect certain ideologies and power relations that control the mind of readers. The author concludes that the media use linguistic tools such as emphasis/de-emphasis, and legitimation/legitimation of the positive, or negative to impose their ideologies on readers. The study does not interrogate HFC representation in Nigerian newspapers which is the focus of the present study. Interrogation of HFC in Nigerian

newspapers is imperative at this time as it constitutes a security challenge that deserves urgent solution.

Scholars' attention is not limited to crisis but also engaged political representations in news reports. Zhang (2014) uses Fairclough's three-dimensional frameworks and Halliday's functional grammar to conduct a critical analysis of the political news reports on the Iraq war by American media. He explores the import of linguistic features, news production and social contexts. The research finds out that news reports are biased. The news is based on different ideologies branded by social values. The author advises that the cultural awareness for the newsreaders be increased. Alkaff and McLellan (2017) as well engage 'hard news' reports, covering similar stories in Malay and English from the *New Straits Times (NST)* and *Berita Harian (BH)*. The study is anchored on Kaplan's early studies on contrastive rhetoric (Kaplan, 1966, 1987 and 1988) which suggests that diversity of language may exhibit diversity in reasoning or at least diversity in cultural transmission. The author's aim is to ascertain the extent to which the claim applies to Malay and English media text. They adopt the modified version of CDA to show the situation of parallelism in Malay and English while reporting similar event, and the relationship in their translation. The study shows the relationship between in the structures and stances in the selected.

These two works show that hidden ideologies can best be revealed using CDA. The present study interrogates the newspapers' presentation of HFC in Nigeria. This study covers news reports and editorial opinions related to HFD. This will make us understand the ideologies of the newspapers and show the influence of the ideologies in escalating or deescalating the conflict.

Text Mining theory is used to support discourse analysis in an attempt to unravel ideologies in the news report election crisis in Kenya. Pollak et al. (2011) analyse news reports of the 2007 Kenyan election and postelection crisis reported by local and western newspapers. The work shows how text mining can assist discourse analysis by finding contrast patterns that provide evidence for ideological differences between local and international press coverage. The result of the research shows that the two (local and international) media have different ideologies in their reports. This study is based in Kenya, and it evaluates the relevance of text mining and discourse analysis in revealing ideologies in newspaper reports. The present study deviates from this in term of focus and domain; it

discusses media representation of ideological issues in herdsmen discourse in Nigerian newspapers. This will help to proffer relevant solution to the problem of HFC in the country.

Persuasive strategies in advertorials also form part of the review studies in this research. Advertisement Yusuff (2020) engages visual and verbal modes of persuasion in selected print advertisements on consumables in Nigeria to reveal different modes of persuasion in the discourse. Halliday's Systemic Functional Grammar (SFG) and Kress and Van Leeuwen's Multimodal Discourse Analysis are adopted as the theoretical anchors. Fourteen print advertisements were purposively selected from the internet based on their resourcefulness in the use of persuasive strategies and subjected to both quantitative and qualitative analysis. The study revealed that advertisers usually adopt participants' gaze to persuade prospective buyers to be attracted to their goods. They also make use of simple sentences to make the language of advertisement straightforward. The use of the imperative mode is also paramount. The study concludes that visual images complement verbal modes to persuade audiences in the discourse. Yusuff (2020) made significant contributions to the study of media and advertisement discourse. The study has helped to advance the study of persuasive strategies in media discourse. It has also revealed how media participants engage others and convince them through discursive strategies to accept their products. The study is, however, limited to advertisement discourse. This is different from the present discourse because it is based on commercial activities and not conflict discourse in the media. This study, therefore, expands the study of discourse strategies to the domain of conflict in the media. It also reveals how media participants are represented. The present study also adopts CDA to unravel different strategies used by newspapers to create power abuse and inequality in the HFD.

Existing literature have shown that CDA is an appropriate linguistic theory to be used in media discourse to reveal hidden ideologies. It is important to reveal these ideologies because language use cannot be excluded from its environment. The present study is relevant as it interrogates newspaper ideologies about HFC that are capable of spiraling or reducing the conflict. While some of the reviewed works focus on war, some focus on the post-election crisis and others on headlines of newspapers in general. However, the present research focuses on the HFC in Nigeria. Reviewed studies agree that context is relevant to

understanding meaning language analysis, thus confirming the resourcefulness of CDA in revealing inherent meanings in media discourse. The present study adopts a fusion of CDA and transitivity models to show how language use in newspapers is capable of aggravating conflict or ameliorating it. This will be achieved by interrogating news reports and editorial opinions to reveal different ideologies used by the newspapers to form agenda for Nigerians. The study will consider how social actors are represented and how different discourse strategies are used by the newspapers to project their ideologies.

Studying herdsmen discourse in Nigerian newspapers becomes imperative not only because of the geographical spread of the herdsmen which makes more people vulnerable to the conflict, but also because of the rate of killings, kidnapping, destruction of properties which further aggravate the security situation in Nigeria. Such reports also portray Nigeria in bad light to the international community. Such negative reportage has the tendency to discourage foreign investors from considering Nigeria as a worthy location. It is, therefore, expedient to proffer a lasting solution to the menace. The study is also relevant because of the resourcefulness of media participants in the use of linguistic tools to form ideologies that promote discrimination, bigotry and division. Consequently, the study proposes to use CDA to reveal hidden ideologies in language use in newspapers. We explore available linguistic tools noticeable in the media presentation of the conflict, such as presupposition, implicature, hedges, rhetorical tropes, qualifier, phraseology and so on. With this, we focus on the herdsmen-farmers' conflict. The study also extends the frontiers of sociolinguistics and some pragmatic frames. The representation of social actors and the role of the media in conflict management are described.

### **2.3. Theoretical framework**

#### **2.3.1. Critical discourse analysis**

This work adopts Teun van Dijk's socio-cognitive and Theo van Leeuwen's Representation of Social Actors approaches to Critical Discourse Analysis served as the framework to this study. In this section, we reviewed approaches to the framework and justify their relevance to the present research.

CDA draws attention to unequal power relations in a discursive act. It also reveals the manipulative tendency that people have in discourse. Every communicative act is

endowed with an act of power play where a discussant attempts manipulation over others to achieve their communicative goals. According to Taiwo (2010), CDA explains how speakers construct social relations, identity, power and knowledge using insight from poststructuralist and critical linguistic approach by situating text with different context. CDA focuses on inequality in the accessibility of communicative power among participants. It reveals how discourse produces social and political imbalance and abuse and domination of power in society. Media participants reflect the inequalities and imbalances in their interactions by positively represent themselves and negatively represent others to society. The concern of CDA is to investigate the relationship between language use and social events. Cummings, de Haan and Seferiadis (2020) argues that CDA engages the link between discourse and elements in social practices. Social practices such as HFC as reported in the newspapers and the different contextual variables are focused to enact different ideologies in the discourse. The authors state further that CDA as a methodology has two significant strengths in analyzing text. According to them, it allows for policy document analysis to be able to show the inner bias and claims of policymakers in a systemic, structured way and reveal their hidden preoccupations and secondly, it exclusively involves identification, narratives and arguments of discourse which attack 'social wrongs' in current dominant discourse at its concluding stage.

Language as discourse is analysed under CDA in the form of action it performs and the social and historical aspects which are inherent in other social aspects of `participants. Every communicative act is with a goal which is either to support the existing opinion or refute it. The intention of participants is made known through the insight from CDA because participants tend to be covert in presenting their minds. CDA helps to reveal intended meanings in discourse and the expected inference of other participants. It focuses on the discursive practices which create and produce different levels of relationship between social groups. For example, CDA unraveled the intention of media participants for continuously repeating *attack* in the context of herdsmen discourse as against football pitch and the inference other participants may have. The aim may be to create a negative labelling. This will be revealed using CDA by considering the context of the text and the intention of participants. According to Jorgensen and Phillips (2002), linguistic textual analysis is carried out, using CDA to interrogate social relations. CDA aims to address

social changes in the areas of unequal power relations in discourse processes and society at large. Summarily, we can assert that CDA is relevant in the construction of social identities (representation of social actors in discourse), social relations (a relationship that exists between participants, friendly or hostile), and systems of knowledge and meaning (the ability of other discussants to understand the intended meaning). It is important to also state that CDA situates text within its context to enact meaning and quantify textual features that are relevant. It is the context that will aid the interpretation of the word *attack* to mean different things to a football analyst and a security analyst. CDA also considers the social environment of interaction from linguistic, cultural, situational, and so on. environment. This helps to reveal hidden meanings. The same word *attack* in the environment of entertainment (sport) and herdsman discourse has different meaning.

Thus, there are three different functions that can be identified in discourse. They are an identity, relational, and ideational functions (Jorgensen and Phillips, 2002). There are two dimensions of engaging discourse; *the communicative event and the order of discourse* (Fairclough, 1995b). Fairclough explains that communicative event constitutes instances of language use in newspaper articles, film, video, interview, and so on; the order of discourse involves configuration of different types of discourse, which can be found in social institution or social field. According to the author, discourse types are discourses and genres. For this study, news headlines, news reports, and opinion news constitute communicative events. As a genre, they are regarded as media discourse. In media discourse, different strategies are used to attract the attention of readers consciously or unconsciously. The strategies are usually with intentions and directions which are made known by the application of CDA. For example, when a participant constantly refers to another as ‘attacker’ or ‘invader’, CDA considers the social context of its usage to know if it is negative or positive. This is because an attacker on a football pitch is different from an attacker in a conflict situation. It also helps to understand the position of the other participant as a victim or as a contestant. In conflict, the referrer may be described as a victim while on a football pitch, they will be described as a contestant. van Dijk approach to CDA will be adopted in this study because of its emphasis on the relationship among discourse, society and cognition. This is relevant because this study proposed to reveal



ideologies in newspaper representation of HFC. CDA will help us to reveal how power abuse and inequalities are negotiated in HFD through news reports and editorials.

The theory is a significant instrument to analysis how discourse projects social powers and inequalities. van Dijk (2015) sees CDA as discourse analytical instrument with primary focus on how social powers are abused and social inequalities are enacted, reproduced, legitimated and resisted, by text and talk in the social and political context. He believes that CDA can be used to reveal the intention of participants to exercise power over others through their use of language and how others inferred and reacted to discourse to achieve their goals in communication. van Dijk (2001) opines that semantic macrostructures is the main focus of discourse which controls the entire discourse. In addition, he discusses language at micro level where he talks about lexical meaning. Relationship between words and there interrelationship. At the meso level he discusses how participants in discourse engage in positive self-representation and negative others representation. At this level, participants foreground the good done by self and the bad of others (p.103). Language use is an expression of the mind. For example, if one participant represents others as killers in a discourse, it is what he/she has meditated in his/her mind and wants people to know about the other participant. This agrees with van Dijk socio-cognitive approach to CDA which emphasises the use of language in discourse to polarise society by positively represent self and negatively represent others. van Dijk's work is relevant to the interrogation of media discourse to engage different ideologies in news reportage as it aids an understanding of the intention of media participants in the discourse. Also, it is relevant because according to van Dijk, the sociocognitive approach in critical discourse studies emphasis a multidisciplinary, triangular analysis of text and talk integrating a discursive, cognitive and social component. In this study, news reports and editorial opinions will be analysed in relation to the social events and reveal the intention (ideology) of the media outlet concerning the herdsmen discourse.

CDA has different approaches that significantly contributed to its development. According to van Dijk (2007) the approaches are; Critical Linguistics (CL), the sociocultural approach, the discourse-historical approach, and the socio-cognitive approach. Van Leeuwen also made a significant contribution to the theory through Representation of

Social Actors. For the purpose of this study, we shall focus on the van Dijk's sociocognitive and van Leeuwen's Representation of Social Actors.

van Dijk (1985; 1998b; 2002) proposed the fourth approach to CDA. According to van Dijk (1998c), texts are based on the ideological beliefs of individuals or group. One of the major functions of CDA is to reveal the sources of discourse dominance and inequality. To the author, what people discuss or say is what exists in their minds. Therefore participants' minds can be understood through their discourses. For a participant to describe another participant as a victim, it shows the experience and belief of the describer. The approach opines that cognition shows the interaction that exist between "society" and "discourse". van Dijk (1985) believes that individual memories and other mental models shape human perception and understanding of descriptive practices, and at the same time, they imply stereotypes and prejudices when these mental models become rigid and over-generalised. For example, the belief about the herdsmen as killers and kidnappers has become rigid and overgeneralised. Any evil perpetrated on the highway or bush is easily ascribed to the herdsmen. van Dijk (2000) uses macro-level, (that is language, discourse verbal interaction), and micro-power as control (inequality, dominance), access and discourse control, context control, the control of text and talk, as well as mind as theoretical concepts. To study discourse, the dynamism of the society and human experience must be recognised because it affects meaning derivation. To address the fourth objective of this study where we discuss the inherent ideologies in HFD, the study will adopt van Dijk models. van Dijk model will be relevant because it helps to reveal the inequalities in the discourse through positive self-representation and negative others representation.

In addition to these contributions, van Leeuwen also contributed to the development of CDA. van Leeuwen (2008) discusses different ways in which social actors can be described in discourse. van Leeuwen's (2008) approach focuses on how social actors and their actions are represented in discourse. The approach has different categorisations of social actors and actions. The categorisation shall be explained as follow: van Leeuwen discusses Exclusion as the way social actors are either totally deleted of a text or become de-emphasised. Exclusion is divided into two divisions, namely, backgrounding which is realised through 'simple ellipses in non-finite clauses with -ing and -ed participles, in infinitival clauses with to, and in paratactic clauses' (Van Leeuwen, 2008: 30) and

suppression which can also be realised through passive agent deletion, non-finite clauses functioning as a grammatical participant, beneficiary deletion, nominalisations, and process nouns and adjectives. Exclusion in backgrounding is less radical compare to suppressing. Role allocation is realised through the roles social actors play in discourse. van Leeuwen's idea takes insight largely from Halliday's SFG; it concerns the assignment of grammatical roles to social actors through grammatical activation, that is, represented as dynamic forces in a given activity, and passivation, which described social actors as undergoing a given activity. Social actors can be represented as 'agent' ('actor'), sayer, senser, behaver and assigner. Passivation can occur as subjected. These are the social actors who are treated as objects beneficialised, in other words, the third party in a discourse that benefits from the action. According to van Leeuwen, genericisation and specification represent social actors as classes of people or as specific individuals that can be easily identified. In assimilation, social actors are represented as individuals (individualisation) or as a group (assimilation). Assimilation is further divided into two, namely, collectivisation and aggregation. Aggregation represents social actors with statistics by quantifying a group of participants, whereas, collectivisation uses generalised opinions, not statistically presented. This is not presented in terms of percentages, surveys or number(s). Association and dissociation on the other hand represent social actors as groups. In association, a common interest is used to associate different collective groups with each other, whereas, in dissociation, an initial association is broken. These groups may associate and dissociate themselves within the same text. Another categorization is Indetermination where social actors are represented as unspecified, groups or individuals: the identity of the group remains anonymous. In determination, the identity of social actors is specified. Social actors or social groups are differentiated explicitly between 'us' and 'them' in differentiation. Nomination identifies individuals 'in terms of their unique identity' (van Leeuwen, 2008: 52). In addition, categorisation identifies individuals with respect to identities and functions that connect them with others in society. In functionalisation, social actors are described in terms of the activity or something they do: 'an occupation or role' (van Leeuwen, 2008: 42); the permanent trait of social actors is used to describe them while discussing identification. Overdetermination is realised when social actors are presented as participating in more than one social action at the same time.

For the first objective, where we discuss newspaper representations of social actors in HFD, van Leeuwen's contribution to CDA is most appropriate, and it is adopted because of its focus on the representation of social actors and actions in discourses. The approach is relevant since the newspapers construct and represent social actors differently to generate ideologies. van Leeuwen's theory discusses how social actors can be described in terms of the roles assigned to them either by reality or as represented in the given text.

Since its introduction, CDA has proven to be a useful instrument in revealing hidden relationship that exists between text and the discourse practices that surrounds it on the one hand and the socio-cultural context on the other hand. In this research, we used CDA to investigate how the media participants use language to create inequality in society. We used the theory to reveal hidden ideologies in the media representation of the social actors in the HFD and discourse strategies that help to reveal social practices in the discourse. In discussing discourse strategies, we also examined various contextual variables used in the strategies. With this, the work identifies different socio-economic and political implications of media reports of the conflict. The study considers the relationship between the discourse (herdsmen discourse) and its environment (conflict), the socio-experience (interaction between farmers and herdsmen) of participants and their cognition to reveal social practice and the relevance of language use in the media to aggravate or reduce conflict. The theory is appropriate because of its strength in revealing what is implied but not said or written in any communicative event.

### **2.3.2. Discourse analysis and critical discourse analysis**

The two phenomena are not the same. Discourse analysts (DA) study elements and structure of discourse (text and speech) to explain how meanings are enacted in context. Discourse analysis studies phrases and clauses within the discourse and not in isolation to situate meaning within the context of the discourse. However, CDA studies how social practices are shaped in discourse. CDA explains how discourse is used to create social inequality in society. DA and CDA converge because they are both linguistic analytical tools and are used to evaluate texts and speeches that are larger than sentences (discourse) but with different focuses.

DA contrasts with CDA because CDA draws attention to unequal power relation in every human discursive act. It further reveals human manipulative tendency in discourse. According to Taiwo (2010), CDA takes insight from the poststructuralist models and critical linguistics to interrogate social relations, identity, knowledge and power that exist in human interactions through discourse as they occur in different linguistic contexts. CDA focuses on inequality in the accessibility of communicative power among participants. It reveals how discourse produces social and political imbalance and abuse and domination of power in society. The concern of CDA is to investigate the way language use and social events are connected. DA only discusses the connectivity that exists between phrases, clauses and sentences in text and speeches. The concern of CDA is not to investigate linguistic units as DA, but interrogating social phenomena in discourse. For example, while DA will investigate the connection between clauses in herdsmen discourse, CDA will interrogate the social relations between herdsmen and farmers and their various professions to enact meaning.

This study is evaluating the manipulative tendency that may exist in herdsmen discourse in Nigerian newspapers and therefore, examine patterns of language used in discourse to create social inequality in society. The study will go beyond the examination of phrases and clauses in discourse and examine how social practices are influenced and affected in discourse. According to Chilwa (2011), it is imperative to investigate how media presentation of news aids attitude formation and manipulation of public opinion and reveal how the manipulations affect social crises. These inform the choice of CDA as a suitable model to study herdsmen discourse in Nigerian newspapers.

### **2.3.3. Criticisms and responses of CDA**

Criticism of CDA is observed from different perspectives. Blommaert (2005:31-37) states that there are two existing schools of thought about the criticism of CDA. In critiquing CDA, the two most sustained criticism of CDA can be seen in the works of Fairclough (1996, 2014) and Blommaert (2005). The second criticism is seen in Widdowson (1995, 1995b) and Fairclough (1996). Billig (1999a and b) and Wetherell (1998) are also not left out in the criticism of CDA. According to Amer (2015), analysis in CDA is selective, partial and qualitative and too ambitious in its quest for social change. Subsequently, we reviewed the criticisms and responses that follow.

CDA harps on the analysis of language use within its context. Blommaert (2005:35) discusses CDA as an instrument that emphasis analysis of linguistic elements in available text. The discourses, according to him, are existing texts with underlined motivation which CDA ignores, and only analyse the linguistic features in them. Blommaert (2005) considers this as a linguistic subjectivity, as she submits that CDA ‘limits’ the scope of linguistic engagement to the analysis of textually organise linguistically encoded discourse, without considering their origins and destination.

Fairclough agrees with Blommaert, however dissent that much of what is referred to as discourse analysis is without linguistic analysis of text or involve any approach to linguistic analysis of CDA (Amer, 2015). Fairclough (2014) responds to the criticism against where discourse goes by referring to his publication ‘language and power’ where he sees the relationship between discourse and social structure as dialectal. He claims that CDA does not only shape them but also reproduce and change them. Fairclough (2001) and Wodak (1999) agree with him on the issue of subjectivity. Fairclough states that it is impossible for CDA to be objective because the analyst has an underlying interest in carrying out their research. Fairclough explains that the research is with a special perspective and therefore renders their analyses biased. Wodak (1999) asserts that researchers cannot separate their personal opinions from the research opinion. This shows their analysis cannot be objective as said by Fairclough. She submits that researchers should be conscious while they analyse discourse to avoid the imposition of self-opinion. These two opinions corroborate the argument of Widdowson. Fairclough, however, states that CDA is not a mere interpretation as Widdowson puts it because it provides an instrument and pattern for analyzing discourse (Fairclough, 2001). It is resourceful in revealing intentions and social practices by examining linguistic variables.

Other scholars have contrary views to the argument. Widdowson (1995a) contests that CDA as an analytical tool is not a valid text engagement. He contends that it is an ordinary interpretation of text. He opines that CDA analysis helps to generate meanings in discourse and the meanings are conditionally valid. In his view, CDA only reveals the position and opinion of the analyst and the position and opinion according to him are subjective. To Widdowson, analysts impose their opinion on discourse Philo (2007) explains that text can never be interpreted in isolation but with the explanation from a

particular ideology that underpins the text. He opines that media text cannot be analysed using CDA alone but imperative to study the pattern of audience reception to enact expected meaning and show the expected impact of text in the public understanding. Philo considers CDA analysis as insufficient if it fails to consider the production and reception in the analysis of media discourse. He believes that in doing the analysis, it is important to develop the communication of messages from their origin through the structure they are made available and constructed by the media and the way the media text appears to the audience (Philo, 2007).

Other scholars disagree with Wodak and Fairclough. In addition, Widdowson (1995a) opines that there is subjectivity in CDA analysis because it projects biased interpretation of text with a focus on a particular standpoint. In his opinion, the presentation is usually anchor-on; (1) the belief and assumption of the analyst and choice of the features in the text to support the pre-meditated worldview. To this scholar, it is the opinions of researchers that are reflected in the identified ideology not necessarily that of the society or participants. Fairclough (1996) however, state that CDA has open-ended results. Fairclough opines that CDA is very clear in its submissions in comparison to other theories of analysis. CDA allows further interpretation and that is why it engages linguistic tools to understand meaning and social actors in conflict situations, especially in a pluralist society like Nigeria. It reveals hidden ideologies in texts including what is written and what is not written. In this work, we focus more on the text, context and mind. The study considers linguistic context, situational context, religious context, professional context, and cultural context as social environments to unmask various meaning and discourse strategies used by the media. This gives us ample opportunity in analysing different ideological construction of participants in the herdsmen/farmer discourse as presented in the selected newspapers.

CDA is a theoretical instrument that can be used to reveal meaning. Responding to Philo, Weiss and Wodak (2003) explain that CDA is a theoretical synthesis of conceptual tools. They submit that the combination of theory and methods could be an opportunity for innovative and productive theoretical formation which will strengthen CDA. Philo's concern is relevant to the study of media discourse.

The reviewed critiques are practical and innovative. They are therefore worthy of consideration, especially for the present work. Previous works have shown that CDA is a

suitable theory and method for the analysis of media representation of societal issues, especially in ideological formation and reproduction. CDA does not rely only on textual analysis, but also takes note of the context in social relation. It also considers the experiences of participants in discourse by contextualizing the text. In spite of the criticism against CDA, this study adopts CDA as the theory and method of analysis because it is useful in examining beliefs and assumptions in newspapers' representation of HFD.

#### **2.4. Summary**

This chapter reviews relevant concepts to the subject of this study. The chapter also reviews the theoretical frameworks adopted for this study. It also critiques extant literature that have engaged herdsmen discourse and other conflicts that are represented in newspapers. It also explores previous studies that have adopted CDA to interrogate media discourse. The review shows that enough attention has not been deployed to the study of HFD, especially from the discourse analytical perspective.



## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **METHODOLOGY**

#### **3.0. Preamble**

Considering its content and critical discourse-based approach, the study adopts a qualitative method of data collection and analysis. This chapter explains how this work was designed. It discussed and elucidated the subject of this research under the subject of the study. This section gives a brief background to the newspapers used and discusses the limitation to data collection and validation.

#### **3.1. Research design**

This study adopted the descriptive design method of analysis because it helps to describe different grammatical units to reveal how social actors were described to negotiate ideologies. It adopted Purposive sampling to gather data for the study. News report and editorial opinions that were relevant to the subject of this study were selected. These were generally used to reveal how newspapers represent social actors in the HFD. News reports and opinions were used to see how different discourse strategies are used to negotiate ideologies in the newspapers.

The sampled data were news reports and editorial opinions on herdsmen-farmers' conflict. News reports and editorials were selected because it is believed that they represent the ideologies of the newspapers. It is imperative to mention that there are variants in the number of reports in the selected newspapers. While *Punch*, *Vanguard* and *The Voice* newspapers adequately reported news about HFC, *Triumph* newspaper under reported such news. Despite the variants, one edition of the newspapers per month was sampled. Consequently, 36 editions of each of the newspapers totalling 144 editions were sampled. All the editions have a report on HFC, hence their choice for the years. However, editorials related to HFC are limited. Consequently, the study sampled 40 editorial opinions throughout the 144 editions (10 from each newspaper). Whenever the newspapers had editorial opinion on HFC, the editorial was deliberately selected to avoid double selection

for the month. Consequently, 36 reports from the 36 editions of each of the newspapers totalling 144 news reports were sampled. These data were selected because of their robust use of linguistic elements to negotiate ideology in media discourse of herdsman-farmers' discourse while the newspapers were selected because of their preference for the reports on HFC and their regional coverage. The electronic versions of these newspapers were used where their Applications (APP) and web pages were used to retrieve information for accessibility.

### **3.2. Data collection technique**

This study used primary data that were retrieved from the selected newspapers (the *Punch*, *Vanguard*, *Triumph* and *The Voice* newspapers). Data were collected from four Nigerian newspapers that enjoy both national and regional coverage. The four Nigerian newspapers were purposively selected based on their circulation and reportage of the conflict. The *Punch* and the *Vanguard* were selected because of their national outlook, while *Triumph* and *The Voice* were chosen because of their regional appeal. In addition, the newspapers are resourceful in the use of linguistic elements to project ideologies, especially in crisis situation. Electronic versions of these newspapers were used where we made use of their Applications and web pages to retrieve information for accessibility. The choice of the electronic version was to allow us easy access to the newspapers, especially because of the Northern newspapers that are not in circulation in the South and the security challenges in the country which hinders free movement.

News reports and editorial opinions constitute data for this study because they reflect the use of linguistic elements to represent social actors and project ideologies. The data cover the period between March 2018 and March 2021 (36 months). This is premised on the fact that the period witnessed unprecedented occurrence of the HFC in Nigeria and attracted more media attention than in the past, locally and internationally as seen in both local and international media. It was also believed that this period witness a surge in the conflict because of President Buhari who is of Fulani extraction. Data were got using the navigation search route of the selected newspapers with captions such as herdsman-farmers' clash again, herdsman-farmers' attack, herdsman and farmers in Nigeria, and herdsman strikes again, as query terms. Collected data includes news reports and editorial

opinions related to the subject of this study. The websites of the newspapers are; the voice is on [www.thevocienewspaper.ng](http://www.thevocienewspaper.ng), the punch is on [www.punchng.com](http://www.punchng.com), the Vanguard on [www.vanguardngr.com](http://www.vanguardngr.com) and Triumph is on [www.triumphnews.org](http://www.triumphnews.org).

### **3.3. Sample and sampling techniques**

Four Nigerian newspapers were selected for this study because of their perceived preference for the reports of HFC based on their location and their proprietors. Out of numerous news reports and editorial opinions of the newspapers in the selected period, relevant reports and editorial opinions were carefully observed and selected. The Uniform Resource Locator (URL) of the selected newspapers were followed to authenticate data and ensure proper acknowledgement of the URL of the data for authentication avoid the contravention of the referencing rule. URL is a reference to a web resource. It is a channel that specifies the location of material retrieved or to be retrieved on the internet. The data were downloaded from web pages of the selected newspapers and stored on a laptop device for easy access. In total, 40 editorial opinions related to HFC were sampled. The sampling was done to achieve equal distribution of data across the newspapers. The breakdown of the editorial opinions from the selected newspapers is as follows; 10 editorial opinions from Triumph, 10 editorial opinions from Punch, 10 editorial opinions from Vanguard and 10 editorial opinions from the Voice newspaper, during the specified period. News reports were also sampled across the selected newspapers within the period under investigation; 36 news reports were sampled from Triumph, 36 news reports from Punch, 36 news reports from Vanguard and 36 news reports from The Voice, totaling 144 news reports from all the selected newspapers. The sampling gave even distribution of data to the newspapers.

### **3.4. Method of data analysis**

The descriptive design was used to describe grammatical units used by the newspapers to promote social actors ideologies in the discourse. Relevant data were carefully observed and culled from news reports and editorial opinions to discuss the objectives of the study. CDA was deployed to interrogate how newspapers negotiate ideologies in HFD through different discourse strategies. The study identified different social actors in the discourse and discussed how newspapers represented them to create different ideologies. To achieve this, van Leeuwen's (2008) approach to CDA that

discusses representation of social actors was adopted. Discourse strategies used by selected Nigerian newspapers were identified and described in relation to their contextual features. The study also identified various contextual variables used in negotiating ideologies in HFD. To discuss the ideologies in the discourse, the study draws insights from the socio-cognitive approach of van Dijk to CDA because it shows how social actors manipulate others in discourse to create inequality. The socio-economic implications of the study were described in terms of their contextual functions and implications for society. In discussing the data, the study considered words, phrases and clauses as used in the text and explained the interaction between texts and their contexts.

### **3.5. Brief information on the selected newspapers**

Below is a brief background of the selected newspapers. The background is given below as reported in [www.answersafrica.com](http://www.answersafrica.com) and [www.hotvibesmedia.com](http://www.hotvibesmedia.com) as of January 2018.

#### **3.5.1. *The Punch***

Chief Olu Aboderin and his partner Sam Amuka established *The Punch* newspaper as a limited liability company. The newspaper commenced operations on 7th March 1973. Immediately after the separation of the two founders in 1981, the *Sunday punch* which was known for its radical criticism of the government became more popular. The popularity was ascribed to its fight for freedom of speech and strong opposition to the governments' action. Until 1st November 1976, the newspaper remained a weekly publication. It later started a daily publication. *Punch* has been recognised as a leading newspaper in Nigeria, winning awards such as Nigeria Media Merit Awards, Nigeria Academy of Science Journalists of the Year Award, and it was also selected by British Broadcasting Corporation as the most trusted Nigerian newspaper in 2006 ([www.punchng.com](http://www.punchng.com)). The electronic version of the newspaper was introduced in 2003, providing access to the global community. It published over eighty thousand copies daily. The internet version also boosts its coverage globally. It can be accessed through [www.punchng.com](http://www.punchng.com). The newspaper also enjoys the benefit of social media through their page/handle on social media like Facebook and Twitter.

**Source:** [www.answersafrica.com](http://www.answersafrica.com), [www.hotvibesmedia.com](http://www.hotvibesmedia.com) and [www.punchng.com](http://www.punchng.com).

### **3.5.2. Vanguard**

The vanguard is a leading Nigerian newspaper in terms of coverage. It is an apolitical newspaper. It was introduced to the newsstand on Sunday 3rd of June 1984 after the veteran columnist and journalist, Mr. Sam Amuka had terminated the partnership with *Punch* in 1981. On July 15th, 1984 (a month after) the paper became a daily newspaper. The paper prints 13,000 copies daily for distribution. This is complemented by the electronic version which has a limitless audience throughout the world. Apart from publishing news, the newspaper also engages in activities that can help in building a new Nigeria by organising public lectures. The newspaper can also be accessed online through [www.vanguardngr.com](http://www.vanguardngr.com). This makes it accessible to all, even beyond the shores of Nigeria. The newspaper also has a social media page/handle through which readers can also read news and comment.

**Source:** [www.answersafrica.com](http://www.answersafrica.com), [www.hotvibesmedia.com](http://www.hotvibesmedia.com) and [www.vangaurdngr.com](http://www.vangaurdngr.com).

### **3.5.3. The Voice**

*The Voice* newspaper was established by the defunct Benue-Plateau state in 1972. The newspaper was initially published by Star Printing and Publishing Corporation, Enugu and later by Benue Printing and Publishing Corporation. Today, the newspaper is being managed by the Benue state government. It made its debut publication as a weekly newspaper. First published in 1979, *The Voice* newspaper is a weekly newspaper but with 24 hours online services. It has regular sections of newspapers such as news reports, editorial opinions and articles. It also has other sections such as sport, advertorials, entertainment, and so on. The newspaper is being circulated in Benue, Abuja, Taraba and other states of the country. This newspaper can be described as a regional newspaper. According to Nwodu (2010), regional newspapers are newspapers that are limited to their region. However, it can be accessed through its Application (APP) and web page. Information about the newspaper can be retrieved through [www.thevoiceneewspaper.ng/about-us](http://www.thevoiceneewspaper.ng/about-us). The newspaper reaches out to its audience through the printing form, the App and the website.

**Source:** [www.answersafrica.com](http://www.answersafrica.com), [www.hotvibesmedia.com](http://www.hotvibesmedia.com) and [www.thevoiceneewspaper.ng](http://www.thevoiceneewspaper.ng).

### **3.5.4. *Triumph***

Like *The Voice* newspaper, *Triumph* newspaper is also own by the state government. It is owned by the Kano state government. It was founded in June 1980. The newspaper is published in English and Hausa languages. It has a sister newspaper called Aibishir. It is published by Triumph Publishing Company that is based in Kano. The newspaper is own by the Ministry of Information, Youth and Culture of the Kano state government. It was shut down in 2012 for lack of good management but reopened in 2018. Since its reopening, it has acquired a modern digital printing machine. The newspaper disseminates through printing copies and online versions. The website address is [www.triumphnews.org](http://www.triumphnews.org). The printing copies of the newspaper are distributed within the state and the neighbouring states. It can also be described as a regional newspaper. However, it can be accessed globally through its online version. Information about the newspaper can be retrieved via [www.triumphnews.org/about-us](http://www.triumphnews.org/about-us).

**Source:** [www.answersafrica.com](http://www.answersafrica.com), [www.hotvibesmedia.com](http://www.hotvibesmedia.com) and [www.triumphnews.org](http://www.triumphnews.org).

### **3.6. Summary**

This chapter explains the methods adopted in this study. It discusses the research design, procedure of data collection, sample and sampling technique, method of data analysis, and brief information on the selected newspapers.

## **CHAPTER FOUR**

### **ANALYSES AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS**

#### **4.0. Preamble**

This work adopts critical discourse analysis for the analysis of the ideological representations of HFD in selected Nigerian newspapers. Social actors in the discourse are differently represented. This chapter reveals different approaches through which the newspapers represent the social actors in HFD. We pay attention to the choice of words used to name and describe the social actors. We also examine how different forms of sentence constructions are used to describe them in line with the preferences of the newspapers. The chapter further reveals different ideologies inherent in the media representation of the herdsmen/farmers' discourse. We achieve this by examining how writers employ different linguistic tools to negotiate meaning.

The chapter also describes different discourse strategies used by the media with the use of CDA as an analytical tool. Using CDA, we pay much attention to the context of language use. Both linguistic and non-linguistic contexts involved helped to identify various strategies adopted by newspapers. This chapter also discusses different contextual variables used in negotiating ideologies. Finally, it discusses the socio-economic and political implications of such ideologies various stakeholders involved in HFD.

#### **4.1. Representation of social actors**

It is expected that there is going to be diverse opinion based on beliefs, assumptions and worldviews of participants. Different affiliations and prejudices also inform levels of involvement of people in any discourse. HFD is a discourse that easily attracts different social actors because ethnic and religious sentiments are involved. Consequently, it has to be treated with utmost care. In HFD, identified social actors include; the herdsmen, farmers/villagers, Miyetti Allah Cattle Breeders Association of Nigeria (MACBAN), religious leaders (Islam and Christians), political leaders (for examples, APC leaders, PDP leaders), social-cultural associations (Odua People's Congress, Arewa Consultative Forum

and Indigenous people of Biafra (IPOB). In a bid to discuss how social actors are represented in HFD, the study adopts van Lauween representation of social actor's approach to CDA because it explores different categories of social actor's representation in discourse.

#### **4.1.1. Representation of herdsmen**

Herdsmen are represented in the newspapers as attackers, killers, terrorists, invaders, innocent citizens, positive addition to the country, foreigners and destroyers, depending on the perspective of each newspaper.

##### **Herdsmen as attackers**

In HFD, herdsmen are represented as attackers by all the selected newspapers sampled. This is premised on their actions against their host communities/farmers. The herdsmen attacked their host communities and not only kill them, but also destroy their properties. The excerpt below captures this.

**Excerpt 1.** Speaker, Benue State House of Assembly, Titus Uba has condemned the attack on Abagena Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) camp in Makurdi Local government Area of Benue State by suspected Fulani herdsmen, describing it as uncivilised and barbaric.

<https://thevoicenewspaper.ng/benue-speaker-condemns-attack-on-idps-as-assembly-embark-on-recess/>

In excerpt 1, *The Voice* newspaper reports that herdsmen attacked the Internally Displaced Persons (IDP) in Benue State. These people were initially displaced by the attack of herdsmen. The speaker of the Benue State House of Assembly is mentioned here to attach importance to the statement. The political status of the speaker adds value to the condemnation. As the Speaker of the legislative arm of the government in Benue State, his statement is strong because it is believed that he understood what he is saying. The reporter fronts the speaker to foreground his statement and concern in the discourse. In this excerpt, the speaker uses the verb, **condemned** to assert his political influence. The choice of the verbal process used by the speaker signals ethnic ideology. This is because the speaker condemns the activities of the herdsmen as an ethnic group. The verb **condemned**, as used reveals the intention of the speaker to stand against the conflict between the two groups. In



representing the herdsmen, the newspaper assigns the role of attackers through passivation. As in

... has condemned the attack on Abagena Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) camp in Makurdi Local government Area of Benue State **by suspected Fulani herdsmen**, describing it as uncivilised and barbaric.

It, however, backgrounds the agent using the passivised sentence structure, **by suspected Fulani herdsmen**. The **by-phrase** is used to background the Fulani herdsmen. The passivation in the excerpt helps to background the main actor and portray them as less powerful agents. The newspaper also hedges by using the word, **suspected**. Hedging is used in discourse by participant to avoid being held responsible for the truth or otherwise of a statement. This is done to avoid playing the role of a judge who only has the power to sentence any suspected criminal. The participant also hedges to conceal the perceived tribe that is involved in rearing of animal. This also signals ethnic ideology because of the attempt to save the *face* of the tribe.

The nominal choice of **Makurdi Local government Area of Benue State** is used to foreground the sufferer of the action of the herdsmen. This also promotes the ethnic ideology of a deliberate attack on the Benue state. The IDP centre is presented as an active sufferer of the attack by herdsmen. IDP is a restricted place where people who are displaced as a result of herdsmen attack are kept in Benue state. Such restriction denies them their right of movement. The newspaper further represents the herdsmen using interpersonal representation through appraisal with the use of the word uncivilized and barbaric. The lexicalisation of **uncivilized** and **barbaric** helps to understand the interpretation of the word attack. The use of passivisation, hedge, and nominal choices helps to promote political and ethnic ideology through the representation of herdsmen as attackers. The following excerpt captures this

Excerpt 2. ...suspected Fulani herdsmen attacks; September recorded three; October, 18; November, 22; December, 28; February 2016, 300; April 2016, 55; and May 2016, two. ...no fewer than 22 persons were reportedly killed when suspected Fulani herdsmen attacked Kwata in Jos...

<https://punchng.com/b-haram-fulani-herdsmen-kill-3000-buhari/>

While narrating the menace of Boko Haram and herdsmen in Nigeria, *Punch* newspaper in its editorial agrees with *The Voice* newspaper in representing herdsmen as attackers. The writer copiously adopts the use of statistics and dates (**October, 18; November, 22; December, 28; February 2016, 300; April 2016, 55; and May 2016, two**) to create gruesome and deadly scenes occasioned from the activities of the herdsmen. *Punch* newspaper activates herdsmen as the attacker in the above excerpt by making the herdsmen the actor; **Fulani herdsmen attacks...** The role of an actor is allocated by the verb **attack** to **Fulani herdsmen**. The use of the verb, **attack** signals revolutionist and ethnic ideologies in the discourse. It also presents **Kwata village in Jos** as the sufferer of the attack carried out by the herdsmen. The editor repeats the word **attack** several times to foreground the action of the group. The repetition activates the revolutionist and ethnic ideologies and presents the herdsmen as the initiator of ethnic and revolutionist ideologies. He nominalises the verb, **attack** with the qualifying article, **the** in **the attack**. The decision to nominalise the verb is to further foreground the negative ideology about the herdsmen. The editor appeals to the emotion of readers through evidentiality, **Fulani herdsmen...in kwata Jos**. He does this by showing the examples of their actions in 2016 and the locations where the attacks took place. The use of **'no fewer than'** and **'reportedly killed'** are evidences that suggests that there were more casualties in the said attack. The editorial fronts the attack in the last sentence to foreground the heinous action of the herdsmen in the Local Government. The passivation in the last sentence of the excerpt as in **22 persons were reportedly killed** is an attempt to background Fulani herdsmen and make them less important in the discourse. **Fulani herdsmen** as the actor is expected to come first as the agent of the sentence but moved to the end of the sentence to background it. However, the contextual variables such as participants (Fulani and villagers such as Kwata local government of Plateau state and Agatu people of Benue state), and their roles (Fulani herdsmen as attacker and the villagers as sufferer) reveal the ideology in the discourse. The intention of the newspaper could be inferred from the persistent use of the word, **attack** and passivation which is used to present herdsmen as attackers. The excerpt below is an example.

Excerpt 3. ...herdsmen allegedly invaded, ... killing seven persons who were taking refuge in the church after being displaced by the raging herdsmen crisis in the area... “The attackers also burnt several houses and farmland...

*Vanguard* newspaper also aligns with other newspapers to describe herdsmen as attackers while reporting that herdsmen attacked another church in Benue state. In doing this, the reporter functionalised the action of the herdsmen through noun formation from the verb, **attack** to foreground the action as the actor. The reporter nominalised the verb through the addition of the suffix **-er**. The noun, **attacker** is activated by foregrounding it as the subject of the sentence. Lexicalisation is also used with words like **kill**, **invaded**, **refuge**, **burnt** and **displaced** to appeal to the emotions of readers and also foreground the negative effect of the attack and promote negative ideologies such as ethnic, and revolutionist. The reporter, however, distances him/herself from the assertion with the use of the qualifier, **suspect** to describe the herdsmen. This distances the reporter from the claim. The word, **suspect** is a suppression strategy by the reporter to distance him/herself from the truth or otherwise of the assertion and to also conceal the perceived ethnic group. The reporter also uses beneficialised to show that **the African Church** suffers from the actions of the herdsmen. This promotes religious ideology because it shows there are deliberate plan to suppress churches. The relative clause, **who were taking refuge in the church after being displaced by the raging herdsmen** helps to also appeal to the emotions of readers by showing the status of the sufferer of the attack. The attacked people are displaced and already taking refuge. Referential antecedent in **...the church after being displaced by the raging herdsmen...** is also shown here to further present herdsmen as attackers when the reporter referred to the fact that the people were initially displaced by the raging herdsmen. The premodification of herdsmen with the word, **raging** is a calculated attempt to foreground and label herdsmen as attackers. The intention of the newspaper is to promote ethnic and religious ideologies.

### **Herdsmen as destroyers**

Considering the result of the herdsmen’s actions, they are represented as destroyers in HFD. At the end of their activities, there is usually a report of damages and destruction

of properties of their host communities including farm produce. The following excerpt captures this.

Excerpt 4. Farmers and herdsmen conflicts remain the most disturbing breach of peace throughout the nation as the nomadic herdsmen ply their trade with reckless abandon, invading farmlands as they openly graze their herds of cattle, attacking and killing whoever would dare challenge their destructive activities. With blood, death and wreckage of crops in unrestricted grazing came the outcry from affected communities across the country.

[www.thevoicenewspaper.com](http://www.thevoicenewspaper.com).

*The Voice* in its editorial opinion praises the Southern governors that have embraced ranching and condemned open grazing. In this opinion, the newspaper describes herdsmen as destroyers. The reporter allocates the role of a destroyer to herdsmen through possessivation in, **their destructive activities**. Using the third person plural possessive pronoun, **their**, the reporter constructs the herdsmen as destroyers. They are described as the possessor of destruction with the use of **their** in **their destructive activities**. He further lexicalises this with the use of **breach, reckless, invading, graze, attacking, killing, death, wreckage, and outcry** to foreground the status of herdsmen negatively. The lexes portray herdsmen as destroyers and promoters of ethnic ideology. Generalisation is used by pluralising their activity (**activities**) to mean that everything they do is destructive. The use of the verbs, **attacking** and **killing**, is an indication that the activities of the herdsmen are progressive. The lexes **reckless** and **invading** are qualifiers used to describe herdsmen as destroyers. To further reveal that their actions constitute a threat to society, the editor uses, **whosoever dares challenge them will be attacked and killed**. One could infer from this that they are hostile and destructive. That one cannot challenge them also promotes resistance ideology which is in tandem with revolutionist ideology. The lexical choice of **attacking, killing, and destructive** also constructs the herdsmen as agent of ethnicity and revolution. The following excerpt is another example to buttress the representation.

Excerpt 5. Herdsmen forcefully and indiscriminately allowing their cattle to graze cultivated farmlands... .. killing, raping, destroying farmlands as well as sacking whole communities.

*Punch* newspaper in its editorial opinion condemns the activities of herdsmen in the country. In doing so, the newspaper refers to herdsmen as destroyers. The editor activates herdsmen as having strong power to force themselves over anybody or community they have contact with. Fulani is suppressed in this excerpt, as in ... **Herdsmen forcefully and indiscriminately allowing their cattle to graze...**, to background the tribe from the atrocity of herdsmen. This supports the claim that Fulani are not involved in the attack. The attempt to suppress them in this report saves their public self-image. That the herdsmen allowing their cattle to graze on farmland shows their destructive action is deliberate. This constructs the herdsmen negatively to society. The qualifiers, **forcefully** and **indiscriminately** help to foreground their role as destroyers. The editor further circumstantiates the herdsmen as the actor with the use of the phrase by destroying valuables. This helps to label them as **destroyers**. Overdetermination is also used to reveal their actions as capable of doing multiple things at the same time. This is done through lexicalisation by listing their actions such as **raping, killing destroying and sacking** of communities. These are evident of destruction. The use of evidentiality is employed to foreground their nefarious activities in the villages. The evidence of their actions includes **killing, raping and destroying**. These activities promote negative ideology as the herdsmen can be seen as agent of ethnic and religious destroyer.

*The Voice* and *Punch* newspapers reports and editorials are replete with evidence that herdsmen are destroyers. The representation is capable of generating different ideologies such as ethnic, religious, and political ideologies.

### **Herdsmen as a positive addition to the country**

In what looks like a contradiction to what other newspapers and other perspectives expressed by even the *Triumph* newspaper in other reports and editorial opinions, the newspaper (*Triumph*) describes herdsmen as a positive addition to Nigeria. The newspaper opines that the group has contributed and still contributing to national development in the country. The excerpt below captures this.

Excerpt 6. The Fulani herdsmen also have great Islamic and scientific scholars throughout history like Muhammad Ibn Muhammad Al-Fulani Al-Kishwani, an early 18th Century Fulani mathematician, astronomer, mystic, and astrologer from Katsina...

In this editorial opinion, the editor argues that Fulani herdsmen are not the problem of this country, but bad governance and insincerity. The editorial activates Fulani herdsmen as powerful agents in the country by fronting **Fulani herdsmen** in the report to foreground the tribe positively. In addition, the nominal choice of **Fulani** in the report promotes a positive ideology about the tribe. The newspaper opines that they (**Fulani herdsmen**) have been **great Islamic scholars** in the past. The use of the verb, **have**, helps to sustain this assertion that they have greatly contributed to the country. The newspaper foregrounds **Islam** by mentioning it first to appeal to the emotion of Muslims in the country. The editorial relies on shared knowledge that religion is a good instrument to demystify serious issues in the country. This promotes religious ideology. He, therefore, presents Islam before scientific to foreground the role of religion in the country. The editorial opinion further interpersonalises them (**Fulani**) through appraisal by listing what they have achieved in the past, such as being Mathematicians, astrologers and so on. This is done to background all the evil the newspaper must have reported about the herdsmen in the country. The editorial deliberately suppresses their role in the conflict by ignoring their activities with farmers. This is to also create the ethnic sentiment and appeal to Fulani emotions and other people to identify with them. This is capable of aggravating the conflict because farmers that have suffered constant attacks from them may not be happy with such report. This is in tandem with John's (2014) submission that media reports of herdsmen that background the destructive activities of herdsmen infuriates farmers and provoke their angers against the herdsmen. Suppressing herdsmen in the article distances Fulani from the activities of herdsmen and foregrounds their good deeds, especially as great Islamic scholars, astrologers, mathematicians and so on. Such representation also promotes ethnic ideology in the discourse.

## **Herdsmen as killers**

In HFD, herdsmen are also described as killers. This is premised on the report of loss of lives after their attack and invasion of communities and farmers on their farms. This is evident in the following excerpt.

Excerpt 7. So, what the issues? First, the issue of the Nigerian Cow and the herdsman are troubling Nigeria ... unsuspecting victims with blood, destitution, dislocations and death. As at today, no state can claim to be safe from these killer-herdsmen whom Government dutifully informs us are foreigners from Libya, Sudan and elsewhere. From the resolve and utterances of their superintendents.

[www.thevoicenewspaper.com](http://www.thevoicenewspaper.com)

In its editorial opinion, *The Voice* newspaper on the 5th of June 2020, asked a rhetorical question to foreground the menace of herdsmen and its consequences on the unity of the country. In the article, the newspaper repeatedly labels herdsmen as killers. The editorial identifies the herdsmen as a killer with the use of the demonstrative pronoun, these and functionalises herdsmen as **killers** with nominalisation of the verb, **kill** by adding the suffix –er to the verb, kill. Also, the newspaper manages the voice of the group by labeling them as killers. The newspaper suppresses the voice of the government that the killers are foreigners. Lexicalisation is further used to foreground the role of herdsmen as killers in words like sporadic **invasion, bloody war, armed, better coordinated, raiding, victims, blood, destitution, dislocation, and death**. The editorial lexicalises his opinion with war registers to appeal to the emotion of readers and support the argument that they are killers. The lexes reveal revolutionist and ethnic ideologies. Lexicalisation is deliberately used to reveal the ideology of the newspaper about the participants in the discourse. The choice of the lexes such as **better coordinated, better** and **armed** reveals that the herdsmen have godfathers who are using them for political, religious and ethnic agenda. The choice of words also reveals that the herdsmen are more powerful than their host communities in term of weapons and political influences. The writer selects the words to reveal that herdsmen attacks are instrument of ethnic cleansing, religious extermination and political domination. The representation therefore reveals ethnic, revolutionist, religious and political ideologies.

Excerpt 8. The institute said Fulani herdsmen murdered 847 people between January and November 2015. When the deaths caused by the herdsmen are added to those of Boko Haram, Nigeria, in 2015, became the third most terrorized...

*Punch* newspaper editorial calls on the federal government to treat herdsmen as terrorists. In doing this, the newspaper describes herdsmen as **killers**. The newspaper categorises herdsmen as killers through functionalisation which is realised with the addition of the suffix –er to the verb **kill**. This categorises them as killers through the use of words such as murdered, terrorizing. The editor foregrounds herdsmen as killers by premodifying the group, herdsmen with the nominalized verb, kill-er. The nominalisation allocates the role of killers to the group. The verb **murder** is used to buttress the claim that they are killers. It allocates the role of agent to the herdsmen. The newspaper suppresses the role of the herdsmen through relative expression, but the verb, caused allocates the role of killers to herdsmen. The writer also uses lexicalisation to foreground the role with words like **murdered, deaths, terrorized** and **killings** to further validate the representation. The choice of figures in the opinion is used to appeal to the emotions of readers. Nigeria is equated with Afghanistan and Iran because of the killings perpetrated by herdsmen. The writer disagrees with other opinions that insinuated that herdsmen are attacking in self-defense. This construction reveals that all the actions of herdsmen are deliberate. One can, therefore, infer from this that they have political, religious and ethnic agenda. These agenda help to understand the ideologies of the newspaper about the herdsmen's activities. The following excerpt is an example from Vanguard.

Excerpt 9. It will be recalled that suspected herdsmen killed three persons in Ugboha, on March 18, including a first year student of Ambrose Alli University, Ekpoma Collins Ojjeriakhi and two others. The killings prompted Governor Obaseki and the state Commissioner of Police, Babatunde Kokumo, to visit the village, while the governor gave security agents seven days to arrest the perpetrators.  
[www.vanguardngr.com](http://www.vanguardngr.com)

*Vanguard* newspaper reports that the youth in Edo state protested against the attack believed to be carried out by herdsmen in the state. In the report, the reporter described



herdsmen as killers. Herdsmen are activated as the actor in the report who perpetrate the action of killing. The verb, killed reveals the role of herdsmen as the actor. The verb assigns the role of killers to the herdsmen. With this role, herdsmen are seen as instruments of racism. Nominalisation is also used to foreground the role in the second sentence where article, **the** is used to qualify the gerundive noun, **killing**. The reporter also manages the voice of the state actor, the governor which condemns the activities of herdsmen by instructing the security to arrest them. The state apparatus used here by quoting the governor is to add value and importance to the statement. The statement is expected to be more powerful than any statement by any individual in the country. The reporter mentions the governor and the Commissioner of Police in the report to reveal the importance and the danger involved in the activities of herdsmen. This promotes negative ideologies about herdsmen. Although the voice of the governor suppresses the name of the ethnic group (**Fulani**) that is involved and distances the governor from mentioning the name, lexicalisation reveals that they are killers. With the use of **killed**, **killing** and **parade**, one can easily construct herdsmen as killers. The reporter, however, quotes the youth directly with the use of inverted coma to distance the reporter from the claim of the youth. That the youth are running out of patience reveals resistant ideology. The youth are definitely against and ready to resist the activities of the herdsmen. This reveals revolutionist and ethnic ideologies.

The three newspapers, out of four, explicitly label herdsmen as killers. Lexicalisation, activation, nomination, functionalisation, labeling, premodification, suppression, and demonstrative pronoun are used by the newspapers to foreground herdsmen as killers.

### **Herdsmen as foreigners**

Fulani herdsmen are believed to be law-abiding and know how to relate with people they have been living with for a long period of time. Consequently, it is generally believed that those that are killing, maiming and destroying properties are not from Nigeria but from foreign land. All the newspapers sampled describe them as foreigners. *Triumph* newspaper projects this representation mostly among the four sampled newspapers. The following excerpt captures this.

Excerpt 10. ...open grazing by foreign herders in this digital age and civilization, especially with its consequential disruptions to native populations and national stability.

In excerpt 10, *The Voice* newspaper editorial raises a critical question to reveal the dangerous consequence of herdsmen's action. Circumstantialisation is used to realise herdsmen as the agent practising open grazing, by foreign herders. This action of the herdsmen reveals that they are foreigners, hence the disobedience to Nigerian law. The newspaper refers to herdsmen as foreigner to protect *face* of the local herdsmen. The reference to the digital age and civilization is intended to label herdsmen as backwards and crude. It implicates that they are not moving in the direction of other civilised societies. The editor lexicalises the report with expressions such as **disruption** to native populations and national stability to show that they are foreigners. The implicature in the lexicalisation is that if the herders were not foreigners, they would have been obeying Nigerian laws. The mutual belief in the country is that herdsmen are majorly from the North. However, *The Voice's* representation contradicts the belief and foregrounds the claim that herdsmen are foreigners. The editor of *The Voice* newspaper, however, associates Northern politicians with herdsmen with the use of contrast and relative clause. The contrast, but shows that, the Northern politician is against anti-open grazing law. The relative clause helps to expatiate on the group that is in support of herdsmen and against anti-open grazing law. The representation discriminates the foreign herders who are alleged to be destroying properties and disrupting native population. This is capable of promoting ethnic and revolutionist ideology. The following extract from *Triumph* newspaper also buttresses the claim that herders are foreigners. The excerpt below supports this.

Excerpt 11. Also, the infiltration of **foreign** Fulani-herdsmen armed with sophisticated weapons has worsened the situation, making it difficult to differentiate between local herdsmen and **foreign** herders. ...the influx of **foreign** herdsmen into the nation's territory for obvious reasons.

In the opinion of *Triumph* newspaper, the newspaper again admits that local Fulani are not the problem of Nigeria. The newspaper, therefore, affirms that the Fulani herdsmen causing troubles are foreigners. The word foreign is repeated three times in the above

excerpt to foreground the claim that the herdsmen are not indigenous to Nigeria but migrants. The newspaper premodifies Fulani herdsmen with the word **Foreign (...foreign Fulani-herdsmen...)** to foreground the assertion that they are migrants and presents them to be criminalised. The newspaper presents them as criminal through lexicalisation with words such as **infiltration, armed,** and phrase such as **sophisticate weapon.** Lexical items such as **infiltration** and **influx** entail that they are illegal migrants from other countries to Nigeria. This description promotes ethnic ideology about the herdsmen, as they are so described to be condemned. The lexicalisation of the editorial opinion with words such as **foreign, influx, territory,** and **movement** validate the claim that the herdsmen that are killing, maiming and destroying properties are foreigners. The newspaper also manages the voice of the state governor and appraised his effort to foreground and condemn the influx of foreigners where he also premodifies herdsmen with foreigners. The newspaper positively appraises the governor for rejecting open grazing. The appraisal is intended to promote political ideology. This will boast the *face* of the state governor and present him positively. The reporter, however, excludes him/herself from the claim of the governor by using the third person singular pronoun, **he** instead of **we.** This distanced the reporter from the governor's claim that the herdsmen are foreigners. Another excerpt from the Punch buttress this, as presented below.

Excerpt 12. Similarly, the Chinua Achebe Centre for Leadership and Development (CACLD) also made some interesting findings. According to the centre, the killer-herdsmen are mostly non-Nigerians and mainly migrants from Chad, Niger, and other Fulani enclaves outside the country.

*Punch* newspaper reports the attack of herdsmen on villagers as deadly. In the report, the punch newspaper, like every other newspaper, projects the voice of CACLD to label herdsmen as foreigners. The newspaper nominates CALCD to attach importance to the statement as the centre is renowned for research and findings. The herdsmen are activated as the agent and the verb, **are,** is used to allocate the role of a foreigner to the herdsmen. The reporter uses prefixation, **non-** in **non-Nigeria** to decategorised herdsmen as Nigerian. The reporter abstracts the herdsmen away from Nigeria through lexicalisation such as **migrants,** and phrases such as, **other Fulani enclave, outside Nigeria.** These foreground their foreign status. The lexicalisation is also capable of promoting negative

ideology. The herdsmen are further interpersonated through negative appraisal as major actors and catalyst to recent conflicts in the Central African Republic. This interpersonal representation further projects the claim that they are not natives to Nigeria but trouble makers. The reporter also premodifies herdsmen with the word **killer** to label them negatively. Herdsmen are assimilated as migrants with plurality in the word migrants. To further promote ethnic ideology in the discourse, the newspaper suppresses Fulani but foregrounded herdsmen in the representations.

### **Herdsmen as threats**

To all the newspapers sampled, herdsmen constitute a serious threat to the security and unity of the country. Their actions and relations with their host communities support this claim as reported in the newspapers. Villagers are scared of living with them. Different agitations have grown because of their punctured relationship with farmers and villagers. The following excerpt captures the representation.

Excerpt 13. There is tension in several states over the activities of the herdsmen. Two weeks ago, some residents took over the Benin-Asaba Expressway in protest against Fulani herders, who had destroyed farmlands in 63 communities in Delta State and had killed Akaeze Ofulue... The herders have recently perpetrated similar crimes in Lagelu, Oyo State...

In the editorial opinion of the Punch newspaper, the editor demands that herdsmen should be treated as terrorists. The editor describes herdsmen as a threat to the unity of the country. The subject, **there** used to show that there is tension which constitutes as serious threat in the country as a result of the herdsmen's activities. The editor further possessivates herdsmen in the expression, **the activities of the herdsmen** as the initiator of the tension in activities of the herdsmen which is leading to fear and threat in the country. This activates the herdsmen as the agent causing tension. The editor also projects the voice of protesters against the activities of herdsmen. This foregrounds the fact that herders constitute threat to the country. The relative pronoun, **who** constructs herdsmen as threats by introducing their activities which is destruction of farm produces and killings. Herders are further activated as criminals in Oyo state. The verb, **have** links them to a similar crime. This also implicates

that they are habitually criminal in society. To foreground this further, the editor uses evidentiality by citing examples of bad things they have done, **Fulani herders, who had destroyed farmlands in 63 communities in Delta State and had killed Akaeze Ofulue**, to be labeled as threats. The lexis, **tension** also entails threat because readers will always attach negativity to herdsman. Nominal choices of **the Local Governments** and the frequent use of figures are used to appeal to the emotion of the people and also segregate against herders, especially in the States and Local Government mentioned. This is capable of promoting ethnic ideology and aggravating the conflict. the following excerpt also supports the representation.

Excerpt 14. ... the issue of threats posed by Fulani herdsmen.. that means Umuowa Ibu may be facing double tragedy.

*Vanguard* newspaper reports an attack believed to be carried out by herdsmen in Imo community. The attack was reported to have claimed several lives and properties. In reporting this, the reporter labels herdsmen as **threats** to the country. The excerpt opens with a conditional statement that obligates the Nigerian Police to take action against the herdsmen. The reporter uses circumstantialisation to indict and foreground herdsmen as threats to the country in in the phrase, **threats posed by Fulani herdsmen**. Using categorisation, the villages are identified as **Umuowa Ibu**, the name of their village. The nominal choice of the village is intended to show that the village does not belong to herders because the shared knowledge is that herders are mainly from the Northern part of the country. The villagers were activated as the sufferers of the action of the herdsmen. The phrase, **facing double tragedy**, appeals to the emotions of readers and criminalises herdsmen as threats to the country. **Facing tragedy** from herdsmen entails that herdsmen are **threats to Umuowa Ibu village**. The categorisation of villagers as Umuowa reveals that the community is at the mercy of the herdsmen. The phrase, **facing double tragedy**, also evokes antecedents and reveals that the villagers are suffering another 'attack' in the past. It shows that there are other tragedies being faced by the villagers. This presents the villagers as vulnerable to different attacks. It could, therefore, be inferred that they are not being protected by the concerned authority. The humanist, pacifist, egalitarian, and ethnic ideologies could be inferred from the construction of the village.

### **Herdsmen as terrorists**

The newspapers' reports construct herdsmen as insurgents. Herdsmen are fighting against the farmers and their host villages who dare to prevent them from grazing on crops. They make use of sophisticated weapons such as Ak47, force and violence to achieve their aims. This can be exemplified as follows from the selected newspapers.

Excerpt 15. Back in 2015, the Australian based Initiative for Economics and Peace (IEP), in its global terrorism index (GTI), identified Fulani herdsmen as the fourth deadliest global Terror Organisation, second to Boko–Haram, ISIS in Syria and Iraq and AL-SHABAB in Somalia.

*The Triumph* newspaper in this report chronicles the efforts of the governor of Gombe state to curb the menace of herdsmen-farmers' attack. The report also gives an account of herdsmen activities. The newspaper manages the voice of Initiative for Economics and Peace (IEP) that described herdsmen as terrorists by mentioning the name of the organisation. The nominal choice of the organisation is to attract influence and attach importance to the report. This is also to show that the labeling of herdsmen as terrorist is not limited to Nigeria and Nigerians. The newspaper mentioned the organisations name to show that herdsmen are fast growing to an international terrorist group. The intention is to criminalise the group and promote ethnic and revolutionist ideologies. The newspaper gives further evidence to label herdsmen as terrorist by lexicalising the report with words such as **deadliest, terror, Boko Haram, ISIS, Syria, Iraq** and **Al-shabab**. These lexicons are associated with terrorism. It foregrounds the claim that herdsmen are terrorists. The numeration gives status to herdsmen in the ranking order of terrorists across the globe. **Reference to 2015**, presupposes that herdsmen are not a new organisation that has been labeled as terrorists. Herdsmen are assimilated to terrorism through comparison to the deadly global groups such as ISIS and Al-Shabab. The intention of the reporter is to promote negative ideologies about herdsmen. The following excerpt is another instance.

Excerpt 16. ...the hostilities, wickedness and havoc being wreaked by herdsmen... with the poor handling of the menace and the audacity of the herdsmen, they could well be described as a new terrorist group distinct from the Boko Haram, Al-Shabab and ...other militant groups.

While reporting the deadly attack of herdsmen in the country, *Vanguard* newspaper aligns with other sampled newspapers to represent herdsmen as terrorists. The reporter passivises herdsmen as the agent of the major crisis confronting the nation. In ...the hostilities, wickedness and havoc being wreaked by herdsmen... the expression is passivised with the passivised verb **...being wreaked by herdsmen...** Passivation is adopted to background herdsmen as the actor, but the context of the discourse reveals the participant and their roles. The newspaper manages the voice of many people to represent herdsmen as terrorists. The reporter assimilates the people to background their identity through aggregation with the use of indefinite qualifiers, **many**, to describe the speakers. The reporter distances himself from the utterance with the reference to many people. To foreground the representation, the reporter lexicalises the report with terrorism registers such as **Boko haram, Al-shaba, ISIS, militant groups, deadly, havoc, wickedness, wreaked,** and **terrorists**. The reporter also projects this further through referencing. He refers to the report of the Global Terrorism Index of 2015 to lend credence to the claim that herdsmen are terrorists. The intention to mention the Global Terrorist Index is an attempt to foreground the activities as international terrorism. This also promotes revolutionist, ethnic, religious and political ideologies. With this type of representation, the group is perceived as anti-people and therefore contradicts pacifist belief. Another excerpt buttress the representation as follows.

Excerpt 17. Fulani herdsmen are the new face of terrorism in Nigeria. ...boasts sophisticated weapons, including AK-47, assault rifle... In their latest atrocity, ...leaving a bloody trail. ...the herdsmen killed 46 people, injuring several others.

Another instance from *Punch* editorial describes Fulani herdsmen as terrorists. The editor activates herdsmen as another (showing addition) terrorist. The use of the verb, **are** validates the claim that herdsmen are terrorists. Functionalisation is used when the reporter identifies terrorists' weapon with which they fight the government and society. Weapons

such as **Ak-47**, and **Rifles** are instruments used by terrorists. The editorial appraises herdsmen negatively by claiming that they have graduated from the use of bows and arrows. Possesivated functionlisation is also used to signify herdsmen as terrorists by ascribing atrocity to them in **their latest atrocity**. Evidentiality is employed to prove the claim that they are terrorists by citing villages where they have carried out their activities. The verb, **killed** assigns the role of agent to herdsmen in the extermination of **46** lives and injuries suffered by others. To appeal to the emotion of readers, the reporter uses an indefinite qualifier to describe others that were injured as in **several others**. Plurality is also used to present the result of their atrocity, houses and vehicles as numerous. The editor uses these choices to associate herdsmen with terrorism. The use of figure, **46 people**, list of weapons used, and nominal choice of the Local government where the attack occurred are used to create gruesome and deadly scene occasioned from the activities of the herdsmen. The representation promotes negative ideologies about the herdsmen. Ideologies such as terrorist, ethnic, revolutionist, and political run in the representation.

### **Herdsmen as armed men**

Herdsmen were known in the past with their bows and arrows to attack any dangerous animal that confronts them in the bush during grazing. Recent events have shown that they no longer carry bows and arrows but sophisticated weapons. This has motivated reporters to refer to them as armed men. The sampled newspapers project the assertion differently. The excerpt below captures the representation.

Excerpt 18 ...senseless attacks on people who have been forcibly evicted from their villages, fleeing violence perpetrated by armed herdsmen only to be stripped of safety again after they just found refuge elsewhere.

*The Voice* newspaper reports that the Speaker of Benue State House of Assembly condemns the activities of herdsmen in the state and Nigeria at large. In the report, the newspaper, like other newspapers sampled, constructs herdsmen as armed men. In excerpt 18, the newspaper passivises herdsmen as the agent of attacks and presents the villagers as the patient and sufferers of the actions of the herdsmen. The passivation is enabled with the use of passive structure, **violence perpetrated by armed herdsmen**. The agent is



backgrounded using a by phrase (**by armed herdsmen**). The reporter used premodification to associate herdsmen as armed men. The newspaper further foregrounds the suffering of the villagers with evidence that they have been sent out of their villages and are still being attacked at the IDP centres. Considering the ongoing activities (conflict) between the herdsmen and the villagers, it is not difficult to insinuate negativity in carrying arms. The reporter lexicalised the report with registers associated with armed people such as an **attack, force, violence, fleeing, stripped** and **refuge**. These lexicons aid the understanding that herdsmen are armed men. The reporter fronted the speaker in the report to attach importance to the statement. The construction promotes negative ideologies such as terrorist, revolutionary, ethnic against the herdsmen. The intention is to portray the herdsmen negatively and represent villagers positively.

Excerpt 19. ...callously exhibited by the spate of senseless killings of defenceless Agatu people by rampaging, fully armed, Fulani herdsmen in Benue State diminishes us as a nation, as a people.

Excerpt 19 also reflects the description of herdsmen as armed men. *Punch* reporter backgrounds herdsmen through passivation in the excerpt. Backgrounding is achieved with the use of the passivised verb, **exhibited by fully armed Fulani herdsmen**. The by-phrase in **by rampaging, fully armed, Fulani herdsmen**. Herdsmen are presented as less important in the report. However, the reporter allocates the role of agent to the **rampaging, fully armed, Fulani herdsmen** with the use of the verb killing. The reporter premodifies herdsmen with lexes such as **rampaging** and **armed** to portray them as armed men. To foreground the representation of herdsmen as armed men, the reporter lexicalised the report with words such as **killings, defenceless, rampaging, and armed**. Agatu people of Benue state are described as the victims who suffer the action of armed men. The Agatu people are described as **defenceless** to appeal to readers' emotions. The opening clause in the excerpt shows that herdsmen are armed as it categorised herdsmen as people who have no regard for human life, **callously exhibited by the spate of senseless killings**. The representation promotes ethnic, pacifist and humanist ideologies. The intention of the reporter is to present

herdsmen negatively because describing them as armed men would present them negatively to society. Excerpt 20 also captures the representation.

Excerpt 20. ...armed with AK-47 guns and cutlasses,... blocked ...Expressway, inflicting bullet wounds on five travellers. The herdsmen ...stormed the road shooting at random for over 30 minutes. Panic-stricken motorists travelling from Asaba were forced to speed off for refuge.  
[www.vanguardngr.com](http://www.vanguardngr.com)

*Vanguard* newspaper reports an attack carried out on motorists by herdsmen along Delta expressway. The reporter also agrees with other newspapers in labeling herdsmen as armed men. In excerpt 20, herdsmen are activated with the verb, armed, assigning the role of agent to herdsmen. The role of the agent portrays them as armed men. Functionalisation is achieved by identifying the instrument they are using to arm themselves, **Ak47 guns** and **cutlasses**. Plurality (**cutlasses**) is used to validate the use of weapons by herdsmen to arm themselves. The word **reportedly**, as used by the reporter, helps to distance the reporter from the truth or otherwise of the report. The reporter uses the word to detach himself from the source of the news. The verb, **blocked** is also used to assign the role of agent to the herdsmen. It is used to present the activities of herdsmen to the world and portraying them as evil. This further foregrounds the fact that they are armed because only armed personnel can easily block expressway and attack motorists. To validate the assertion that they are armed men, the reporter lexicalised the report with armed registers such as **guns**, **cutlasses**, **blocked**, **inflicting**, **bullets**, **wounds**, **stormed**, **shooting**, **panic-stricken**, and **forced**. These are evident that they are armed. The reporter also gives evidence of their activities such as **shooting**, **Inflicting bullet wounds**, and **blocked expressway**. This also supports the claim that they are armed men. Travelers are presented as the patient who suffers the action of herdsmen. The presentation also promotes ethnic ideology. This is seen in the deliberate mention of the Local Government involved.

Representing herdsmen as armed men creates inequality in society. The reporter manipulates readers to show that herdsmen have more access to arms and ammunition than other group in the society. Herdsmen are presented as more powerful with the use of sophisticated weapon. This is capable of promoting ideologies such as revolutionary, terrorist, humanist, and ethnic.

## **Herdsmen as militants**

Militants are people wishing to use strong or violent means to achieve political or social change. This is evident in the actions of herdsmen as reported in newspapers. The following excerpt explains further.

Excerpt 21. ...the security challenge confronting the state and quickly nip the disturbing trend in the bud. Recall Governor Ortom was attacked by suspected militia herdsmen at Tyomu village, ...

[www.thevoicenewspaper.com](http://www.thevoicenewspaper.com)

*The Voice* newspaper reports that Senator Moro, a Senator representing Benue state in the National Assembly, condemns the activities of the herdsmen on Governor Ortom of Benue state. In the report, the reporter labels herdsmen as **militants**. The reporter backgrounds herdsmen in the report through passivation in **attacked by suspected militia herdsmen**. The by-phrase **by suspect militia** backgrounds the actor. To further background the herdsmen, the reporter refers to them as **suspects**. This is to save the herdsmen's *face* in the society. The passivised phrase is used to present the actor as insignificant. However, the verb, **attack** assigned the role of agent to herdsmen. To validate herdsmen as militants, the reporter uses premodification to shed more light on the role and action of herdsmen. The reporter distances himself from the claim by using the word suspected to avoid the role of a 'judge' in criminalising the herdsmen. The role of the militant is validated through narration where the activities of the herdsmen are narrated. This entails that they must be fully armed and attempted to force the governor to do their will. The nominal choice of the governor in the report is to further present the herdsmen as militant. It promotes ethnic, revolutionist and political ideologies in the discourse. The following excerpt further explains this.

Excerpt 22. "There have been reports of a link between Boko Haram and Fulani militants, particularly in regard to smuggling and organised crime. However, unlike Boko Haram..., the Fulani militants have very localised goals..."

*Punch* newspaper reports the activities of herdsmen in Taraba state and condemns them. In the report, the reporter describes herdsmen as militants. The use of the word, **there**, by the newspaper signals the fact that the reporter does not want to reveal the source of his information. The word shows that there is no nominal antecedent. The report also compares Boko haram and herdsmen to show that herdsmen are militants. Boko Haram is an

internationally acclaimed militant group. Pairing herdsmen and Boko Haram foregrounds the claim that herdsmen are militant group. Fulani is post-modifier to foreground them as militants. To achieve this, the reporter drops herdsmen who should reveal their profession and replace it with militants to possessive Fulani as militants, **Fulani militants**. The comparison is done using their activities which include **smuggling** and **organised crime**. The reporter activated Fulani as active agent with the use of relational process as possessing local goals to achieve. Possession of local goals implicates ethnic and religious ideologies where people believe that the herdsmen attack has underline agenda. To achieve such agenda, a militia approach is required, hence the representation as militants.

Excerpt 23. Vanguard gathered from a source in the area that the victims... He said, “the militant herdsmen arrived Mondo settlement about 1am and started shooting sporadically at displaced persons who were asleep in the church which also has a primary school building.

[www.vanguardngr.com](http://www.vanguardngr.com)

*Vanguard* newspaper reports an attack by herdsmen on a church in Benue State. In the report, the reporter refers to herdsmen as militants. In excerpt 23, the reporter manages the source of the news with the use of an indefinite article with the source in a source in the area to detach himself from the source. Reported speech, **He said, “the militant herdsmen arrived Mondo settlement about** is used to authenticate the news directly from the eye-witness. The approach is to also distance the reporter from the source of the news. Like other sampled newspapers, *Vanguard* newspaper activates and premodifies herdsmen with the qualifier, **militant** to reveal their status. The verb, **arrived** reveals the action of the herdsmen and their determination to attack the village and impose their will on the villagers. The time of the attack is mentioned to associate their activity to militancy. The adjectival clause is introduced with the relative pronoun, **who** in **...who were asleep in the church...** to describe villagers as defenceless and victims of the activities of herdsmen. That they were sleeping as at the time of the herdsmen arrival shows they are not prepared. The last sentence suppresses the actor through passivation which deletes the actor. However, the verb, killed assigned the role of agent to the militant herdsmen. To further validate the claim that herdsmen are militant, the report is lexicalised with militant registers such as shooting, victims, displaced, and killed. These words help to induce readers and motivated them to

agree with the newspaper. The reporter further itemises the victims as women and children and people who were sleeping in the church to reveals their vulnerability and superiority of the herdsmen in term of weaponry. The representation promotes ethnic, terrorist, revolutionary and religious ideology. Activities of herdsmen as highlighted by the reporter revealed negative ideologies about the herdsmen.

### **Herdsmen as marauders**

Marauders are the people that move around to foment trouble. They are always ready to attack and cause trouble. This action is revealed in the media representation of herdsmen discourse. This is evident in the following example.

Excerpt 24. ...the fight against banditry, terrorism and other forms of criminality. “Hundreds of villages in Benue State had been sacked and thousands displaced by marauding herdsmen,... He admonished the people of the state to put politics aside and join hands with government...

Excerpt 25. ...the marauding herdsmen resorted to sacking the community after their entreaty to be allowed into the community.

From the sampled newspapers, two of them represent herdsmen as marauders. The Voice newspaper appeals to the emotion of readers and the society at large. The newspaper appeals to readers’ emotion by pointing to the role they needed to play to curb the menace and the need to fight against insecurity. This is to foreground the level of insecurity in the country resulting from the ‘marauding’ activities. The reporter distanced himself from the statement with the use of third-person pronoun, **He** to point to the speaker. Passivation is used through categorisation to allocate the role of actor to herdsmen. The use of passive sentence activated the villagers as in Benue state as victim, displaced **...by marauding herdsmen**. The passivation backgrounds the herdsmen and make them less important in the discourse. This is done to save their face and promote ethnic ideology as the herdsmen will be seen as enemy of the Benue people. The nominal choice of villages in **Benue State** is to appeal to emotion of readers. Villagers are presented as the patient who suffers the action of herdsmen. The villagers are foregrounded by putting them first in the sentence with figures, **hundreds** and **thousands** to appeal to the emotion of Nigerians and the entire world. The reporter manages the voice of the state Governor with the use of verb, **lamented** which reveals him as the speaker to express the concern of the governor about the implication of

the attack on food production. The third-person singular pronoun, **he** is used further to exclude the reporter from the statement. Another verb, **admonished** is used to manage the voice of the governor. The appeal by the governor to the people is to seek peace and this also promotes pacifist and humanist ideologies. Premodifying herdsmen with the word marauding means they are marauders. To validate this, the reporter lexicalises the report with words like **sacked**, **displaced** and **danger**. These are used to show that they are moving around to destroy (sack) and displace people from their homes. That the state is the food basket of the nation shows the negative effects of the marauding herdsmen. The reporter mentioned that to show how dangerous the activities of the herdsmen are to the entire country.

*Vanguard* newspaper in excerpt 25 also represents herdsmen as marauders with the use of premodification. Herdsmen are qualified as marauders to describe the herdsmen and manipulate readers' minds to perceive them as such. The reporter, however, detaches himself from the source of the news with the use of referential phrase, **according to...** They (herdsmen) have earlier requested to be allowed to the community, but they were rejected because of their previous activities. They later forced themselves on the community. The description constructs herdsmen as marauders who do not comply with societal norms. The choice of the word sacking promotes negative ideology against the herdsmen and foregrounds the terrorist ideology. In addition, the reporter states that the entreaty of the herdsmen to enter the community was turned down. They decided to attack the community because they were **rejected**. This is a resistance ideology insinuated by the villagers and promoted by the newspapers. The community rejected them and they also rejected the action of the community with force. The intention of this is to promote revolutionist ideology.

### **Herdsmen as invaders**

Invaders are people who entered another people's territory without permission and forcefully take what does not belong to them. The lexes such as seizure and invasion characterised the reports to present herdsmen as invaders, as exemplified in the following excerpts.

Excerpt 26. Many on the bandwagon are keen to place the welfare of the Fulani cow over and above the citizen who are a crop farmers (sic). They argue and rationalize the forceful seizure of ancestral lands from crop farmers for indiscriminate grazing by the Fulani of the whole world. Rt. Honourable Ahmed Idris Wase's vile move is significant.

[www.thevoicenewspaper.com](http://www.thevoicenewspaper.com)

*The Voice* newspaper reports the comments of an Honourable member of the House of Representative about the activities of herdsmen in Taraba and Benue states. The Honourable condemns the attacks and describes the herdsmen as invaders who forcefully take the ancestral home of crop framers. The verb, **seizure** allocates the role of agent as invader to Fulani. The choice of the nominal Fulani is to condemn the tribe. It foregrounds ethnic ideology in the discourse. Abstraction is used by the reporter with a qualifier, **cow** to present Fulani herdsmen as animals. The qualifier promotes humanist ideology. The reporter wants readers to infer that they are animals, and it projects the voice of the supporters of herdsmen through utterance autonomisation in **they argue and rationalise**. The reporter, however, conceals the identity of the speaker with the use of pronominal, they. To validate that herdsmen are invaders, the report is lexicalised with the use of **seizure, forceful, ancestral lands, and indiscriminate grazing**. The lexicalisation is relevant as it helps to manipulate readers' mind to agree that herdsmen are invaders. The representation promotes revolutionary, ethnic and humanist ideologies. The following excerpt also supports this representation.

Excerpt 27. As a result, available open land for grazing cattle is restricted due to constant encroachment of herdsmen and their cattle into farming land, which in recent years have been pitching farmers and herders at loggerheads, with fatal consequences in most cases across the nation. Also, the issue had and continued to generate heated debate between the protagonist and antagonists of open-grazing in the country. This is more so, because, the raging controversy is all about the incursion of herdsmen who have affinity with core-Northern states, against Southern communities, with their socio-cultural economic endeavours. That is obviously no longer tenable and relevant in this 21<sup>st</sup> Century

*Triumph* newspaper also agrees with other newspapers in representing herdsmen as invaders. The newspaper lexicalises its report with phrases like **constant encroachment** which entails that they are not invited. They only enter the farmlands as they like and graze on crops without permission. Possesivation is used to ascribe encroachment to herdsmen. The **of** in the expression **constant encroachment of herdsmen** ascribes the action to the herdsmen. Possesivation helps to understand the activities of herdsmen which reveals that they invade crop farms with impunity. The verb phrase, **have been** assigns the role of agent to herdsmen and farmers as rivals to foreground the consequence of the invasion. The lexis, **incursion** entails that herdsmen impose themselves on people and forcefully take what does not belong to them. Spatialisation is used to impersonalise herdsmen as Northerners and farmers as Southerners. This submission further buttresses the fact that herdsmen are from another region but moving around to claim, **by force**, what does not belong to them. The use of spatialisation and the phrasal verb promotes revolutionist and ethnic ideologies. There are insinuations that the Northerners and the political elites in the country have political and ethnic agenda to invade the country. The insinuation is also validated in the following excerpt.

Excerpt 28. While attacks by Fulani herdsmen on Benue communities continued unabated since the beginning of the year, some of the herders raided and killed about 55 villagers in Lau Local Government Area of Taraba State. The invasion reportedly began on January 6, 2018, with bodies of 25 victims so far recovered and given a mass burial. The Nation reported Governor Darius Ishaku as saying, “Herdsmen are killing people in Lau, my state”

In its editorial opinion, *Punch* newspaper enumerates five attacks by herdsmen that are critical and capable of affecting the unity of the nation. In the article, the editor describes herdsmen as invaders. Herdsmen are activated as the actor with verbs like **raided** and **killed** assigning the role of invaders to herdsmen to present them as offenders. The verbs promote negative ideology such as ethnic and revolutionist. Villagers are presented as victims who suffer from the activities of herdsmen. Circumstantialisation is used to allocate the role of invaders to Fulani herdsmen with the use of the verb, **attack** where Benue communities were presented as the victims of the herdsmen’s attack. Functionalisation is



also employed by the editor to categorise the herdsmen as invaders with a nominalised word, **invasion**. The word invade was nominalized with addition of suffix **-sion**. The editor manages the voice of the governor through a direct quotation from the Nation newspaper as in ...“**Herdsmen are killing people in Lau, my state**”... This helps the editor to detach himself from the source of the news. The use of evidentiality, where the editor mentions villages and the number of people affected, is a strategy to appeal to the emotion of readers and persuade them to agree that herdsmen usually encroach into farmers’ farms without permission. The choice of figures and dates creates gruesome and destructive activities of herdsmen through invasion. To validate the claim that herdsmen are invaders, the editor lexicalised the article with words like **attacks, raided, killed, victims, and mass burial**. This also promotes ideologies such as revolutionist, ethnic, and terrorist. The choice of words and other linguistic devices revealed the ideologies.

#### **Herdsmen as innocent citizens**

In all the sampled newspapers, *Triumph* is the only newspaper that presents herdsmen as innocent. The newspaper believes that herdsmen are also suffering from the poor security situation in the country. According to the newspaper, Fulani herdsmen are being accused of the offences without concrete evidences. In the following excerpts from the newspaper, we shall discuss the opinion of the newspaper.

Excerpt 29. Worst still, the Fulani herdsmen have been rightly or wrongly accused of all sort of atrocities, such as: raping, maiming; arson; robbery; kidnapping; destruction of farm produce and outright killing of inhabitants of rural communities.

Excerpt 30. Back home, due to the alleged inimical activities of Fulani herdsmen in the Western region of Nigeria, the governor of Ekiti State in particular, had banned open grazing in his state. This has generated heated debate and tension, especially between Northerners, sympathetic to the cause of the herdsmen and Southern elites who felt it was the right thing to do, to checkmate the activities of itinerant-nomadic herders for the safety of their citizens.

In its editorial opinion, *Triumph* newspaper projects and praises the Kano State Governor for his effort on his approach to curbing insecurity in the state. In appraising the state governor, the newspaper presents Fulani herdsmen as innocent. To achieve this, the

editor activates Fulani herdsmen as the victim, but suppresses the accuser of the herdsmen through passivation, in ... **the Fulani herdsmen have been rightly or wrongly accused**. The accused is known but the accuser is suppressed in the expression. The intention of this is to make readers infer that herdsmen are not guilty of everything said about them. The editor denies the involvement of herdsmen in the atrocities through lexicalisation in phrase such as **rightly or wrongly accused**. Fulani herdsmen are foregrounded in the expression to project their innocence whereas actors are suppressed. Backgrounding of the actor neutralises the claim that herdsmen are killers and invaders. The absence of an actor shows that the accusation is baseless as long as the accusation has no 'author'. The strategy promotes pacifist and humanist ideologies.

In another instance, *Triumph* newspaper disclaims the belief that herdsmen are **killers, invaders** and sources of conflict through lexicalisation. Words like **alleged inimical activities** help to neutralise the involvement of herdsmen in the accusations. The expression implicates that herdsmen are not involved in the 'non-provocative' attack reported in other newspapers. Also, the newspaper uses premodification to exonerate herdsmen from the accusations. The newspaper describes herdsmen as **itinerant-nomadic**. This description entails that they are innocently carrying out their legitimate duty. Ekiti State government is activated as one of the accusers of herdsmen. The editor polarises the country along two groups through objection to impersonalise herdsmen as representative of the North and farmers from the South. He describes the North as sympathisers of herdsmen and Southern elites as accusers of herdsmen to appeal to the emotion of the North. The attempt assimilates herdsmen to the North and excludes herdsmen from the South. It foregrounds the ethnic ideology.

By and large, the sampled newspapers use different strategies to variously present herdsmen as one of the social actors in the discourse. All the newspapers construct herdsmen as attackers, destroyers, killers, foreigners, threats, terrorists, armed men, militants and invaders. However, only *The Voice* and *Vanguard* describe them as marauders, while *Triumph* only represents herdsmen as innocents and positive addition to the country. The representation foregrounds the negative representation of herdsmen and therefore promotes ethnic, revolutionist, terrorist, religious, and political ideologies. These representations are capable of aggravating the conflict because competitive language is

used and according to Olekalns and Smith (2003), Competitive language leads to conflict aggravation. This is evident in the way the herdsmen are seen in southern Nigeria today. They are being rejected and rebuffed. The representation also polarises the society further along different beliefs, religious, ethnic, and profession lines. In the following paragraphs, we shall discuss newspaper representations of farmers/villagers as actors in HFD.

#### **4.1.2. Representation of the farmers**

Farmers/villagers are also significant actors in HFD. Farmers and villagers may be used interchangeably in this discourse because they constitute the host community to herdsmen. They are represented as victims, displaced people, and law-abiding/innocent.

##### **Farmers as displaced people**

Displaced people are people who are forced to leave their homes because of war or conflict. Special places are usually organised for them to leave temporarily for the war to subside. The following excerpt captures the representation.

Excerpt 31. Uba says he is horrified by the senseless attacks on people who have been forcibly evicted from their villages, fleeing violence perpetrated by armed herdsmen only to be stripped of safety again... ...in a statement said his principal strongly condemn the unprovoked attack on camps for internally displaced people.

[www.thevoicenewspaper.com](http://www.thevoicenewspaper.com)

*The Voice* newspaper reports an attack believed to have been carried out by Fulani herdsmen on villages in Benue state. In the report, the newspaper also reports that the Speaker of the House of Assembly in the state charges the people to defend themselves from the attackers. The statement, credited to the Speaker of the State House of Assembly, is significant in the discourse, considering the status of the Speaker. As the number three citizen in the state, whatever he says is taken seriously. This is because it is believed that he knows the implication of what he says. The reporter fronts the Speaker's name, **Uba**, in the report to foreground his importance and make readers believe the statement. The nominal choice of his name and the decision to front him in the report promote ethnic and political ideologies. This is because other people from his state would be comfortable to discriminate against the herdsmen.

In the report, the newspaper foregrounds the fact that the villagers/farmers are displaced and refugees in their communities. To achieve this, the reporter lexicalised the report with words such as **attacks, evicted, fleeing, armed herdsmen, stripped of safety, refuge** and **displaced**. This is done to appeal to the emotions of readers and present farmers/villagers as refugees. The reporter activates the farmers /villagers as active agent to foreground their vulnerability to the activities of herdsmen in the state. The verb, **found** assigns the role of agents to villagers/farmers. This role allocation also presents them to the entire world as refugees in their villages. Pronouns such as **their** and **they** refer to the villagers who have been stripped of safety. The pronouns distances the reporter from the villagers/farmers to show that he/she is not a member of the village, but the villagers are associated as victims to show the gruesome effects of the herdsmen activities. To be **stripped again after they have just found refuge elsewhere** implicates that they have been displaced before. The word, **again** in the expression is an evocation of antecedent to show that villagers are habitually victims of herdsmen attack. One can also infer from the lexicalisation of words such as **elsewhere** shows that they are not in their home communities. They have been sent out of their ancestral home. This may mean that the herdsmen have conquered them. This also promotes ethnic and terrorist ideologies because it shows that herdsmen have fulfilled their ethnic agenda as insinuated. **Unprovoked attack** on camps for internally displaced people also entails that they are refugees. Premodification is used to achieve the presentation of farmers/villagers as refugees. The people are qualified as **displaced** to describe their status in the discourse. The qualifier assimilates the people them as displaced people. To detach himself from the source of the news, the reporter uses reported speech indicator, **says**. He also refers to the Press Secretary of the Speaker to avoid being held responsible for the statement. The reporter successfully manages the voice of the speaker with the use of lexicalisation in words such as **say** and **said**. The following excerpt also buttress the argument.

Excerpt 32. The incessant attacks in Benue and other parts of the country suggest that the government is not placing adequate premium on the lives of Nigerians. ...the crux of the matter is the illegal grazing of farmlands..

[www.punchng.com](http://www.punchng.com)

*Punch* newspaper in its editorial opinion calls on the government to end various attacks believed to be perpetrated by herdsmen. In the article, *The Punch* newspaper describes the villagers/farmers as refugees. In the report, there is an emphasis on Benue State. The intention of the reporter to mention this is to show that the state is seriously under the attack of herdsmen. The reporter nominates **Benue** to show that there is ethnic agenda in the attack. This is because the attack concentrates on the state and one may begin to query the intention behind the concentration of the attack on the state. Ethnic and terrorist ideologies are obvious in the representation. Villagers (people) are presented as the victims that suffer as a result of the attack carried out by herdsmen. The verb, **attack**, allocates the role of victim to the villagers. The word, **refugees** is used to generalise farmers/villagers as victims with the use of plural noun **refugees** without adding article. van Leeuwen refers to this as generalisation of social actors as **refugees**. The writer further appeals to the emotion of readers with the use of possessivation in the phrase **their abode**. The possessive pronoun, **their** is used to ascribe the ownership of the community to the people. The editor uses negative appraisal to condemn the government as not doing what is expected of them to secure the lives of Nigerians. He validates this by claiming that what is causing the crisis open grazing is the concern of the government. This appraisal is used to challenge the government to be alive to their responsibility of securing the lives and properties of Nigerians. Presentation of farmers as refugees and herdsmen as attackers reveals power inequality. While farmers are victims, herdsmen are offenders. It reveals negative ideology about herdsmen. Ethnic, revolutionist, terrorist and humanitarian ideologies are obvious in the discourse. The excerpt below also agrees with the representation.

Excerpt 33. ...armed herdsmen stormed Omusu village and opened sporadic fire on the locals, killing and butchering anyone and anything they came across.” Among the first callers to the deserted community was Governor Samuel Ortom...

[www.vanguardngr.com](http://www.vanguardngr.com)

*Vanguard* newspaper reports activities of herders in some villages in Benue State. *Vanguard*'s reference to villagers as displaced people in the report could be inferred from the premodification used in the report to qualify the community. The reporter refers to the

community as deserted. This entails that before the governor arrives, the villagers have been displaced. To confirm that the action was carried out by herdsmen, the verb, stormed is used to activate herdsmen as the agent in the discourse. To further validate herdsmen as actors, the reporter lexicalises the report with words such as **armed, sporadic fire, killings, and butchering**. These words describe the action of herdsmen to reveal power inequality and assimilate them as the offenders. It shows the herdsmen are powerful than villagers because of their sophisticated weapons. The reporter manages the voice of the governor by quoting him directly and used of inverted commas to detach the reporter from the utterance. The reporter, therefore, mentions the name of the Governor, **Samuel Ortom** to attach importance to the statement. He appeals to the emotions of readers with expressions like **fight tears, fought back tears, rain terror on the people and bloody evening**. These expressions foreground victimhood of the villagers and represent herdsmen as attackers who create terror. The governor used interpersonal representation through positive appraisal by lamenting that his government has been doing much to stem the tide of the security situation. The governor also premodifies herdsmen as **killers** to negatively appraise them. The representation reveals that the villagers are forced out of their ancestral homes. It also reveals a deliberate attack on the villagers to conquer them. This representation promotes ethnic and terrorist ideologies.

### **Farmers as victims**

In HFD, farmers and villagers are referred to by all the sampled newspapers as victims of the attack believed to be carried out by herdsmen. The following excerpt captures the representation.

Excerpt 34. In the same month, suspected Fulani herdsmen also attacked  
..., killing at least 15 people... more than 40 persons were  
killed and several houses razed by the assailants.

*Punch* newspaper reports the number of lives presumed to have been terminated by both Boko Haram and herdsmen in Nigeria. In doing this, *The Punch* referred to villagers/farmers as victims. The reporter fronts the clause, **in the same month** to show that the villagers have suffered a previous attack from the herdsmen. In the report, as is the case in other newspapers, *The Punch* activated herdsmen as the actor and present **Dori** and

**Mesuma** villages as victims. The verb, **attacked** assigns the role of victim to the villagers to present them as victims and attracts sympathy from readers. The allocated role presents them as the sufferer of the action of the herdsmen. The reporter foregrounds the claim through lexicalisation, in expressions such as **killing at least 15 people, 40 persons were killed**. The use of figures is a piece of evidence to appeal to the emotions of readers and show the negative and horrible effects of the herdsmen's actions. In the second sentence of the excerpt, the actor is suppressed by nominalising their roles to replace the actor. ... **more than 40 persons were killed and several houses razed by the assailants**. The word, **assailants** is used to suppress herdsmen as the actor in the discourse. The setting of the discourse such as actors, their roles, shared knowledge about the discourse reveals the actor that is suppressed as herdsmen. The reporter also used passivized expression to background **assailants**. This is to make the actor less-important but foregrounds the victim. The voice of residents foregrounded by the report reveals that villagers/farmers are victims of the attack. The reporter distances himself from the truth or otherwise of the statement by managing the voice of the residents with the use of reported speech. The reported speech is indicated with ... **according to the police**. Presenting villagers as victim reveals that herdsmen care less about human lives. It also shows they are determined to conquer the people through killing of innocent citizens. The use of force to conquer the state is also obvious in the discourse. Consequently, revolutionist, terrorist, ethnic, and humanist ideologies are obvious in the representation.

Excerpt 35. Killers Suspected to be Fulani herdsmen at the weekend launched a fresh attack on Tiv communities at different locations in the southern senatorial district of Nasarawa state. The suspected killers were said to have carried out the attacks simultaneously... leaving about 32 killed and 19 others with severe gun and matchete injuries. At the time of this report, over 10,000 Tiv villagers are currently trapped in Obi Local Government Area following the coordinated attacks by the suspected herdsmen  
[www.thevoicenewspapers.com](http://www.thevoicenewspapers.com)

In the above excerpt, *The Voice* newspaper aligns with other newspapers to describe villagers/farmers as victims of herdsmen attack. The reporter activates herdsmen with the verb, **launched, making** herdsmen actor and Tiv communities the victim of the herdsmen

action. The reporter uses overdetermination to reveal their actions in two different places. This reveals how dangerous their actions are and the vulnerability of villagers. The reporter also itemises the number of people killed, **32 people killed**, to appeal to the emotions of readers and present villagers as victims. Herdsmen are nominalised as killers and activated as the agent in the discourse. **Awe, Keana, Obi and Doma Local Government areas** are represented as victims who suffered the action of herdsmen. To validate the fact that the villagers are victims, the reporter lexicalised the report with expressions such as **32 killed, 19 suffer severe gun and matchete injuries**, and **10,000 Tiv trapped**. The use of figures such as **32 killed, 19 suffer, 1000 trapped** is to show the horrible effect of the herdsmen's activity in the state. It also shows that herdsmen have more power and support than the villagers. The herdsmen using force to displace the villagers through their powers. These show terrorist and ethnic beliefs and assumptions about the herdsmen. The following excerpt also supports the representation.

Excerpt 36. ASP Dungus Abdulkarim, Police Public Relations Officer (PPRO), Yobe Police Command, Damaturu confirmed the incident in a statement made available to *The Triumph* in Damaturu, recently. According to him, Fulani herders invaded the farm lands of the said Garin Malam village and begun to graze on farm produce... He further explained that the herders stormed the community, razed down one house and burnt down some farm produce belonging to them.

[www.triumphnews.org](http://www.triumphnews.org).

*Triumph* newspaper also supports the claim that villagers/farmers are victims while reporting clashes in Nasarawa State. In the report, the newspaper manages the voice of the Police through the Police Public Relations Officer. The attempt was to legitimise the statement and detaches the reporter from the statement. The reporter activates herders as the actors with the use of verb **invaded** to allocate the role of patient to farmlands. This is to validate the victimhood status of the villagers. Activating Fulani herders as the actor who graze on the farm produce of the villagers present the farmers as victims. Activation is further employed by the reporter with the verb, **storm** allocating the role of actor to herders and community as victims. Overdetermination is seen in the role of razed and burnt farm produce. This is done to show the destructive nature of herders and the victimhood of



farmers/villagers. The reporter intentionally mentions Fulani in the report to foreground ethnic ideology. This is to foreground the claim that Fulani ethnic group in the country is planning to ‘**Fulanise**’ the country. The intention to mention Fulani also reveals power play. It is generally believed that the herders are perpetrating evil because the president of the country, **President Muhammadu Buhari**, is of Fulani extraction. Therefore, there are insinuations that herdsman attack has religious and ethnic agenda because participants shared the knowledge of the President’s religion and ethnic affiliation. *Triumph* reporter intentionally mentions Fulani to foreground the ethnic and religious ideology.

### **Farmers as law-abiding citizens**

The sampled newspapers, except *Triumph* describe farmers/villagers as law-abiding citizens considering their innocence in HFC. The following excerpts validate this.

Excerpt 37. ...the most pathetic part of the calamity that befell our people is the blatant manner in which the unprovoked attacks are carried out on the defenceless, innocent and law-abiding members of communities across the country...

In its editorial, *Punch* newspaper admonishes the government to find a lasting solution to herdsman attack on villagers. In the editorial, the editor describes farmers as law-abiding and innocent citizens. To achieve this, the editor uses premodification to describe members of the community. In doing this, the editor uses **innocent** and **law-abiding** as premodifiers to describe the community members. He also premodifies the action of the herdsman as unprovoked which further foregrounds villagers as innocent and herdsman as attacker. To strengthen the claim, the editor lexicalises his opinion with words such as **blatant**, **defenceless**, and **unprovoked**. The lexical items foreground the innocence of the villagers. To appeal to the emotions of readers, the editor describes the actions of herdsman as violence against humanity. Violence against humanity is a serious offence being perpetrated by herdsman against villagers. Farmers/villagers will be seen by readers as obedient citizens. That the attack is unprovoked shows that the villagers believe in peace and do not commit any evil against humanity. The unprovoked attack and ‘**no violence against humanity**’ promote pacifist and humanist ideologies. The reporter refers to villagers as defenceless to show that they are powerless and that herdsman are terrorising

them to achieve ethnic and political agenda since they are of the same extraction with the President. This also promotes ethnic, terrorist and political ideologies. This can be further explained with the following excerpt.

Excerpt 38. “So what was the basis to attack and kill innocent people who know nothing about your problem? How can the herdsmen justify the killing of an 11-year old girl, other children and the elderly over allegation that cattle were rustled? “Our people do not rustle cattle, it is herdsmen that rustle cattle, ...

[www.vanguardngr.com](http://www.vanguardngr.com)

In another report by *Vanguard* newspaper, the newspaper reports an attack carried out by herdsmen in Benue state. The attack claims lives of people including children and the aged. In reporting the attack, the newspaper describes the villagers as innocent. To achieve this, the reporter makes use of what van Leeuwen describes as premodification. He uses **innocent** in **innocent people** as a qualifier to premodify people. The report validates this with a relative clause, **who know nothing about your problem** to provide more evidence that the villagers are innocent by claiming that they know nothing about the problems of cattle rustling. The reporter uses possessivation to ascribe the problem to the herdsmen. This is achieved with the use of the possessive pronoun, **your**. This presentation also discriminates against the herdsmen by referring to them as **problematic**. Such discrimination promotes ethnic ideology. The editor uses abstraction to impersonalise the herdsmen by nominalising problem to refer to them. This is called impersonalisation by abstraction which is used to foreground the status of the actor with the intention of appraising the actor. A rhetorical question, **how can the herdsmen justify the killing of an 11-year old girl, other children and the elderly over allegation that cattle were rustled?** is also used to query the action of the herdsmen. This is used to attract the emotions of readers. We could infer from the excerpt that even the governor is not happy with the situation. The status of the government helps to appeal to the emotion of readers and foreground the gruesome actions of herdsmen. It also helps the governor to score political points. The reporter manages the voice of the Governor with the use of quotation marks. This is done to distance the reporter from the source of the statement. The governor is quoted to include him in the victimhood with the use of the pronoun **our** and also give a

vote of confidence in the people to present them as innocent when he said, **our people do not rustle cattle**. This further validates the innocence of villagers. Villagers are seen as lover of peace and respecer of human lives. This promotes pacifist and humanist ideologies.

Excerpt 39. “The speaker promised to continue to support any lawful move by Governor Samuel Ortom in permanently ending the senseless killing of innocent Benue farmers. “While calling on the government of Nigeria to step up the protection of innocent people, Hon. Uba says his deepest condolence goes to the families of the victims of this attack and wish the injured a speedy recovery even as he prays God to give Governor Samuel Ortom more courage to continue to stand firm on the path of truth and press on the federal government to do the right thing for the benefit of people of the state,” he said.

[www.thevoicenewspaper.ng](http://www.thevoicenewspaper.ng)

*The Voice* newspaper reports the opinions of the speaker of Benue State House of Assembly where he condemns the attack believed to be carried out by herdsmen in some Benue communities. The reporter describes the villagers and farmers as innocent. In the report, the reporter uses premodification to qualify Benue farmers. The participant, Hon **Uba** further premodifies the people with the word **innocent** to qualify villagers/farmers as **innocent**. The Speaker appeals to the citizens to be law abiding because he does not want chaos in the state and does not want lives to be terminated. This is a pacifist and humanist approach to the conflict. The reporter manages the voice of the Honourable with the use of reported speech to detach himself from the source of the news. The reporter lexicalises the report with words like **protection, innocent, condolences, victims, and injured** to validate the claim that farmers are innocent and appeal to the emotions of readers in favour of villagers/farmers. The report nominates the speaker’s name and the governor to show solidarity from the two prominent personalities in the state. It also shows readers that the government of the state is on the side of the citizens. Ethnic and pacifist ideologies are also obvious in the report.

The villagers/farmers are represented as law-abiding/innocent, victims, and displaced/refugees. The newspapers sampled are unanimous on the representation. van

Leeuwen's categorisation of social actor representation such as activation, premodification, possessivation, nomination, assimilation, categorisation, and impersonalisation are used to construct villagers as innocent, victims and law abiding citizens. The representation promotes pacifist, ethnic, and humanist ideologies in the discourse.

#### 4.1.3. Representation of MACBAN

Another prominent actor in the herdsmen discourse is MACBAN. MACBAN is a closed group that was formed to promote the welfare of Fulani pastoralists in Nigeria. The association also fights to protect and increase grazing areas in the country. It is devoted to protecting the interest and rights of members, including their constitutional rights to freedom of movement and ownership of private wealth. The association has not failed in performing its civic duty to its members as seen in their media representations. MACBAN is represented as killers and mouthpiece.

##### MACBAN as killers

As earlier mentioned, MACBAN is the umbrella body for cattle breeders in the country, especially those that are of Fulani extraction. In HFD, the association is described as killers. This is premised on their roles in the HFC. Three out of the four sampled newspapers labeled the association as killers. Only *Triumph* newspaper does not label the association as killers. The following excerpt captures the representation.

Excerpt 40. ...rampaging killer herdsmen, who might be planning to come into the State. Gov. ...the leaders of Miyetti Allah claiming responsibility for the deaths recorded in Benue State. "We have put everything in place to ensure safety of our people in the hands of the rampaging killer herdsmen.

In this report, *Vanguard* newspaper reports an attack believed to have been carried out by herdsmen in Ebonyi state and the reaction of the state governor. In the report, the newspaper uses lexicalization (**rampaging killer**) to appeal to readers' emotions. Utterance autonomisation is used to assign the role of killers to MACBAN. The verb, **claiming** helps to describe MACBAN as the speaker that accepts the role of killer of the deaths recorded in Benue. The reporter, however, distances himself from the source of the news by nominating the speaker. The status of the participants reveals

their roles in the discourse. The state governor is playing the role of a chief executive and protector of the citizens of the state while MACBAN is also defending their members. These roles reveal discrimination and power inequality. The repetition of **we** have put everything in place shows the power of the governor to access every resource required to protect the victims (**citizens**). This also gives political relevance to the governor as citizens will admire his courage and effort to speak against the dreaded herdsmen. In their claim to the death of innocent citizens, MACBAN is also resisting the effort of the state government to reject open grazing. The resistance from MACBAN and their claim to the death of innocent citizens reveal their determination to impose their belief on their host communities. The discrimination reveals ethnic ideology, while the resistance also reveals revolutionist ideology. The representation of MACBAN as killers also promotes terrorist ideology. Another evidence is seen in the following excerpt.

Excerpt 41. Just like in other cases, the Miyetti Allah Cattle Breeders Association, which has President Muhammadu Buhari as its grand patron, would usually give reasons why they carried out the attack. In the Benue case, Mr. Garus Gololo, Chairman, Benue State Miyetti Allah Cattle Breeders Association, was quoted as saying on the BBC: “We weren’t grazing. After the Benue government banned grazing, we were relocating to Taraba State through Nengere border town of Nasarawa State.”

[www.punchng.com](http://www.punchng.com)

*Punch* newspaper editorial opinion argues that the President will not do anything against the Fulani herdsmen as their patron. An inverted comma in “**We weren’t grazing. After the Benue government banned grazing, we were relocating to Taraba State through Nengere border town of Nasarawa State.**” is used as an instrument to ascribe the source of the piece of information to the Chairman of the association. The editor activates the association, **the Miyetti Allah Cattle Breeders Association** as an active agent in the discourse. The first person plural pronoun, **we** as used by the Chairman, includes the association in the act of retaliation and killing by the herdsmen. To indict President Buhari and show that the herders have more power to conquer the villagers, the editorial uses relative clause to describe him

as the leader of the association. This promotes ethnic ideology as the President is supporting herdsmen because they are of the same ethnic extraction. The editor foregrounds the regularity of the action of MACBAN as a serial killer with lexicalisation. The editorial is lexicalised with expression such as **just in like other cases** and **usually**. The lexicalisation evokes the antecedents of MACBAN. This shows the determination of the herdsmen to resist their host communities and possibly exterminate them and takeover their ancestral homes. Revolutionist and terrorist ideologies are obvious in the presentation. The Chairman of the association, however, makes effort to dissociate the association from fomenting trouble when the editor manages his voice by saying ‘**We weren’t grazing and we were relocating**’. This claim was neutralised with the claim that they are responsible for the killing with the use of pronominal, **we**, which included the chairman of the group. The retaliation also reveals resistance from the herdsmen. The following excerpt also supports the representation.

Excerpt 42. Leading Fulani umbrella bodies including the ‘twin brothers’ of Miyetti Allah Cattle Breeders Association of Nigeria (MACBAN) and Miyetti Allah Kautal Hore as well as GAN Allah Fulani Development Association have variously claimed responsibility for massacres across the country.

*The Voice* newspaper also describes MACBAN as killers in its report of the activities of herdsmen in the middle belt areas of Nigeria. The newspaper reports that the herdsmen are unabatedly killing innocent people in the middle belt of Nigeria. To achieve the representation of MACBAN, the reporter uses utterance autonomisation. The reporter assigns the role of killers to the group through their utterances and claims of the activities of herdsmen. MACBAN and its allied groups are quoted as accepting the killing across the country. With lexical items such as **claimed**, readers will infer that they are involved in the killing. The verb, **claimed** helps the reader to understand the speaker and helps to impersonalise the association with herdsmen who carried out the action to further represent MACBAN as killers. This implies that they are fully involved in the activities of herdsmen. The nominal choice of the associations, **Miyetti Allah Cattle Breeders Association of Nigeria (MACBAN)** is to inform readers that herdsmen are killers and by extension their associations that usually support their actions. The representation also shows resistance from

the herdsmen and its association. It also shows their superiority and determination to cleanse other ethnic groups in the country because they have the backing of their association and the government at the centre led by President Buhari who is also a member of the association. The representation promotes revolutionist, terrorist and ethnic ideologies.

### **MACBAN as mouthpiece**

MACBAN is presented as the mouthpiece of the herdsmen. The association usually defends the activities of members and protects them. All the newspapers sampled present the association as the mouthpiece of herdsmen. The following excerpt explains the representation.

Excerpt 43. It was gathered that the government was contacting relevant stakeholders towards ensuring peace. The *Triumph* learnt that MACBAN, a Fulani cultural organization, has also intervened to assist in this direction. The organization was at the centre of the peace dialogue between farmers and the herdsmen.

[www.triumphnews.org](http://www.triumphnews.org)

*Triumph* newspaper reports the effort of the government in maintaining peace between herdsmen and their host communities. The government invited the herdsmen and farmers/villagers to a peace meeting where they can present their opinions and look for a way forward. In reporting this, the newspaper presented MACBAN as the mouthpiece of herdsmen. MACBAN is functionalised as the mouthpiece of the herdsmen. This is achieved through the role they play in the peace meeting. The report claims that the association has intervened before the invitation. The newspaper states this to promote the pacifist ideology. With this, readers will submit that the association is a peace lover. We can also identify the use of aggregation to assimilate the group as the mouthpiece of the association. This can be seen in the use of an indefinite article, **a** with Fulani cultural organization, in **a Fulani cultural organization**. The reporter described the association as a Fulani social-cultural organisation. This entails that the association belongs to Fulani herdsmen. One can infer from this that they will always represent herdsmen. The choice of the nomenclature, Fulani cultural organisation is to appeal to the emotions of the Fulani ethnic group and thereby generate ethnic ideology in the discourse. The verbs, **has** and **was**, sustain MACBAN as the

mouthpieces of herdsmen as they represent the group at the peace meeting. The excerpt below is another instance from the Punch newspaper.

Excerpt 44. But when the new law was introduced last year, it was instantly condemned by the Miyetti Allah Cattle Breeders Association of Nigeria (MACBAN), ... who said it threatened their way of life.

*Punch* newspaper reports the clash between herdsmen and farmers in Benue state. The newspaper projects the role played by MACBAN in the activities between herdsmen and farmers. In doing this, the reporter uses utterance autonomisation to represent MACBAN with the use of the verb, **condemn**. The verb allocates the role of speaker to MACBAN. Their statement is in favour of the herdsmen. The word, **condemn** shows they are against the anti-open grazing law. The anti-open grazing law which was promulgated to curb the killing of human being by herdsmen during attack between them and their host communities. Yet, they are against the law. One can infer humanist ideology in their action which proposes that human beings are superior to other creature. The word **condemn** also implicates that they resist the law of the land. This is also a revolutionist ideology. The reporter chooses the word to promote humanist and revolutionist ideologies. The association spoke against the anti-open grazing law in the state. Through their utterance, they are represented as the mouthpiece of the association. The reporter describes MACBAN as the umbrella body of Fulani herders. This also shows that they act in the interest of herdsmen always. With the description, we could infer that they speak for herdsmen. The reporter further validates the said affiliation with herdsmen with the use of the relative clause, **who said it threatens**, which projects the utterance and associates them with herdsmen. Another verb, **said**, is used to describe them as the mouthpiece. The choice of the word **threatens**, also shows resistance. This resistance empowers herdsmen to reject state laws and terrorise their host communities. This also projects terrorist and revolutionist ideologies. The following is another excerpt that supports the representation.

Excerpt 45. ...the key stakeholders from both the endangered communities and Miyetti Allah, parent body of the Fulani herdsmen, should be physically present...

[www.vanguardnews.ng](http://www.vanguardnews.ng)



There was also an attack by herdsmen in Imo state communities as reported by the Vanguard newspaper. *Vanguard* newspaper reports it, and the efforts of the state government to settle the conflict. All stakeholders are invited to the peace meeting, according to the newspaper. The reporter uses postmodification in **Miyetti Allah, parent body of the Fulani herdsmen** to present the MACBAN as the representative of herdsmen. The community which is assimilated as the villagers through aggregation, using an indefinite adjective, **some** also describes the association as a stakeholder. This also assimilates the association through collectivism. Collectivism is achieved by referring to herdsmen as **parent body**. In the report, we could infer that the association is also standing up for herdsmen. This is made obvious through lexicalisation in words such as a stakeholder and parent body. The choice of these linguistic devices to present MACBAN as the mouthpiece is to further create ethnic ideology as participants have background knowledge that MACBAN is a Northern association with northern agenda. The shared knowledge of participants about the association validates and promotes ethnic ideology.

In HFC, MACBAN plays significant role as the umbrella body of herdsmen. This is seen through different representations given to the association in newspapers. The association is represented as killers and mouthpieces of herdsmen by other social actors in the discourse and projected by the selected newspapers. Activation, postmodification, utterance autonomisation, and functionalisation are used to represent the association. The representations promote such ideologies as revolutionist, humanist, ethnic, terrorist, and pacifist.

#### **4.1.4 Representations of religious leaders**

HFC has aggravated different insinuations and suspicions towards different groups within the country. Lately, herders' activities have also affected religious groups and their leaders. Religious centres such as churches are being attacked, and this insinuates religious agenda. Religious associations and their leaders are, therefore, involved and represented as social actors in the discourse. Religious groups and their leaders are represented as victims and agents of peace.

#### **Religious leaders as victims**

Religious groups and leaders are represented as victims of herdsmen attacks. This is because religious centres also suffer attacks from the herdsmen. Members of congregations are attacked and displaced. The following are evident in the selected newspapers.

Excerpt 46. Again, the governor specifically called on the Federal Government to arrest these gentlemen to avert this calamity. No action was taken. Rather, another deadly attack was carried out on the Catholic Church in a sleepy community in the state in April 2018.

[www.thevoicenewspaper.ng](http://www.thevoicenewspaper.ng)

In its editorial opinion, *The Voice* newspaper advises the Federal Government to heed the suggestion of the Benue State governor to arrest the leaders of MACBAN which is the umbrella body for Fulani herdsmen. The governor announces earlier that arresting the leaders of the association would ameliorate the attack because the association supports herdsmen's atrocity. In the editorial, the editor informs readers about the gravity of the attack, and the previous effort of the Benue State governor to curb the attack. In this report, the editor nominates the governor to show the seriousness of the attack. That the state government has informed the Federal Government and the Federal Government is being alleged of treating the menace of herdsmen with *kid-gloves* because herdsmen are of the President's ethnic extraction. This promotes ethnic ideology. The editor activates the governor as an active agent in the discourse. The word, **again** evokes the antecedent of the governor, and the statement which entails that the statement has been made in the past to prevent reoccurrence of the attack. The evocation of antecedent shows a repeated attack on the state by the herdsmen. This is similar to a terrorist attack. One can, therefore, infer a terrorist ideology from the representation.

The religious group involved in this case is the **Catholic Church** which was attacked and members were killed. They are represented as victims of the attack. To achieve this, the actor uses what van Leeuwen called nomination and categorisation. The use of proper noun and identity is employed to nominate the church and some members of the church. The editor nominates the church by its name **Catholic Church** and the priests, **Rev Fr. Joseph Gor and Rev. Fr. Felix Tyoloha**. This is done to represent them as victims. The church and its members are passivated as the beneficiary of the herdsmen's attack using the verb, **murdered** to describe them as victims. To appeal to the emotion of other Christians, the

editor reveals that they are in the church observing their religious rites when the attackers emerge and attack. The presentation shows there is a deliberate attack on the church, perhaps, because they do not believe in the church activities. This also promotes some assumptions about religion. It is also capable of creating inter-religious bigotry in the country. The actor manages the voice of the governor to detach himself from the call to arrest the leadership of MACBAN by nominalising the governor. The call to arrest the leadership of MACBAN further condemns the association and its member as the culprit in the discourse. This further validates the fact that the religious group is the victim of the attack because out of the two participants, the governor requests that one should be arrested. This implicates that the second participant is the victim. In addition, vanguard newspaper support the representation in the excerpt below.

Excerpt 47. He said: “In the morning of Tuesday, April 24, while some Christian faithful were gathered at St. Ignatius Catholic Church in Ayar town in Gwer East Local Government Area, “They opened fire indiscriminately on the worshippers, resulting in the death of two reverend fathers, a catechist, and 17 others.

[www.vanguardnews.ng](http://www.vanguardnews.ng)

Like other newspapers sampled, *Vanguard* newspaper also describes religious groups as victims of the attack. In this report, *Vanguard* newspaper reports an attack that occurs in Benue and Nassarawa states and the oversight role of the Nigeria National Assembly. The excerpt starts with a reported speech signal, **He said: “In the morning of Tuesday**, to authenticate the news with an eyewitness report. In the report, the newspaper assimilates Christians as victims using indefinite article, **some** to qualify Christian faithful. The verb, **were** describes Christians as active participants in the discourse and inform readers about what Christians were doing at the time of the attack. This is done to show that the Christians did not have any intention of fighting the herdsmen. It validates the claim that the herdsmen attack is unprovoked and has ethnic and religious agenda. It also presents Christians as innocent who are **unaware of the attack**. Christians were passivated as the beneficiary of the attack carried out by the herdsmen with the passivized verb, **were ambushed**. To present the church as the victim of the action, the editor lexicalises his opinion with words and phrases such as **Christian faithful, were ambushed, worshippers, death of reverend fathers** and **attack on worship centres**. Lexicalisation is

also engaged to present herdsmen as the attacker. Expression such as **gunmen believed to be herdsmen** validate the claim that they are attackers. Figures of affected people are also revealed to portray the gruesome effect of the herdsmen's actions and appeal to the emotions of readers. Ethnic and terrorist ideologies can be inferred from the discourse.

### **Religious leaders as agents of peace**

Based on their interventions and roles in HFC, religious leaders are represented as agents of peace in the discourse. The sampled newspapers use different linguistic items and strategies to achieve such representation. This is evident in the following excerpts:

Excerpt 48. Also speaking, the Imam of Otukpo Central Mosque, Alhaji Umaro Zuberu, applauded the development, saying the move will help to bring the herder-farmer crisis to an end. On his own part, the Coordinator, Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN), in Benue South, The Very Reverend Frederick Onoja, said the resolution to outlaw open grazing is a welcome development.

[www.thevoicesnewspapers.ng](http://www.thevoicesnewspapers.ng)

In this report, the two religious leaders (Islam and Christianity) are nominated to attach importance to their words. *The Voice* newspaper activates the Imam as the active agents of peace who appraise the efforts of the state government in curbing the conflict. The appraisal shows that the Imam agrees with the efforts. The intention of the reporter to nominate the Imam is to make his Muslim followers believe the news and follow his example. This is because the reporter understands the relationship between Imams and their followers. The reporter manages the voice of the Imam with the use of the third person pronoun, **he** which co-refers to the Imam. Utterance autonomisation in **applauded the development**, saying the move will help to **bring the herder-farmer is also used to represent him as an agent of peace**. Utterance autonomisation is used when a social actor is represented through his/her statement in discourse. From his quoted speech, readers will easily infer that the Imam is a peace lover. This will further allow his followers to believe the statement. It promotes pacifist ideology. He advises the governor to sustain the effort. This implicates that the Imam prefers peace to conflict. It can further be inferred that he is tired of conflict. Being the head of a religious group, he also contributes to peace-building

through his advice to the state actor. The coordinator of the Christian Association of Nigeria in Benue South is also represented as an agent of peace. The coordinator's role in the discourse is known through utterance autonomisation. By supporting the effort of the government through his speech, it implicates that the coordinator is also an agent of peace and wants his followers to also embrace peace. This representation foregrounds the role of religious leaders in society. They are expected to be agents of peace, and this is what they have demonstrated.

#### 4.1.6. **Representation of government**

Government is the constituted authority that is saddled with the responsibility of protecting lives and properties and maintaining peace and harmony in society. The government may be seen through the executives, judiciary or legislature. It may also be seen through government agents or representatives such as the police, the president and so on. In this discourse, we see the government through the executives, the president and its ministers. We also see the government through her agents such as the security agents, the welfare officers and so on. The government is also represented by members of the parliament and state governors.

The role of the government in conflict situations is to mediate between the warring parties. The government is expected to impose rules and regulations in society to ensure sanity and prevent chaos. When the government plays its roles genuinely, crisis would be properly managed. However, whenever the government is seen to be indifferent or biased in managing a crisis, the crisis may escalate. The government is represented differently in the discourse. The following representations are identified in HFD: government as a weak institution, government as pretender, government as law enforcer, and government as biased.

#### **Government as weak institution**

In HFD, some participants believe that the security network of the government is weak, and this explains why it is difficult to curb the security challenges in the country. This is premised on the way the security situation is handled by the concerned agencies. It is believed that when the agency is weak, it is a reflection of government weakness at large. In the following excerpts from the sampled newspapers, we shall discuss how the newspapers represent the government.

Excerpt 49. The attacks, once again, confirm the weak security system in the country. What is the use of intelligence gathering? But despite the promise of the security chiefs to prevent the attacks, they didn't do so. This is tragic.

[www.punchng.com](http://www.punchng.com)

In excerpt 49, *The Punch* newspaper samples people's opinions concerning the effort of the government in tackling the herdsmen menace. While some applaud the efforts, others condemn the government. In the report, *The Punch* uses different linguistic elements to present the government as a weak institution. The reporter premodifies security with the qualifier **weak**. This description presents to readers the status of the security system in the country. To further validate this, the reporter uses a rhetorical question, **What is the use of intelligence gathering?** to present intelligence which is a veritable instrument that security agents usually use to curb security challenges. The question is asked to undermine the lack of intelligence within the security apparatus and foreground the weakness of the government. To sustain the belief that the government is weak, the reporter activates the governor of the state as an active agent that has made effort to prevent the attack. The reporter also nominates all the security agents by itemising their offices, and this reflects the strength that should prevent the attack. The choice of the nomination reveals power struggle between the herders and the government. This presentation promotes terrorist ideology because the herdsmen are competing with the strength of the government in the society. When this happens, it creates fear in citizens who may not trust the strength of the government to protect them from the menace of the herdsmen. One of the traits of terrorists is to cause fear in the society and make citizens lose trust in their government (Ogungbemi, 2018). This is to show that despite the number expected, the attacks still occur. The contrast, **but** shows that the security system is weak because they have every piece of information required to prevent the situation, yet they failed. The presentation reveals why the attack persists. Security agents failed to utilise intelligent report for lack of weaponry or human capacity. These reveal that the government is weak. Below is another excerpt that supports the representation.

Excerpt 50. I want to call on my people to defend themselves against such impunity... Security agents are behaving as if they are being overwhelmed by the development. They have to live up to the expectation of the people.” Stay away, Umahi tells herdsmen.

*Vanguard* newspaper reports the attack by herdsmen in Ebonyi state. The reporter starts managing the voice of the state governor by quoting his speech in **Stay away, Umahi tells herdsmen (Umahi is the governor of Ebonyi state)** to show the level of vulnerability of citizens and the frustration of the governor. This is a reflection of the weakness of the government. The governor is presented as the speaker with the verb **call** allocating the role of agent. The governor informed citizens to defend themselves. Doing this means transferring the responsibility of the government to citizens which may lead to anarchy. However, still maintaining the role of speaker, the governor contradicts his statement with the use of the contrasting word, **but**, to warn the citizens not to take laws into their own hands. The security agents are activated as an active agent in the HFD to condemn them for not acting appropriately. The security agents are activated as agents that are weak and suppressed by insecurity. This reveals that the herdsmen has conquered the security agents in the state and promotes terrorist ideology about the herdsmen. They possess more power than the government agent. The reporter manages the voice of the state governor by calling on the security to be more active. This presupposes that they have not been doing enough to secure citizens. Readers will easily infer that citizens are not secure because of the weakness of security agents. The reporter nominates the government to show his frustration in the face of the attack carried out by the herdsmen in the state. Maintaining the role of speaker allocated by the verb, **tells** the governor orders the herdsmen to stay away. The governor gives the order to exercise his power as the chief security officer. The order implicates that the state has been under the siege of the herdsmen. The reporter uses reported speech and an inverted comma to manage the voice of the governor and detaches himself from the source of the news. The voice of the governor is managed to show the frustration of the state to readers and tell the readers how unsecure the citizens are in the face of the herdsmen attack.

### **Government as pretender**

While discussing HFD, some Nigerians believe that the government is a pretender. The government says something and does something else. This has promoted the belief that the presidency is supporting the herdsmen's attack. *The Punch* newspaper report is characterised with evidence to support the claim that Nigerian government pretends. The following excerpt captures this representation.

Excerpt 51. The President should not pretend otherwise, as his predecessors in office did, looking the other way and allowing the herdsmen to overrun defenceless farmers. Sadly, it is the same official pretence that allowed the Boko Haram insurgency to metamorphose into a deadly terror. What we see here is a disarticulated police force.

<https://punchng.com/treating-violent-fulani-herdsmen-terrorists/>

*The Punch* newspaper reports herdsmen attack in Nassarawa state of Nigeria. In the report, the newspaper represents the government as a pretender, considering the previous promises and the responses of the government to the situation. The President is activated as an active agent in the discourse. The negator, **not** entails that the government is known for pretence. The verb, **pretend** helps to describe the president as a pretender. Referring to his predecessors as in **as his predecessors in office did**, is an evocation of antecedent that points to what has happened in the past. The reporter refers to **Boko Haram** to appeal to the sensitivity of readers and compel them to attach serious importance to the menace of herdsmen. Lexicalisation is used in the report to promote the belief that the government is a pretender. The use of **pretence**, **discard**, **pacifist** and **disarticulated** lexicalise the report and validate the claim that the government is a pretender. The word, **pretend**, is first used as a verb and later nominalized, **pretence** to foreground the claim. The nominalisation helps to understand the intention of the reporter. Such nominalisation emphasises the claim that the government is weak. Police are premodified as **disarticulated** to describe them as powerless because they are not equipped. The promodification shows that the government is pretending because they fail to equip the agent that is saddled with the responsibility of curbing the situation. Yet, they claim to be fighting the menace. The choice of the reporter to nominate President Buhari is to promote ethnic ideology. Readers rely on shared knowledge that Buhari is of Fulani extraction, hence his decision to pretend to be handling



the herdsmen crisis. With the nomination, we could infer that the President is deliberately handling the herdsmen attack with *kid-gloves* to exterminate other ethnic groups in the country. The lexis criminal is used to show that the government is not expected to be treating the herdsmen with *kid-gloves*, but with all seriousness as they did to other agitators in the country.

### **Government as law enforcer**

One of the major responsibilities of government is to make law and enforce it. Enforcing law involves arresting and punishing any lawbreaker. In this discourse, government agencies are seen carrying out this civic responsibility at the state and local levels but not federal. The following captures this representation.

Excerpt 52. Livestock Guards in Benue State have arrested two cattle rustlers, Mr Atsagba Ukua and his son for rustling six cows from herdsmen. ...the suspects were arrested on their way to ..., Makurdi to sell the rustled cows.

<https://thevoicenewspaper.ng/livestock-guards-arrest-cattle-rustlers-teenage-herder/>

*The Voice* newspaper reports the effort of the government in curbing the menace of herdsmen in Benue state. In reporting this, the reporter describes the government as a law enforcer. The Benue State government has an agency, **Livestock Guards**, that regulates the activities of people rearing livestock in the state. The agency is saddled with the responsibility of maintaining law and order in the sector. The report activates the agency, **Livestock Guards** in this report as an active agent that is actively performing her duties as expected. The verb, **arrested** helps to describe the role of the agency in the state. **Cattle rustlers** are assigned the role of victim to show them as culprits and beneficiary of the action of the government agencies. The rustlers are nominated to represent them as culprits and confirm the role of government as law enforcer. The reporter succeeds in doing this by nominating the rustler as **Mr Atsagba Ukua**. The reporter manages the voice of the speaker with the use of reported speech. The reporter detaches himself from the truth or otherwise of the claim that the people rustle cattle by managing the voice of participants in the discourse and the use of the lexis suspect. Rustlers are passivated to foreground their actions that compel the government to arrest them. The passivation is enabled with the use of passivised

verb, **were arrested**. The verb, **arrest** is repeated twice to emphasise the claim that the government is a law enforcer. Special adviser to the governor on security matters is nominated to show that the government of the state is ‘working’. This would help the governor of the state to score political points because he belongs to the opposition party in the country. We could interpret this based on shared knowledge of his movement from the ruling party to the opposition party because he claims that the government at the centre is biased in dealing with herdsmen. Herdsmen are killing in the state with the aim to exterminate his ethnic group for the herdsmen to graze. In this representation, political and ethnic ideologies are obvious. The following also supports this.

Excerpt 53. Governor, Samuel Ortom, has moved to sign the Anti-Open Grazing Bill into law. It is chiefly aimed at curbing killings and destruction of farmlands... He has also given an ultimatum to herdsmen to either ranch their livestock or leave the state. The law is an improvement on an earlier version promulgated in Ekiti State’

<https://punchng.com/herdsmen-attacks-benue-law-offers-sensible-model/>

*The Punch* newspaper reports that the Benue State Governor makes effort to curb the menace of herdsmen by signing the anti-open grazing bill into law. To represent the government as a law enforcer, the reporter uses activation and nomination. The state governor is activated as the active agent in the discourse who is ‘performing the action’ of enforcing anti-open grazing law through anti-open grazing bill. To foreground the performer of the action, the reporter nominates the **governor** by mentioning his name, **Samuel Ortom**. The nomination is intended to reveal the state apparatus in the activities against the herdsmen attack. The reporter appeals to the emotion of readers to support the need for the enforcement of the law through lexicalisation. Words such as **herdsmen carnage, chiefly aimed to curb killing, destruction of farmlands** are used to appeal to the emotion of readers. The action (signing of the bill) is pronominalised to avoid monotony in the report, but the shared knowledge about killings by herdsmen revealed the meaning of the pronominalisation. The statement emphasises the importance of the action of the governor as it helps to secure more lives and properties in the state. He also pronominalises the agent (the governor) as he to also foreground his presence. Giving an ultimatum implicates that the governor uses his executive power to enforce the law in the state to curb the menace of

herdsmen. The enforcement is not limited to the state. The reporter reveals this through evidentiality. This is done by referring to the same action in other states such as Ekiti state. This is to legitimise the enforcement in the state. To further foreground the importance of the enforcement, the reporter lexicalises herdsmen's actions with negative registers such as suspicion, tension, devastation, and reprisal. The two states involved take the protection of lives and properties seriously.

### **Government as biased institution**

To an average Nigerian, especially those that are not from Fulani extraction, the government at the federal level is not objective in dealing with the menace of herdsmen. Nigerians believe that the government is biased in dealing with herdsmen and other security challenges. This is seen in the way the president and security agents address the security situations. The newspapers have therefore presented the government as biased. Three of the newspapers sampled agree that the federal government is biased in dealing with the menace of herdsmen. The following excerpts will shed more light on this claim.

Excerpt 54. Another area that the Federal Government should be mindful of is the way and manner it deploys security apparatus to tackle threats to peace. Such interventions should not be seen as lopsided, biased and selective.  
<https://punchng.com/ending-deadly-herdsmen-attacks/>

In this report, the Federal government is activated as the agent that needs to be mindful of how they manage the security apparatus in the country. The reporter nominates the federal government to differentiate between the levels of the government that is expected to be mindful. The statement is directed at the Federal government and not the other levels of government. The differentiation between the levels of government is relevant because of the insinuations that the Federal government is not handling the herdsmen as they handle other agitators in the country. The tier of the government is nominated as **the Federal Government** to emphasise the tier of government that is involved. While other agitators with genuine claims are being proscribed, the Federal government is describing herdsmen attack as a mere conflict. This is because the herdsmen are of the same ethnic extraction with the President. The representation promotes ethnic ideology as people believe that President Buhari is discriminating against other ethnic

groups in the country. One could infer from the report that the government has been tackling security situation but not objectively as expected. The expression, **be mindful of the way and manner it deploys security apparatus reveals bias in deploying security apparatus** supports the claim. To further validate this claim, the reporter lexicalises the report with registers that reflect subjectivity, such as, **lopsided, biased** and **selective**. The reporter affirms that the government is biased with the use of negator, **not**. The intention of the reporter to nominate other agitators such as **IPOB, Niger delta** and **Boko haram** is to affirm that the Federal government is biased. The reporter nominates other agitators that attract security attention and indicates what the government has done to them, but used the negator to show that the government has not done so to the herdsmen. The intention is to show that the Federal government is supporting the herdsmen indirectly because of their affiliation with the President. To show how dangerous the herdsmen are, the reporter uses premodification for their description. He describes Fulani herdsmen as **rampaging** Fulani herdsmen. The choice of the nominal Fulani is to further relate the herdsmen to the Fulani ethnic group. To show the horrible effects of the Fulani's attacks and appeal to the emotions of readers, the reporter describes their activities as **excess**. Despite the danger that the actions of herdsmen portends, the reporter insinuates that the Federal government is handling them with *kid-gloves*. This promotes ethnic ideology. Another excerpt that supports this is seen below.

Excerpt 55. There is no way a government can approach the scale of security challenges we are facing with double standards and expect to win. All hands are not on deck. Nigerians who feel unjustly treated by this regime feel alienated. Apart from their feeling of injustice, the perception that the Federal Government is not pursuing a pan-Nigerian agenda, but an ethnic one, cannot promote a united effort, even among those in the armed forces and security agencies. The "bandits" and armed herdsmen are terrorists. They must be officially declared for what they are, and dealt with in the language they understand.

<https://www.vanguardngr.com/2021/07/double-standard-approach-to-dealing-with-insecurity/>

*Vanguard* newspaper's editorial opinion insinuates that the Federal government is approaching the menace of herdsmen attack with double standard. The editor presents the

government as being biased in dealing with security situations in the country. The newspaper opines that double standard dealing is the major obstacle to curbing security challenges in the country. To affirm this, the subject **there** which has no antecedent is used to allow readers to understand the focus and direction of the argument. The choice of the word **there** is to show empty promises in dealing with herdsmen. Lexicalisation is also used to validate the claim. The editor selects words and phrases like **double standard, unjustly treated, alienated, injustice, and not pursuing pan-Nigeria**. Nigerians are assimilated through aggregation as Nigerian to present them as one body. The relative clause is used to insinuate that other ethnic groups are being cheated to satisfy the herdsmen agenda. The choice of the word **alienated** implicates subjectivity by the Federal government. Negators (**no, not, and but**) and morphemes (prefix **un-** and **in-**) implicate that the Federal government is against other ethnic groups in the country. The intention of the repeated use of the negator is to foreground the government as biased in dealing with herdsmen and foreground terrorist ideology. This repetition reveals that the government is ‘one sided’ in handling different forms of security situations differently. The Federal government is also activated as an active agent that is not pursuing objective agenda for ‘one Nigeria’. The activation further promotes the government’s subjectivity. *Vanguard* newspaper describes the government as biased towards other ethnic groups using negator. Federal government is also nominated to show the affiliation of the President with Fulani ethnic group. The intention of the reporter is to construct ethnic ideology. The following excerpt further discuss this.

Excerpt 56. TPG (Tiv Professional Group) urged President Muhamadu Buhari, who is also a life patron of MACBAN, to take an unambiguous stance on the murderous activities of Fulani herdsmen. ...the President must be boldly patriotic and should also be seen to be faithful to the letters of the oath of allegiance and oath of office he took

<https://thevoicenewspaper.ng/attack-on-ortom-group-wants-fg-to-proscribe-armed-herdsmen/>

*The Voice* newspaper reports the attack on the Benue State governor and the position of a group known as Tiv Professional Group (TPG). The governor was attacked by armed men believed to be herdsmen. In the report, the reporter accuses the Federal

government led by President Buhari of being biased in dealing with herdsmen. The reporter starts by associating the President with MACBAN, an umbrella body for Fulani herdsmen with the use of a relative clause. The relative clause is used to describe the President as the ‘father’ of the association to clear all doubt about their relationship and foreground the reason for the ‘one-sided’ action of the presidency in dealing with the herdsmen. The association is realised through circumstantial of accompaniment to MACBAN by President Buhari. This entails that the President will be biased in favour of MACBAN and its members, Fulani herdsmen. The reporter premodifies stance with unambiguous to implicate that the President does not show a clear position on the case of herdsmen. The group calls on the President to take a bold patriotic position and respect the Constitution he swore to. This implicates that the President has not been patriotic. The reporter intends to compel readers to infer that the Federal government under President Buhari is biased towards the menace of herdsmen attack. Lexicalisation is also adopted to promote the assumption with words like **urge**, **patron** of MACBAN, **unambiguous stance**, **patriotic**, **faithful**, **allegiance** and **wilfully abdicating**. The lexicalisation portrays the Federal government as being in support of herdsmen actions. The negator, **not** as used in the excerpt also implicates that the President deliberately jettisoned the constitution to suit his purpose. This construction of the Federal government as biased reveals that the Federal government is biased to suit the president’s ethnic group. This foregrounds ethnic ideology.

This section x-rays different representations of social actors in the herdsmen discourse in Nigerian newspapers. The actors include the herdsmen, the farmer/villagers, the Miyetti Allah Cattle Breeder Association of Nigeria (MACBAN), religious leaders/groups, and the government. They are allocated different roles in the discourse. Both negative and positive representations are used to condemn the action of the herdsmen. Governments and other social actors are also represented both negatively and positively to promote different ideologies. The representation shows the ability of newspapers to set agenda for people and control what they discuss. Social actors in HFC are polarising the country because ethnic, religious and political biases are easily noticed in the representations. The newspapers reflect their biases and prejudices in their representations. However, they converged at some points in representing herdsmen negatively. Different

linguistic instruments are also used to represent the actor to society. The representations of social actors align with van Leeuwen approach's to social actors' representation.

## 4.2. Discourse strategies

Discourse strategies are used in HFD to achieve communicative goals. It is typical of the media to use discourse strategies to represent social actors or negotiate meaning. The strategies are used to negotiate ideologies in discourse. This section discusses different discourse strategies used by the selected newspapers to project social actors' ideologies that are used to control the minds of readers and society at large.

### 4.2.1. Passivisation

This is a process employed by discussants to achieve a significant purpose of suppressing or backgrounding actors or actions. In HFD, social actors employ passivisation to ensure that other actors involved is either deleted or made less important. This action is achieved through the use of passivised verb. Passive verbs are used with the main verb of the sentence. They are referred to as linking verbs when performing such function. Passive verbs are formed with the past participle form of the verb which is headed by 'to be' or other verbs of its form.

For example, **Fulani herdsmen killed 15 villagers in Gwer local government of Benue State**. The attackers also burnt several houses and farmland, as we speak the entire area has been deserted.

This is an active sentence.

We can passivise this statement as follow,

**15 Villagers were killed in Gwer local government of Benue State**. The attackers also burnt several houses and farmland, as we speak the entire area has been deserted.

In the passivised form, we import the appropriate participle be form of a verb (were) to assist the main verb (kill) while we suppress the actor in the sentence.

The actor may be backgrounded as follows.

**15 Villagers were killed by herdsmen in Gwer local government of Benue State.** The attackers also burnt several houses and farmland, as we speak the entire area has been deserted.

In this example, the actor is not suppressed but backgrounded because we can still identify the culprit. Through the passivised verb, passivisation is enabled especially when the subject (actor) is made irrelevant or backgrounded. Media employ this strategy while reporting news to achieve certain ideologies. Amer (2013) states that journalists adopt Passivisation to deemphasis responsibilities and agency of the actor. The following paragraphs shall discuss this with data from the sampled newspapers.

Excerpt 57. Residents of Garin Malam Community, Jakusko Local Government Area of Yobe State were thrown into pandemonium when some herdsmen allegedly invaded their farmlands with their livestock resulting in bloody clash leading to the death of one person.

<http://triumphnews.org/farmers-herders-clash-over-land-invasion/>

In its editorial opinion, *Triumph* newspaper opines that the reason for the crisis that occurs between the two groups (herdsmen and farmers) is land invasion. In the editorial, the newspaper traces the origin of the problem and makes effort to proffer solution to the menace. The author narrates the experience of the residents of Garin Malam Community, Jakusko Local Government Area of Yobe State, but backgrounds the agent that causes the experiences the villagers have. To background the agent, the author uses the passivised verb to background the actor. The active sentence should have been.

Herders threw residents of Garin Malam Community, Jakusko Local Government Area of Yobe State in to pandemonium ...

Instead of

Residents of Garin Malam Community, Jakusko Local Government Area of Yobe State were thrown into pandemonium...



The active form would have easily revealed the actor and made the actor more relevant, but the writer decides to background the actor with the use of passivised verb, were thrown. The sentence is, therefore, passivised and the actor is backgrounded while the sufferer (villagers) is fronted to save the *face* of the actor and win sympathy for the sufferer. The sufferer (villagers) is fronted and made more important than the actor. The newspaper backgrounds the actor to save their *face* in the discourse. This makes herders less important to support the assumption that herders are not the perpetrator of the attack. This action supports the claim that the attackers are foreigners and not herdsmen. The actor is presented as less important by fronting the beneficiary of their action. However, readers are able to identify the actor through shared knowledge. It is in the public domain that herders are attacking farmers on their farm. The actor is activated as the active agent that causes the pandemonium through passivation. The activation also helps to identify the real actor even when it is backgrounded by the writer. The following excerpts capture this.

Excerpt 58. ...were forced to speed off. ...those wounded were travelling along the road when they were hit by bullets, adding that the driver of the vehicle was also attacked

<https://www.vanguardngr.com/2018/04/herdsmen-attack-motorists-delta-injure-5/>

Excerpt 59. ...the area that the victims who were mostly women and children were all killed in their sleep. “Seven people were confirmed killed...

<https://www.vanguardngr.com/2018/04/herdsmen-attack-motorists-delta-injure-5/>

The following passivised verbs, **were forced**, **was attacked**, **were killed** were used by Vanguard newspaper to suppress the actor in the discourse. The agent that forced **travellers**, **attacked**, and **killed** in excerpts 58 and 59 are not known to readers. The original statement should reveal the actor such as,

...  $\phi$  Forced Panic-stricken motorists travelling from Asaba were forced to speed off for refuge at Umuachi-Ogo community

...  $\phi$  attacked the driver along Asaba road with sophisticated weapons

ϕ killed the victims on their farms while the herdsmen were grazing with their cattle.

... ϕ killed seven people in an attack between the herdsmen and farmers in a community in Nassarawa state on Nigeria.

<https://www.vanguardngr.com/2018/04/herdsmen-attack-motorists-delta-injure->  
The main verbs used in the above sentences require a subject which is the agent, but the subjects are deleted with the use of passivised structures. It is difficult to identify the subject because it is deleted in the passivised sentences. The nullity sign in the sentences above shows the subjects are not known. This is a concealment strategy which prevents readers from knowing the identity of the actor. The victim (sufferer) and the action performed are foregrounded. This reveals the significance of the victim and the action of the actor. The victims are foregrounded to appeal to the emotions of readers. The context of the discourse and the shared knowledge between the participants reveal the actor to readers, but the reporter suppresses the actor(s) to save their public self-image and possible jungle justice. Passivation is also used to detach the reporter from holding a particular person or tribe responsible for the crime. The suppression will hinder the effort of the security agents as they may not know where, who and what to investigate. Women and children including other villagers/farmers and travellers are nominated to reveal their identity and present them as victims of the action. This foregrounds the representation of farmers/villagers as victims. This is captured in excerpt 60 below.

Excerpt 60. Eighty people have been killed in Benue State...

<https://www.vanguardngr.com/2018/04/herdsmen-attack-another-benue-church-kill-seven-idps/>

Excerpts 60 is an instance of the herdsmen attack in Benue state of Nigeria. The passivised verb, have been killed is used to suppress the actor. The actor is suppressed to foreground the action and the victim.

... ϕ have killed eighty people in Benue State since December 31

The verb, killed allocates the role of the victim to eighty people. It requires actor to be able to allocate grammatical roles. However, the actor is not known through the use of

passivised verb, have been killed. This strategy is used to *save* the actor's *face* and make it insignificant in the discourse. The readers may be worried as to why the *face* of the agent has to be *saved*, but with the knowledge of the context, it is clear that this strategy is adopted to *save* the tribal name that is involved in the attack. This will reduce the level of discrimination against the tribe in society. The strategy favours the pacifist ideology, as it will not encourage discrimination among the people. However, it may encourage ethnic ideology because the tribes invaded and killed feel marginalised.

The above are some of the shreds of evidence where actors are suppressed and backgrounded through passivation. Passivised verbs such as were killed, were, thrown, were attacked, were forced, have been killed are used to background and suppress the actors in the discourse. While the actions and the patients (sufferers) are known, the actors are largely suppressed. This approach foregrounds the victimhood of farmers/villagers and the weakness of the government. It is capable of promoting pacifist and ethnic ideologies. This aligns with Amer (2013) who states that Passivisation helps journalists to manipulate and mystify the responsibility and agency of the warring parties. With the strategy, reporters in the sampled newspapers are able to mystify agencies in the discourse.

#### 4.2.2. **Presupposition**

Presupposition could be interpreted to mean the knowledge which a speaker or writer does not expressly state, but presumes as part of the background knowledge of the discourse which is known by readers/hearers. Hudson (2000: 321) explains that a presupposition is the information that the speaker presumed to be true which enact other information in a sentence. In HFD in Nigerian newspapers, the presupposition is used strategically to negotiate meaning. The understanding of this is based on the background knowledge of readers. This also helps to background some information and make them less important to readers. In what follows, we shall explore different instances of presupposition from the selected newspapers.

Excerpt 61. In one of the cases we handled..., the cattle owners agreed  
to pay damages...

<https://www.vanguardngr.com/2018/04/herdsmen-attacks-double-tragedy-imo-community/>

*Vanguard* newspaper reports the activities of a local government Chairman in Imo state. The Chairman narrates his intervention in curbing the menace of herdsmen attacks in the local government. Cattle owners are activated as the active agent who has agreed to pay compensation. The verb, agreed, allocates the role of actor to the cattle owners. It could be inferred from the excerpt that there are several actions of damage. As revealed in the report, the culprits are known and they have agreed to pay damages. The clause, '**In one of the cases,**' reveals that the actions are many. This is activated to foreground the importance of the expression and the word, case is pluralised to generalise the action. It shows that the action is not a mistake, but deliberate with planned agenda. We could also infer from the statement that there are many cases of conflicts the Chairman has been managing. This reveals the role of the Chairman as a peace lover. Pacifist ideology could be inferred from the role of the Chairman. We could also infer from the statement that all herders are not cattle owners. This is why the statement says, the cattle owners agreed... the presupposition also supports the assumption that one cannot generalise and criminalise all herders. One could also infer that there are other occasions that cattle owners refuse to pay damages. This could be inferred from the agreement of these cattle owners to pay damages this time. This is also good as it helps to sustain peace. In addition, we could infer that there are damages which may not be caused by herdsmen but by other miscreants. When the reporter states that ... damages caused by the herdsmen. It shows there are damages not caused by herdsmen. The presupposition is used to conceal certain facts about the herdsmen and their relationship with their host communities. It shows there are efforts being made by villagers and government functionaries to curb the conflict as seen in the roles of the Chairman. The presupposition also reveals that all the criminal activities may not be caused by the herdsmen. These assumptions are not always good in conflict situation as people would not endure to interpret the assumptions, but jump into conclusion and consequently aggravate the conflict.

The excerpt foregrounds ethnic and religious ideologies. The constant and continuous attack on the state may compel one to believe the ethnic and religious cleansing/invasion agenda. However, the interpretation of the presupposition reveals pacifist and humanist ideology which may not be known without the background

knowledge and proper examination of the statement. The following excerpt explains further.

Excerpt 62. **There** must never be a time when the majority should pay for the crimes of a few members of their group. It is unjust and uncivilized. With the menace of the Fulani herdsmen ravaging farmlands and crops of fellow Nigerians, one may be tempted to classify all Fulani as hostile and irrational people but that would be a grossly false narrative.

[www.triumphnews.ng](http://www.triumphnews.ng)

*Triumph* newspaper reports the attack of herdsmen in Nassarawa state, and laments the negative effect of the attack on food production and the relationship between the herdsmen and farmers/villagers. The newspaper further condemns the insinuation that the attack is orchestrated by Fulani ethnic group. It opines that it is possible to have some miscreants among the Fulani herdsmen, but it would be unfair to generalise the assertion. The word, **there**, is used as the subject to deliberately neutralise the claim that the attack is carried out by Fulani because the pronoun, **there** has no antecedent. Readers rely on the shared knowledge to interpret the intention of the reporter because there is no antecedent that the subject refers to. The reporter wants readers to agree with him, but does not state that directly. He lexicalises the report with words such as unjust, uncivilised, classify false narrative to refute the claim that herdsmen are the attackers. This lexicalisation helps to affirm the fact that herdsmen are not criminals. One could infer from the above excerpt that innocent people are punished for the offence they do not commit. The intention of the writer is to appeal to the society that not all Fulani are miscreants. The excerpt presupposes that few among Fulani are criminals. One could also infer that criminals are among Fulani herdsmen who terrorise their host communities. This is to protect the *face* of the herdsmen and prevent ethnic ideology about them, but promote pacifist ideology. We could also infer humanist ideology about the race as the report insinuates that some Fulani are humane and not criminals. Their innocence could be inferred from **it is unjust and uncivilised to punish majority for the 'crime' of few**. Another presupposition from the excerpt is that, those that commit crime must be punished rather than crucifying all members of the race. It can be inferred from majority should not pay for the crimes of a few members of their group. This presupposes that those that commit crimes must be punished. However, they must be

identified rather than assuming that every member of the race is a culprit. This demystifies the criminalisation of herdsmen. Every attack on farmers and villagers are believed to be carried out by herdsmen. This generalised assumption criminalises and discriminates.

The expression, **one may be tempted to classify all Fulani as hostile and irrational** also presupposes that some people have been blaming Fulani herdsmen for the attack. However, we could also infer from the expression that some Fulani are accommodating and friendly. This is to exonerate the entire Fulani race from the repeated attack on farmers and villagers. One could infer from this that the reporter does not want people to hate or discriminate against Fulani ethnic group. Such discrimination, if allowed, may lead to ethnic conflict. This promotes ethnic and pacifist ideologies. Finally, we could also infer that Fulani ethnic group cannot be totally exonerated from the hostility that is leading to constant attack on their host communities as we can infer from the excerpt that the minority perpetrating crime are still Fulani and not other tribes in the country. This could be inferred from **one may be tempted to classify all Fulani as hostile and irrational people but that would be a grossly false narrative**. This implies that not all but few Fulani are hostile. This shared knowledge presents Fulani negatively and promotes terrorist and ethnic ideologies because of their hostilities to their host communities and subsequent attacks.

Excerpt 63. After this attack, Governor Ortom in another letter in late January 2018... Husaini Yusuf Bosso, who had vowed at a world press conference in Abuja, that, “More blood will be shed in the state if the Anti-Open Grazing Law”. ...“the cattle colony is the only solution to the crises.” Again, the governor specifically called on the Federal Government to arrest these gentlemen to avert this calamity.

<https://thevoicenewspaper.ng/if-only-they-would-listen-to-ortom/>

In its editorial opinion, *The Voice* newspaper opines that if the Federal government had listened to the advice given by the Benue State Governor to arrest leaders of MACBAN, the herdsmen/farmers conflict would have ended. The author states that the attack by herdsmen is unabated because the government does not listen to advice. The governor laments the unabated conflict in his state and Nigeria at large. To validate that the conflict is unabated, the reporter lexicalises the report with words such as **more, again and another**. In the expression, “More blood will be shed in the state if the Anti-Open Grazing

Law”, the word **more** presupposes that it is not the first time blood is shed in the state. It has become a routine. This mirrors the activities of the terrorists. One could also infer that the governor condemns the statement of the leader of MACBAN with the use of the lexis **re-called**. This shows that the governor is always worried about the situation, but the Federal government always neglects the call from the governor. This supports the insinuation that the Federal government ignores the menace of herdsmen because they are of the same tribe with the president. It is a discrimination against other tribes in the country. To inform the readers that the governor is not just telling the Federal government to address the issue, the report uses the word **again**. This word presupposes that the governor reiterates the statement without response from the Federal government. The word **another** is also used so that readers would know that it is not the first attack on innocent Nigerians by herdsmen. The intention of the reporter to use the phrase **sleepy community** is to inform readers that the community is innocent and not active when the Fulani herdsmen attacked. One could infer from this that the herdsmen invaded the village. This foregrounds the newspaper’s representations of farmers/villagers as victims, innocents and displaced and the herdsmen as invaders, killers, marauders. It also foregrounds the representation of MACBAN as mouthpieces of herdsmen and government as weak, bias and pretender. We could also infer from the excerpt that the cause of the attack is the anti-open grazing law. This reflects in **if the Anti-Open Grazing Law introduced was not completely scrapped**. It presupposes that the herdsmen are against the law. We could also infer from that that they are above the law because they resist it and attack the villagers, and yet, no arrest is made.

The representations, therefore, strengthen ethnic and religious ideologies. The ethnic ideology is strengthened by the belief that the President is of Fulani extraction which informs the reason they are not arrested. In addition, the constant attack on churches, which can be inferred from the use of **another**, promotes religious ideology as the herdsmen have not been reported to have attacked Mosques or shrines. Revolutionist ideology is also obvious in their resistance to the state law. Shared knowledge about the HFC helps to understand what is meant, but not said in the discourse. It also helps to negotiate and understand different representations in the discourse.

#### 4.2.3. Labelling

Labeling is a way in which the media name or give identity to social actors and events in discourse. Depending on the way they want the actor to be seen, they give identity to actors through different labelling. Negative labeling negatively portrays actors and promotes negative ideology while positive labelling portrays actors positively and promotes positive ideology. Richardson (2007:49) submits that the way news writers name social actors in the news significantly contributed to the way society will perceive the social actors. In HFD, different labelling are done for different purposes. Labeling is used to represent social actors and promote different ideologies in the discourse. In this section, we shall take instances from the selected newspapers to justify different labelling that are used for discourse purposes. Excerpt 64 explains this further.

Excerpt 64. Fayose holds security summit with hunters over the killer, calls for herdsmen to be labelled as terrorists”...

<https://punchng.com/fulani-herdsmen-and-the-killing-fields-of-benue/>

*The Punch* newspaper reports the action of the Ekiti State government towards the herdsmen attack in the state. In reporting the case, the reporter activates the governor as the active agent who holds a security summit. The verb, holds, allocates the role of actor to the governor. This is used to show the concern of the governor towards his people. The governor is also nominated as an active governor who wants peace and harmony in his state. Instead of mentioning the name of the group to be labeled terrorists, the report uses categorisation to label them as killers and menace. A particular tribe is known in Nigeria for the business of animal rearing, but to avoid mentioning the name of the tribe but criminalise their actions, the reporter adopts labelling strategy through categorisation to represent them as killers. Categorisation is used to capture those that are involved in the attack on villages as killers. The strategy promotes ethnic ideology as the governor may be accused of discriminating against other tribes. Negative reference reveals that the constant attacks are orchestrated to exterminate some ethnic groups in the country. The strategy enables the reader to know the real actors and their roles in the discourse. Choice of words such as security, herdsmen, hunters, and terrorists constitutes the linguistic environment that helps to enact meaning while the roles of the participant, such as the governor calling



security meeting, helps to understand the labelling. The labelling promotes the representation of herdsmen as killers and invaders and farmers as victims. Ethnic ideology is evident in the report. The following excerpt captures this.

Excerpt 65. The attackers also burnt several houses and farmland,... the militia proceeded to Zaki Biam/ Wukari road... (Vanguard newspaper)

*Vanguard* newspaper reports that Fulani herdsmen attacked a village in Jos Plateau State. The herdsmen attacked the community and burnt their properties, including church buildings. In reporting the news, the reporter activates and functionalised the word, attack (attack+er) to refer to the Fulani herdsmen. The reporter uses functionalisation to label them by attaching the suffix **-er** to the verb attack. The use of the word attacker to label them is a negative representation. This is done to represent herdsmen as attackers and dangerous. The verb, burnt allocates the role of an active agent in the discourse to attacker. Herdsmen are also labeled as militia. The reporter activates militia and drops herdsmen. This is done to negatively label herdsmen and create negative ideology about them. The verb, **proceeded**, allocates the role of agent to the militia to activate them as active agents in the discourse. Having understood that the herdsmen attacked, they are tagged militia. The intention is to present them negatively to society and create discrimination against them. The representation reveals ethnic agenda and assumptions. The role of participants in the discourse such as burnt several houses and farmland and invading the church and community reveals the identity of the participants. To this ends, herdsmen are represented as attackers who is making effort to enslave other ethnic groups in the country. Ethnic and terrorist ideologies are obvious in the labelling. Excerpt 66 below further explains this.

Excerpt 66 ...the assassination attempt on his life by Fulani militia at his Tyo-Mu farm on Saturday said,...the attackers who opened fire on him as his security operatives responded speedily to repel them...

<https://thevoicenewspaper.ng/save-nigeria-from-anarchy-lawlessness-ortom/>

*The Voice* newspaper reports that the governor of Benue State was attacked by gunmen. The governor called on the Federal government to save Nigerians from the menace of herdsmen attack in the country. The reporter uses negative labeling to present

herdsmen in HFD. To achieve the negative labeling, the reporter uses premodification. He premodifies militia with Fulani. The qualifier labels Fulani as Militia. We could infer from this that Fulani herdsmen are dangerous to the peace and harmony of the country. Fulani herdsmen are further labeled as attackers in the statement to confirm that they are the criminals that attack the governor. This is also a negative labeling to make society discriminate against the herdsmen. The reporter also labels Fulani herdsmen as lawbreakers in the expression **but Fulani herdsmen have vowed never to obey the law**. The reporter states that the anti-open grazing law is meant for both crop farmers and animal farmers. This is negated with the use of **but** to label herdsmen as disobedient to the law of the state that will ensure peace and harmony in the state. That the herdsmen pledge to disobey the law reveals resistant ideology. Fulani is nominated in the discourse to foreground their negative activities in different locales. Fulani herdsmen are therefore seen in the society as lawbreakers and enemies of peace. From this, one could also infer positive labeling for crop farmers as law-abiding citizens.

By and large, both positive and negative labeling are used to promote ethnic, terrorist, revolutionist and religious ideologies. Negative labeling is prominent than positive labeling which shows the danger attached to HFC. It portrays the profession (rearing of animals) negatively.

#### 4.2.4. Nominalisation

Nominalisation helps writers to suppress or background agents in discourse. According to Amer (2013:87), nominalisation as a discourse strategy permits the removal of participants because it prevents the identification of such participants or references to the participant. Verbs are used in this discourse to stand in the place of the actor. Nominalisation is used to background the actor and foreground the action. In nominalization, the verb is raised to the nominal position thereby making the verb the actor of action performed. In that wise, the actor is not known to readers. In HFD, nominalisation is mostly realized with the attachment of suffix to the verb (for example, -er) or by using article the with the verb. It performs palliative function and saves *face* in the discourse. In the following excerpts, we shall examine different nominalisation instances that are used as

discourse strategies. All the newspapers sampled employed this strategy to suppress actors in the discourse. Excerpt 67 below captures this.

Excerpt 67. The attackers,... “After the invading, the militia proceeded to Zaki Biam/ Wukari road ...Confirming the incident [www.vanguardnews.ng](http://www.vanguardnews.ng)

*Vanguard* newspaper reports an attack on a church in Benue State. In the report, the verb attack is nominalised and activated as the active agent that performs the act of burning. Suffixation is the process adopted to nominalise the verb where the suffix –er is attached to the base word, **attack**. This strategy suppresses the real actor in the discourse as it is difficult for readers and the entire world to identify the real culprit. The verb, burnt allocates the role of agent to attacker and the role of patient to houses and farmland. The suppression of the real actor manages the *face* of ethnic groups and individuals that are involved in the discourse. It also foregrounds the negative of the action. It may also hinder security agents to easily know where to dispense their effort to curb the menace of herdsmen. The role of the actor, burnt, the location involved, farmland, logo local government council, other words in the same environment such as desert, farmland, church, militia, invade attack and other participants in the discourse such as the Chairman of the Local Government reveal the actor as the herdsmen. For example, herdsmen attack is constant in Logo local government of Benue State. This strategy promotes ethnic ideologies because it saves the public image of the ethnic group that perpetrating the attack. This strategy is aimed at sustaining peace between the two groups involved in the conflict because the intention is to conceal the real actor. This may, however, aggravate the conflict because according to John (2014) media framing that undermines the loss of farmers aggravated the conflict, as farmers were provoked to retaliate. This may be so as farmers may not be happy for not revealing the real actor and label them appropriately. This is evident in the following excerpt.

Excerpt 68. The severity of the attack had prompted President Muhammadu Buhari to order the relocation of the Inspector General of Police to Benue.

<https://punchng.com/five-herdsmen-attacks-that-shocked-nigerians/>

*The Punch* newspaper reports herdsmen's attacks in Nassarawa and Benue States. In the report, verbs are nominated to function as the actor. The nominal category is the only category of words that take adjectives and articles. In this report, the reporter gives these features to the verbal category. The word, attacks is premodified by Benue State. The strategy possessivates Benue State as the victim of the attack. The 'noun', attacks is activated as the active agent in the discourse. The verb, **began** allocates the role of actor to the noun attacks. Article, the, is also attached to the verb attack to nominalise it and activate it as the active agent in the discourse. Another verb prompted the noun **the attack**. The strategy is aimed at managing the *face* of the real actors in the discourse and preventing readers from knowing them. It is insinuated that the herdsmen are behind the menace. With the shared knowledge, reporters suppress their identities to prevent assaults on the ethnic group. The action is, however, foregrounded to show the severity of the action and appeal to the emotions of readers and that of security agents to compel them to intervene. This may promote the assumption that the Fulani herdsmen are not behind the attacks. The location of the attack, Benue State, participants such as President Muhammadu Buhari, and other words such as attack fatalities reveal the attacker as the herdsmen. Benue State seems to be the focus of the Fulani herdsmen while President Buhari is the patron of the herdsmen in the country, and it is insinuated that he is supporting them by not act accordingly in curbing the menace of herdsmen in Nigeria.

#### 4.2.5. Use of pronoun

The use of pronoun is also relevant in the discourse. Radford (2009) describes Pronouns as items that are said to 'stand in place of' or 'refer back to' noun expressions. The process of changing a noun to a pronoun is called pronominalisation. Pronominalisation is defined according to Oluikpe (1978) as the process through which a pronoun replaces a noun or noun phrase which at the deep structure is not a noun. Following this definition, Pronominalisation can be seen as having a direct relationship with the nominal group. Emenanjo (1978) states that, pronominals have a closed system while the nominals have an open system. In order words, pronouns are limited compared to nouns. Despite this, the pronouns are still enough to substitute nouns. Pronominalisation is useful to economise words, avoid unnecessary repetition and also conceal social actors. It aids ambiguity and may make information vague.

With the later functions, pronominal is used in discourse to suppress or background actors especially to save the actor's *face*.

In herdsmen discourse, social actors such as the herdsmen, farmers, and government are backgrounded or suppressed with the use of pronouns. It is used as a palliative strategy to save *face* in the discourse. In what follows, we shall consider various pronominalisation used to replace actors in herdsmen discourse. Excerpt 69 below captures this.

Excerpt 69. ...Exact details of the attack will be made available after the visit, he said. He said the attackers are suspected to have come in from neighboring Nasarawa state, and that they raided the community after crossing a nearby river. "They crossed over the river.

<http://thevoicenewspaper.ng/police-confirm-45-dead-benue-attack>

The police commissioner addressed the press after he visited to the scene of the herdsmen and farmer's clash in Nasarawa state, Nigeria. The attack was believed to have been carried out by Fulani herdsmen who migrated to the state from a neighbouring state. The pronouns used are co-referential. They are referring back to the noun earlier mentioned. 'He' refers back to the police which represent the government while they refers to the attackers. The verb raided helps to understand that the pronoun, they refers anaphorically to the attacker. The location of the attack, Benue State where the attack took place helps to understand that the attackers are herdsmen. This is premised on the repeated attack of herdsmen on the state. Nassarawa State is home to Fulani. It is easy for them to migrate to their neighbouring state, Benue, the centre of the herdsmen attack. The shared knowledge enables the understanding of the attackers to be herdsmen. The pronoun, they refers back to the attackers. The intention of the reporter is to suppress the actor in herdsmen discourse and save their *face*. Shared knowledge reveals group identities in the excerpt. They are presented as having more power than the security personnel as they are able to catch them unaware. The pronoun, **they** is used to polarise the participants. The attackers are referred to as they to exclude them from the attacked, villagers. The police are seen as the agent of the government that is performing their job as and when due. The reporter manages the voice of the police with the use of reported speech to detach himself from the source of the information. The verb, said helps to understand the speaker which is

represented by the pronoun **he** which co-refers to the police. It promotes the representation of the government as a law enforcer. The following excerpt also explains this.

Excerpt 70. Indeed, the frequency and gravity of the killing spree by Fulani herdsmen should inform us that we are greatly under-policed. It also shows that the current centralised policing system, just like that of our political power... We need more of community policing,...

<https://punchng.com/fulani-herdsmen-and-the-killing-fields-of-benue/>

The editor appraises the policing system in the country and condemns the present system and structure. The author believes that the system and structure make citizens vulnerable. Four of the pronouns in this excerpt are personal plural pronouns. The remaining one is the first person neuter pronoun, **it**. The neuter pronoun is used to refer to the action, **killing in the society**. The editor refers to the action of the herdsmen, the killing of innocent Nigerians, using pronouns to avoid repetition. On the other hand, first-person personal plural pronouns, both object and subject are used to show inclusion. The use of **we** and **us** helps to put the writer at the centre of the discourse. The writer employs the pronouns to involve themselves without mentioning the name of any individual or ethnic group. The pronouns leave the reader wondering, who are the 'we' or 'us'? The pronouns background the participants concerned. This strategy is used to appeal to the emotions of readers by presenting all as vulnerable. The pronouns reveal the weakness of the citizens in the country. Citizens and the people at the corridors of power are referred to as vulnerable and weak. Nigeria society is bedeviled with security challenges with different killings and destruction by herdsmen. The reporter nominates the herdsmen without pronominalising them so as to reveal the true identity of the killers. The plural pronouns are used to represent citizens to polarize the country, the in- and out-groups. Fulani herdsmen are seen as the out group while citizens are seen as the in-group with the use of the personal pronoun to include the media participant. This foregrounds the herdsmen as the enemy of the country. The nomination of Fulani herdsmen helps to reveal group identity. It is easy to infer that the participant is referring to the entire country with the use of the pronoun **we** and **us**. The use of inclusive pronouns projects the representation of villagers as vulnerable and victims. This is evident in the following excerpt.

Excerpt 71. The ruler of Kwah and Gyakan community, who preferred anonymity, said his people were now living in fear. He said although casualty figures could not yet be ascertained, reports reaching him indicated.

[https://thevoicenewspaper.ng/hundreds\\_displaced\\_as\\_fulani\\_herdsmen\\_ata  
ck\\_communities.html](https://thevoicenewspaper.ng/hundreds_displaced_as_fulani_herdsmen_attack_communities.html)

The reporter makes use of the third person singular pronoun (**he** and **him**), both subject and object. This is used to refer to the informant who is representing his people in volunteering information. The informant has earlier requested anonymity. This is to prevent him from possible attack by unknown people. The writer cooperates with him/her by employing the use of pronouns. The use of pronouns helps to conceal his identity to prevent him/her from any danger. It aids harmonious relationships in the society as the informant would not be known and subsequently be attacked. The reporter manages the voice of the ruler through the use of reported speech enabled by the use of verb, said. The verb allocates the role of the sayer to the ruler, represented by a pronoun. The strategy also promotes the belief that Nigerians are vulnerable, especially those who are not of Fulani extraction. It foregrounds the newspapers' representation of farmers/villagers as victims and innocents. The reporter nominates the community, kwah and gyakan to foreground the vulnerability of the villagers. The nomination helps to understand that the pronoun refers to the villagers. The villagers are weak compared to the attackers, hence the need to conceal their identities to forestall any attack. To further confirm that the pronouns, he and him (which represent the same person) are vulnerable and innocent, he states that the number of victims of the attack is unknown. This appeals to the emotions of readers and reveals the horrible effect of the herdsmen attack. The pronouns backgrounds the actor who has been mentioned earlier.

Different pronouns are used to achieve suppression and backgrounding. They are also used to avoid monotony. This is in tandem with Cornish (1986) who states that pronoun is the avoidance unnecessary use of a semantically attenuated expression instead of the early nominal expressions. The strategy also promotes ethnic and pacifist ideologies. The ideologies are obvious because it presents the attackers (herdsmen) as stronger and villagers as weaker agent. The reporter also maintains anonymity to avoid attack on weak participants.

#### 4.2.6. Evidentiality

Another discourse strategy identified is evidentiality. According to Igwebuiké (2018), evidentiality are shred of evidence or proof used to present opinions, claims or points of view for plausibility, reliability and credibility in news reports. van Dijk (2006) states that providing evidence and giving credibility to opinions influence the mental models of recipients/readers by persuading them to accept views as real and true. Reporters provide piece of evidences and facts through eyewitnesses to authenticate their reports and opinions. Evidentiality is mostly used to foreground certain beliefs and appeal to emotions. The following excerpt captures this.

Excerpt 72. He said suddenly, the communities alongside their vigilante took action to stop the herders, adding that as a result, bow and arrow fighting ensued where one of the herders died consequently. He further explained that the herders stormed the community, razed down one house and burnt down some farm produce belonging to them. The police spokesperson added that: “In a nick of time police rescued the situation; few people were arrested and hospitalised the wounded ones at Federal Medical Center, Nguru  
<http://triumphnews.org/farmers-herders-clash-over-land-invasion/>

*Triumph* newspaper reports an attack of herders on crop farmers in Nassarawa State. The report presents evidence to represent herders as destroyers. To validate this, the reporter uses verbs such as **stormed**, **razed** and **burnt** to allocate the role of actor to herdsmen and farm produce as the beneficiary (sufferer). Shreds of evidences of **burning** and **razing** of properties criminalised the actor. The evidence to present herders as destroyer is seeing in one house and burnt down some farm produce belonging to them. These actions present them as culprits to society. To validate the evidence, the reporter manages the voice of the police spokesperson with the use of reported speech and inverted comma. The inverted comma is used to present a direct speech from the eyewitness. The reporter decides to manage the voice of the police to detach himself from the source of the information and legitimise its authenticity. The police are nominated in the report to reveal power of the state in the conflict. Power of the police is shown with evidence that few people were arrested. The hospital is also nominated to provide more evidence that people were attacked and wounded. These evidences show the terrorist and resistance actions of the herders. The



reporter provides these evidences to foreground the terrorist and revolutionist ideologies. The exchange of bow and arrow shows power struggle between the villagers and herdsmen. The struggle results in the killing of villagers and destruction of their properties. This shows that the herders possess more powers and weaponry compared to the villagers and farmers. Excerpt 73 also captures this.

Excerpt 73. Narrating the incident to newsmen, the 72-year-old had said, “I was working on my farm when two men attacked me from behind, held my neck such that I couldn’t ask for help. They tore my clothes and took turns to rape me.” She said a fellow farmer saw her where the herdsmen had abandoned her after the rape and took her home. In October 2017, two Fulani herdsmen, Umar and Musa Ali, who are brothers, were arrested in Nasarawa State for allegedly raping a 14-year-old girl at Tudun Lambaga in the Eggon Hills area, Eggon Local Government Area of the state. (*The Punch*)

*The Punch* newspaper reports different shocking herdsmen attacks in the country. In the report, the reporter presents herdsmen as rapists. To validate this, the reporter presents shreds of evidence by presenting eyewitnesses. This is similar to what is obtainable in a court of law where witnesses are invited to validate claims. The evidence is seen in the 72 years old woman who narrates her experience. The reporter manages the voice of the woman with the use of reported speech and quotation mark to show that it is an eyewitness statement and not that of the reporter. This helps to affirm the representation of herdsmen as rapists. The verb said which allocates the role of the speaker to the woman aided the presentation of evidence. Her age, **72 years**, is mentioned to reveal the horrible effect of the herdsmen action on the woman. The use of the first person singular pronoun sustains the evidence. It shows that statement is coming from the mouth of the witness to further indict the herdsmen. The witness gives further evidence that they tore her cloths which is typical of rapists. This is used to create a visual image of how herdsmen mal-handled the aged woman. The use of the third person plural pronoun, they entails that the herdsmen are more than one on the woman. This also shows the gruesome experience of the woman in the hand of the herdsmen. In another instance, the herdsmen are also arrested in relation to the rape allegations. In this case, the police nominated them as Umar and Musa Ali to provide further

evidence that herdsmen are rapist. Using proper nouns, the report activated the duo as the offender. The 14-year old girl is mentioned as further evidence to validate the claim and present her as the victim. The evidence presents herdsmen as offenders while the woman and girl are presented as patients. The evidence supports the presentation of herdsmen as rapists and invaders while villagers/farmers are represented as victims and innocents. Female gender is presented as weak. This presentation shows the brutal experience of women in the hand of the herdsmen. There are several reports that present female gender as victims of herdsmen attack.

Excerpt 74. Eight persons were feared dead... after an invasion by suspected herdsmen. Vanguard gathered that the invaders also left scores injured while several houses and huts in the community were set ablaze. According to our source, the marauding herdsmen resorted to sacking the community after their entreaty to be allowed into the community.

[www.vanguardnews.ng](http://www.vanguardnews.ng)

*Vanguard* newspaper also reports an attack by herdsmen in Gwer Local Government of Benue State, Nigeria. The reporter describes herdsmen as attackers, invaders and destroyers. Herdsmen are activated as an active agent in the invasion that occurred in Benue State. The herdsmen were passivated with the use of the passivised verb, to background the herdsmen as the culprit while the villagers are presented as the patient in the discourse. The reporter backgrounds the herdsmen in the discourse to make them appear less-important and save their public *self-image*. The role allocation by the verb attack and other words in the same environment, shared knowledge of participants about invasion in Benue State enables the understanding of the agent in the statement. The verb, **attack** allocates the role of agent to herdsmen and that of patient to the villagers. The local government is nominated to show that there is constant attack on the local government by herdsmen, and show the horrible experience of the local government. The presentation shows the focus of the herdsmen on the tribes in Benue State. Such presentations promote ethnic ideology because people shared the belief that the attacks on the state are intended to exterminate the tribes in the state. To validate the claim that they are attackers, invaders and destroyers, the reporter presents shreds of evidence of their actions. The reporter states that they left scores injured, houses and huts burnt. Premodification is adopted to sustain the

claim. Injury and houses are premodified with figures to reveal the quantity of the damages and shows the horrible effect of the herdsmen attack. The evidence of injury and house burning appeal to the emotions of readers and the general public. To affirm the claim, the reporter provides evidence by putting words into the mouth of the eyewitness with the use of reported speech clause, according to our source. The eyewitness validates the authenticity of the information. The villagers are presented as weak and vulnerable while herdsmen are presented as powerful and destructive. This promotes terrorist, ethnic and religious ideologies.

#### 4.2.7. Voice management

Voice management is a discourse strategy used by reporters to detach themselves from the source of news or information. In achieving this, reporters make use of reported speech and quotation marks. The following excerpt captures this.

Excerpt 75. “We intend to replicate what Holland, a country of about 17 million population just like Kano State,...  
<http://triumphnews.org/seeking-lasting-solution-to-farmers-herders-conflict-in-northern-states/>

*Triumph* newspaper editorial seeks lasting solutions to the menace of herdsmen. In the editorial, the editor narrated and praised different efforts made by the governor to end the clash between the two groups. In presenting this, the editor manages the participant’s voice to detach himself from the source of the information. The verb, **said** is used by the reporter to assign the role of sayer to the **governor of Kano state**. The verb shows that the statement does not belong to the editor. The editor further manages the voice with the use of an inverted comma to show reported speech. The governor promised to promote ranching which according to him is more profitable than open grazing. The promise can only be made by a chief executive, hence the need for voice management. The editor also nominates and functionalises the governor by stating his name and revealing his role in the state as the chief executive. The nomination attached more importance to the promise of the governor to provide solution to the menace of herdsmen. The intention of the reporter to manage the voice of the governor is to present the governor as active and law-enforcer. It also fetches the governor political scores as the governor is seeing as active and responsive. This promotes political and pacifist ideologies. The attempt of the state governor would

help to reduce conflict in the country, as herders would no longer invade farm. Holand and Kano are nominated and compared to show possibility of the governor's promise in the country. It is important to manage the governor's voice to authenticate the claims. Excerpt 76 also supports this.

Excerpt 76. A statement by his Special Assistant on New Media, Emmanuel Eche-Ofun, quotes Senator Moro as describing the attack as mindless, provoking and highly unacceptable. He said if the governor is not safe and can be attacked by criminals in broad daylight ...

<https://thevoicenewspaper.ng/sen-moro-condemns-attack-on-gov-ortom/>

*The Voice* newspaper reports the attack on the governor of Benue State by suspected herdsmen. In the report, the report quoted the Special Assistant (SA) on New Media to the governor. The Special Assistant condemns the attack and expresses his concern about the security situation in the country. The reporter nominates the SA to manage his voice and detach himself from the source of the information. The voice management helps to know the importance of the statement and also validates it. It shows an eyewitness account of the event. The strategy helps to understand how vulnerable ordinary citizens are in the state. If the chief executive could be attacked as confirmed by the SA, it shows that citizens are not safe. Managing the voice also helps to reveal terrorist and revolutionist ideology because it shows that the herdsmen are fighting the state. The reporter functionalised the speaker with his official status as the SA to the governor. Functionalisation helps to add more value to the statement. The lamentation of the SA also reveals that there is insecurity and agony in the state. It represents the state as weak while herdsmen are presented as powerful. The following excerpt aligns with this.

Excerpt 77. Vanguard gathered from a source in the area that the victims ... were all killed in their sleep. He said, "the militant herdsmen arrived Mondo settlement... shooting sporadically at displaced persons... "Seven people were confirmed killed...

Herdsmen attacked IDP centre owned by a church in Benue State. This was reported by *Vanguard* newspaper. The report conceals the real identity of the witness and

detaches itself from the source of the news. The newspaper manages the voice of the witness to validate the news and also protects its source. Validation of the news makes readers believe it and protecting the source of the news is ethically required. This dilemma prompts the reporter to manage the voice of the witness. The newspaper adopts circumstantialisation in managing the voice of the source of the news. Circumstantialisation is realised with the use of *by* or *from* to realise agent. The newspaper uses the preposition **from** to realise the provider of the news so as to validate the statement that herdsmen are attacking villages and killing innocent citizens. The name of the speaker is suppressed with the use of pronoun. The pronoun **he** is used to suppress the source but also reveal that the source is male and not ghost. An inverted comma is also used to distance the reporter from the source of the news. *Vanguard* newspaper reports that the attacker burnt farmlands. To avoid being held responsible for the news, the reporter detaches himself with the use of quotation to show direct speech from eyewitness which is concealed. This strategy promotes ethnic and pacifist ideologies. It promotes ethnic because it conceals the ethnic group involved and manages their face. Face management helps to promote pacifist ideology as nobody will be attacked as the eyewitness.

#### 4.2.8. **Penchant for figures**

This strategy is used to foreground the objectivity and credibility of information. It also helps to create gruesome and deadly scenes occasioned by herdsmen activities. van Dijk (2006) opines that numerical descriptions of the victims in conflict news reports predominantly signal precision and hence truthfulness. The following excerpts buttress the importance of figures in news reports, especially in conflict situations. The following excerpt captures this.

Excerpt 78. ...“Between 2013 and 2016 alone, Fulani herdsmen killed more than 1,878 men, women and children...12 local government areas.” In addition, 750 people were critically injured, 200 still missing and over 99,427 households destroyed... they massacred over 500 persons in the Agatu community...

<https://punchng.com/herdsmen-attacks-benue-law-offers-sensible-model/>

Herdsman attack witnessed in Benue State is perceived to be higher than other states. The governor of the state is one of the governors that openly condemn Federal government of the country for the poor handling of the crisis. To curb the incessant attack by herdsman in the state, the state liaises with the State assembly to enact a law that will prohibit open grazing in the state. The decision to forbid open grazing was condemned and rejected by the herdsman and its umbrella body (MACBAN). Despite the criticism, the state assembly passed the bill and sent it back to the state governor for his assent. The state governor justifies the reason for the new law. The reporter manages his voice to detach himself from the source of the information provided by the governor. The state governor is nominated to attach importance to the statement and appeal to readers' emotions. In the report, Fulani herdsman are foregrounded as killers with the verb, **kill** assigning the role of agent to herdsman and that of beneficiary to villagers. Herdsman are activated as the active agent that performed the action of killing to foreground their role in the conflict. To affirm that herdsman are killers, the reporter adopts the number game as an evidence to create gruesome and horrible effect of the herdsman activities. The reporter itemises the number of villagers that were killed and the properties destroyed. To appeal to the emotions of readers and the general public, figures were used to qualify those that were killed and properties destroyed. For example, **1,878** men, women and children, **12** local government areas, **750** people, **200** still missing, over **99,427** households destroyed, and **500** persons. The use of figures will move readers to empathise with victims. The concentration of these figures in Benue State alone would motivate readers to believe that the attack is focused on the ethnic groups in Benue State. The numbers are also used to show that herdsman are resisting and attacking different efforts of the state government to curb the HFC. Ethnic, terrorist and revolutionist ideologies are evident in the representation. Excerpt 79 below explains further.

Excerpt 79. ...leaving about 32 killed and 19 others with severe gun and matchete injuries. At the time of this report, over 10,000 Tiv villagers are currently trapped in Obi Local Government Area...

<https://www.vanguardngr.com/2018/04/fresh-herdsman-attack-claims-32-lives-nasarawa/>

*Vanguard* newspaper also reports another attack in Nassarawa State. In the report, the herdsmen are represented as killers. Premodification and nominalisation are used to achieve such representation. Fulani herdsmen are activated as the active agent in the excerpt with the verb, launched, presents Fulani herdsmen as the actor. Fulani herdsmen and Tiv villagers are nominated in the discourse to promote ethnic ideology. Nominating Fulani herdsmen as the agent and Tiv villagers as the patient, motivates readers to agree that the attack is planned to exterminate the Tiv villagers. The reporter also appeals to the emotions of readers with his penchant for figures in narrating the ugly incident. The reporter itemised those that were killed and properties destroyed with figures. For example, **32** killed and **19** others with severe gun and machete injuries and **10,000** Tiv villagers. The use of figures helps to foreground the herdsmen as killers and destroyers and villagers as victims. The intention of the reporter to indicate that **10,000** Tiv villagers were killed also promotes the assumption that the attack is a deliberate effort to cleanse the Tiv race. Penchant for figures helps to validate the claim that the herdsmen are killers. The use of figures by newspaper reporters and editors strengthens different representations and aids ideological formation such as revolutionist, ethnic, and terrorist ideologies. This is common to all newspapers sampled.

This section considers some discourse strategies that foreground newspaper representations of social actors in the HFD. The strategies are vital to the discourse as they play significant roles in media discourse and by extension, society. Eight (8) strategies are identified and expatiated. The strategies are: passivisation, presupposition, labelling, nominalisation, use of pronouns, evidentiality, voice management, and penchant for figures. The strategies strengthen different media representations of social actors and promote different ideologies, such as ethnic, pacifist, religious, political, revolutionist, humanist, political, and terrorist that are capable of spiraling or reducing the conflict between herdsmen and farmers.

#### **4.3. Contextual variables in the representation of herdsmen/farmer discourse**

Context is an essential instrument in negotiating meaning. The importance of context cannot be ignored in discourse because it assists participants to infer meaning. Context is the general environment that is involved in a discourse which represents the general world

view of participants in any communicative event. This shows that participants in any communicative event must understand the context of discourse to be able to enact meaning. Widdowson (2000:126) opines that contexts are the various circumstantial aspects of language that are relevant in meaning-making. He further explains that pragmatic meaning is achieved by combining linguistic code with elements of context to generate meaning. In other words, context aids meaning generation in pragmatic analysis. It helps to understand the intention of participants in the communicative acts. Yule (2000:128) sees context as the physical environment in which a word is used. This definition explains the fact that context involves everything in the environment of the participants in a communicative event. It involves linguistics, social-cultural, religion, education, and every other environment that participants experienced in the course of interaction. Context also helps to evaluate the linguistic and sociolinguistic competence of participants in a communicative event. To Chilwa (2014), context means the situation within which language functions. Chilwa (2014) highlights four features of context. They are; participants, ongoing activity, the place and the time of the communication. The variables of context that help to negotiate meaning include the following: the participants and their roles, the setting (locations), shared beliefs of participants, inference, intentions, the convention/norm of the genre being analysed (newspapers), shared linguistic codes and implicature/ the unsaid. In the following paragraphs, the study interrogates how these contextual variables are adopted by the media in interpreting conflict in the selected newspapers. We shall discuss their implications on text, and how such influence the discourse (HFD).

#### **4.3.1. The participants**

Participants are the social actors in the discourse. They include the agents and patients in discourse. As earlier mentioned, the social actors in this discourse include the herdsmen, farmers/villagers, MACBAN, religious organization/leaders and the government. We shall discuss their roles and how it affects the discourse. The following excerpt is an evidence.

Excerpt 80. ...when soldiers are in a community or close by during the attacks by Fulani herdsmen, they either leave or take no action to prevent the attacks.



<https://punchng.com/why-buhari-will-not-act-on-fulani-herdsmen-killings/>

The above excerpt is culled from an editorial opinion of *Punch* newspaper. The writer insinuates that the President will not take any action against the herdsmen attack. The writer highlights the reasons for the claim. Collectivism is used to represent the military men. They are nominated as soldier making them a member of the same group that represents the government. The soldier is expected to protect citizens and confront the ‘enemies’ (attackers), instead they take no action to prevent the attacks.

The Soldiers are activated as the active agent that refused to take action. It reveals that Soldiers intentionally did nothing to stop herdsmen from attacking and killing villagers. One could infer that the soldiers have failed in performing their civic duties to the citizens. It promotes the representation of government as biased institution and pretender. ethnic ideology is inferred as it could be inferred that herdsmen are enjoying the privilege of the incumbent president. This inference is premised on the fact that the soldiers are the representative of the Federal government.

The herdsmen are represented as attackers with the verb attack which allocates the role of agent to the herdsmen. The role of the herdsmen in this representation is of attacking. The herdsmen do not fail in attacking, but the soldiers fail in performing their roles. This shows that the soldiers are supporting the herders to exterminate villagers. The intention of the reporter is to foreground ethnic ideology which is successful with role allocated to participants. The roles of the participants help to understand the intention of the reporter and the different ideological stances in the discourse. Excerpt 81 below also supports this.

Excerpt 81. The Fulani/Hausa extractions will be the ones to endanger their mere existence. Today it's their turn to kill. Today Buhari is the President and he can afford to support Fulanis' atrocities. A President of a nation being so timidly nepotistic. He is evil. That's treasonable act and sin against the nation.

<http://thevoicenewspaper.ng/fulani-herdsmen-attacks-buharis-silence-discomforting>

This is another editorial from *The Voice* newspaper accusing the President of nepotism. The opinion insinuates that the President would not do anything to stop the herdsmen because they are his kinsmen. It is also clear here that the writer deliberately and conspicuously backgrounds the major actor in the opinion. We could deduce, through role allocation, that, the Fulani herdsmen are killers. **Hausa/Fulani** is nominated in this editorial as the active agent. The reporter affirms that the Hausa/Fulani is self-inflicting danger on themselves because of their role and that of the president in the conflict. President Buhari is functionalised as the President of the country who is supporting every action of Hausa/Fulani because they are of the same ethnic extraction. The verb **kill** allocates the role of killer to the Hausa/Fulani. The role allocation is expressed in ‘today it's their turn to kill’. The pronoun, their, refers back to Hausa/Fulani earlier mentioned. The intention of the reporter is to reveal the role of the Hausa/Fulani and that of the President in the discourse. The President is expected to be for the whole country without bias for any ethnic group. However, this is not the case in the report. The reporter states that the President is **nepotistic**. The proposition such as ‘**he can afford to support Fulani atrocities**’ foregrounds the insinuation. This reveals the role of the president as the number one citizen and powerful that is supporting every action of the herdsmen. The role of the participant (the President) helps to understand the text that the herdsmen enjoy the support of the presidency to carry out their nefarious activities. Herdsmen also play roles that portray them as killers and perpetrators of different evils. The reporter possessivates them with the use of possessive sign (**Fulanis' atrocities**) as the initiator of evil in Fulani atrocities. The role of participants strengthens the representations of herdsmen as killers, invaders and the government as biased institution and pretender. The president is presented as supporting his ethnic group. This foregrounds the ethnic ideology. Words like support, nepotistic, treasonable, sin, nation and nomination of the President reveal the intention of the participant to accuse the President of biased in the discourse. Collocation of words such as support, nepotistic, treasonable, sin, and nation reveal to readers that the writer is accusing the President of supporting the herdsmen in carrying out their nefarious activities to the detriment of others in the country. We are also able to know that the President’s action is against the law (Constitution) of the country. Such words as treasonable, sin and nation reveal this assertion. It also reveals that the President does not belong to his tribe alone, but

the whole nation. It is, therefore, expected that he acts in favour of all and not a percentage of the population. This also strengthens ethnic ideology and is capable of spiraling the conflict. the following excerpt captures this.

Excerpt 82. EBONYI State government said it has put everything in place to ensure the safety... rampaging killer herdsmen, who might be planning to come into the State. Gov. Dave Umahi, the Chief Press Secretary to the Governor of Ebonyi state,...the leaders of Miyetti Allah claiming responsibility for the deaths... “We have put everything in place to ensure safety of our people in the hands of the rampaging killer herdsmen. “His Excellency in his prompt response to the dangerously divisive tendencies...of killer herdsmen into the state.

<https://www.vanguardngr.com/2018/01/herdsmen-attack-david-umahi-assures-adequate-security-ebonyi/>

The Ebonyi State government called a press conference to address the incessant attacks of the herdsmen in the state. *Vanguard* newspaper reports the press conference. In the report, four participants could be identified: the government, MACBAN, herdsmen, and villagers. The role of law enforcer is allocated to the government, MACBAN as mouthpiece, herdsmen as killers, invaders while villagers are allocated the role of victims. To present the government as law-enforcer, the Ebonyi state government is nominated as the active agent in the sentence by promising his people peace. The state government condemns the actions of the herdsmen in the state and labeled them as rampaging killers. The governor polarises the society by condemning the herdsmen actions and assured his people of safety. Pronoun, **our**, is used to create in-group which shows that the government is a member of the community (victims). The polarisation is seen in the phrase, **our people**. This discriminates against the action of the herdsmen and promotes ethnic ideology. The role of the governor further shows that the herdsmen resist the state law.

Herdsmen are also presented as killers in ‘killer herdsmen’. The qualifier allocates the role of killer to herdsmen. This phrase is repeated three times in the excerpt to emphasise the role of the herdsmen in the discourse as killers. The killing by herdsmen is reported to be targeted towards non-Fulani herdsmen. This is seen in the reference of the

governor to the villagers as his people. This mirrors terrorist activities and presumes terrorist assumption in the discourse. MACBAN is also presented as the mouthpiece of its members and killers. This is expressed in the clause Miyetti Allah claiming responsibility for the deaths. MACBAN is nominated as the agent in the clause. The lexis claiming presents MACBAN as the killers and mouthpiece for claiming responsibility for the death of the people. The intention of the reporter is to present MACBAN as killers and mouthpiece. The villagers are also presented as victims. Governor Umahi refers to them as the victim of herdsmen attack as seeing in **to ensure safety of our people**. This implies that the people are not safe in the country. The intention is to present the people as vulnerable and make readers believe that the attack is targeted at the ethnic group. The representations reveal different ideologies in the discourse, such as revolutionist, ethnic, pacifist, and terrorist. The role and relationship of different participants help to understand the representations and the ideologies.

#### 4.3.2. **Settings in the discourse**

Setting in discourse refers to the place (geographical location) and time involved in the discourse. In HFD, the place includes the farm, church, and communities where attack and destruction of properties occurred. The time of the day that the attack takes place may be during the day or at night. The setting of the discourse enables different representations of social actors which help to enact different ideologies in the discourse. For example, where the attack occurred on the farm, it can be inferred that the herdsmen attack farmers on their farm. Therefore, herdsmen can be referred to as attacker, killers, invaders, and so on. while farmers can be referred to as victims and vulnerable. One can infer different ideologies from these representations such as terrorist, ethnic, revolutionist, and so on. We shall buttress this with data from the selected newspapers. Excerpt 83 supports this.

Excerpt 83. ...a woman was raped... by two herdsmen while working on her farm in Ore, Ondo State. ... “I was working on my farm when two men attacked me from behind, held my neck such that I couldn’t ask for help.  
In the same month, suspected Fulani herdsmen also attacked Dori and Mesuma villages in Taraba State, ...killing at least 15 people, according to the police.

*Punch* newspaper reports that a woman was raped by herdsmen in Ondo state of Nigeria. In the report, the reporter nominates the woman and describes her as grandmother to create a gruesome and horrible experience occasioned by the activities of the herdsmen in the state. The statement was passivized in **a woman was raped... by two herdsmen while working on her farm in Ore, Ondo State** to foreground the victim, but backgrounds the offender. The herdsmen is backgrounded through the use of passivised verb, was raped. The writer also mentions the number of the suspected culprits, **two herdsmen** to create a victim and offender group. In the report, they are described as **rapists** and **attacker**. The herdsmen are activated in the passivised sentence as active agent that perpetrated rape. The victim, **72-year-old woman**, also states that they attacked her from the back. This represents the herdsmen as attackers. The setting of the attack reveals that the attackers are invaders and terrorists. The herdsmen attacked and raped the woman on her farm. The intention to mention the location as farm and the time, which is day time when the woman was on her farm shows they invaded her farm to terrorise her. In addition, the reporter nominates the town and local government where the attack took place. This is to create ethnic ideology. The herdsmen are also nominated to show that they are migrants who came to ‘terrorise’ another race. Participants in the discourse shared the same knowledge that the herdsmen are usually migrants from the Northern part of the country. To this end, readers could infer that the Northerners have come to the West to invade their territory and carry out their ethnic agenda. Moreover, that they have come to invade the village despite the anti-open grazing law by the Ondo State government shows they resist the law of the state. Such action mirrors revolutionist ideology. The setting of the event reveals different ideologies, terrorist, ethnic and revolutionist.

The same newspaper (*Punch*) reports another attack and invasion in Taraba State. The attack occurred in a church. Churches and houses were burnt by Fulani herdsmen. The number of houses and churches burnt are mentioned and fronted to create a horrible effect of the herdsmen activities. It is also reports that Fulani herdsmen attack villages in Gashaka Local Government of Taraba State. The report nominates Fulani herdsmen to present them as attackers and offenders. The villages are also nominated to show the setting of the attack. The setting is nominated to reveal ethnic, terrorist, religious, and revolutionist ideologies. That Fulani herdsmen went to another ethnic dominated state to attack victims reveals

ethnic agenda. In addition to that, it shows they terrorise the villages and resist their rules and regulation. With the knowledge of the setting, readers are able to infer that the attack is intentional. The intention is to exterminate the race by force. Attack on churches also reveals religious ideology. Destroying churches will mean the worshippers will no longer gather and worship their God. The following excerpt also captures this.

Excerpt 84. Second, herdsmen attacks on Nigerian Native/Farmer and their intermittent clashes predate this administration. ...the sporadic invasions have virtually become bloody wars, with better armed and better-coordinated herdsmen raiding farms and homesteads, and visiting their unsuspecting victims with blood, destitution, dislocations and death...

<https://thevoicenewspaper.ng/Will-the-Nigerian-Cow-Push-Nigeria-to-the-Precipice>

The *Voice* newspaper editorial discusses the menace of herdsmen attack and insinuates that cows are more valued than human lives by the owners. The newspaper opines that farmers and herders have been living together for ages with little crisis but the conflict is aggravated with the inception of the incumbent President Buhari. This proposition affirms the ethnic and revolutionist ideologies. The *Voice* editorial evokes the antecedent of the herdsmen by stating that the herdsmen attacks on Nigerian Native/Farmer and their intermittent clashes predate this administration. Herdsmen are possessivated as the owner of attack by premodifying attack with herdsmen. The intention is to compare the clash between herdsmen and farmers under previous administrations and the incumbent President Buhari. The comparison helps to understand nepotism and favouritism in favour of the herdsmen who are of the same ethnic extraction with the incumbent President Buhari. To further show that the conflict aggravated under President Buhari, the editor lexicalised the report as follows, but in recent years, the sporadic invasions have virtually become bloody wars, with better armed and better-coordinated herdsmen. The intention of the editor is to promote ethnic ideology. The setting which is the time of the actions helps to understand the comparison that reveals ethnic ideology. By understanding that the clash under other administration at the federal level is not as deadly and with impunity as it is under President Buhari, readers will be able to understand that

herdsmen enjoy favouritism because they have affiliation with the incumbent President Buhari.

The editorial further states that herdsmen raiding farms and homesteads. The editorial uses evidentiality to criminalise herdsmen as invader by allocating the role of actor to herdsmen with the use of the verb, raiding. The setting here is the geographical location of the farmers. The editorial shows that farmers are innocent and vulnerable to the herdsmen attack. This is because they are attacked on their farms and homesteads. This promotes terrorist and revolutionist ideologies. The herdsmen attack farmers and kill them even on their farm. Herdsmen attack farmers in resistance to the anti-open grazing law. The resistance ideology mirrors a revolutionist ideology. Government who is a participant in the discourse is said to dutifully inform the public that herdsmen are foreigners from Libya, Sudan and elsewhere to save the face of the local herdsmen. The editor lexicalised the editorial with the word dutifully to foreground the favouritism from the government. This foregrounds the representation of the government as biased institution. With this, other political parties in the country will use that to score political point by projecting that the incumbent party is not capable of running the country objectively. This also promotes political ideology. Two settings are identified: time and geographical location. The two helps to understand ethnic, terrorist, revolutionist, and political ideologies in the discourse. another excerpt below explains further.

Excerpt 85. The dreaded herdsmen have once more left sorrow in Enugu community, machetting a security guard. The incident which occurred in Okpanku community, Aninri Local Government Area of Enugu State, ... the incident occurred, Easter Monday, herdsmen defiled a security guard attached to a private residence...

This excerpt also reports an attack on a community by the herdsmen where they killed a security guard attached to a residential building in Enugu state, Nigeria. Several other community members sustained serious injuries. The herdsmen are activated as active agent who defied security guard and macheted them. The verb, **left**, assigns the role of agent to the herdsmen and that of the patient to the Enugu community. This foregrounds the representation of herdsmen as attackers, killers while villagers are described as victims. Premodification is also used to present herdsmen as dangerous, **dreaded**, herdsmen. The

writer projects ethnic, terrorist and religious ideologies which are made obvious with the understanding of the setting. Geographical location and time are the two setting in the discourse. The location includes Okpanku community, Aninri Local Government Area of Enugu State. The reporter nominates the community to show that the invaders (herdsmen) are not from the same communities but from the Northern part of Nigeria who are majorly Fulani but migrated to invade Eastern communities. Eastern communities are dominated by another ethnic group such as the Igbo. The herdsmen also invade the community to terrorise them. The representation is aimed at promoting terrorist ideology. With the nomination of the geographical location, readers are able to enact ethnic and terrorist ideologies.

Another obvious setting that helps infer ideology in the discourse is time. The invasion took place on **Easter Monday**. Easter is a popular Christian festive period. During the period, Christians celebrate the death and resurrection of their messiah, Jesus Christ. The period is sacred to the Christians and, it represents peace. The herdsmen attack during the period. One could infer that the intention is to destabilise the festivity and kill in groups because the period usually witness concentration of Christian faithful in their various locale. Fulani herdsmen are believed to be Muslim. This shared knowledge helps to interpret religious ideology from the time of the attack. The intention of the reporter is to show how the herdsmen caused chaos during the Christian festive period. The report further shows that the herdsmen invaded private residence and attack, private residence and invaded the compound. Herdsmen are nominated to present them as active agent that invaded private residence while the owners of the residence are presented as victims of the herdsmen attack. The verb **invaded** allocates the role of actor to herdsmen and that of victim to the residents of the house. This also mirrors terrorism. The residents were in their house peacefully before herdsmen invaded them. It was an unprovoked attack. The setting reveals that the residents are victim because the attack was in their house and not on the battle ground.

#### 4.3.3. **Shared beliefs of participants**

Shared belief is the general assumption that two or more people have and understood about the others. It is the mutual agreement of participants in discourse about the subject of the discourse. The agreement helps to enact meaning in discourse based on mutual



understanding. In HFD, there are shared beliefs among the Nigerians about the herdsmen and their activities and relationship with their host communities. For example, herdsmen are nomadic. They are fearless and can enter into any properties and use it without permission. The following excerpt captures this.

Excerpt 86. He blamed suspected herdsmen who had previously had a dispute with the management of the seminary over their grazing activities in and around the premises.

[www.punchng.com](http://www.punchng.com)

*Punch* newspaper reports herdsmen's activities in Taraba state, Nigeria where they (herdsmen) attacked a seminary (College) and killed students. The students were subsequently evacuated for lack of security. The reporter uses premodification to describe herdsmen as accused. The word, suspected is a legal register that is used to avoid being sentimental about performing the role of a judge. The law enforcement agencies and the lawyers usually use the word suspect to refer to an accused person that has not been pronounced guilty by any court of competent jurisdiction. The reporter also used this to exclude the tribal name because the participant did not want to overtly refer to the tribe as attackers to save their *face*. The legal system forms part of our ways of life. Relying on this, readers shared the belief that the herdsmen cannot be indicted without the pronouncement of the court. The premodification promotes pacifist ideology as it helps to maintain peace because of the *face saving act*. The reporter premodifies herdsmen with suspect to save their public self-image. The reporter also possessivates herdsmen as the owner of grazing activities with the use of the possessive pronoun, **their**. Participants shared belief about grazing activities reveals that the writer is referring to herdsmen. Readers believed that herdsmen in Nigeria usually roam with their cattle to graze and destroy properties. This shared belief helps readers to infer that herdsmen are **invader** and **attacker** because they can invade and attack any community with impunity. It, therefore, makes the meaning obvious to participants that understood the 'culture' of grazing in the country. This promotes the belief that herdsmen are invaders. They invade during their roaming for foddors. The representation promotes terrorist and religious ideologies. Herdsmen invaded seminary to terrorise them. Seminary is not grazing route neither is it a grazing field where animals can find feed. Invading seminary means the herdsmen went

there to terrorise them. In the same vein, the invasion of seminary promotes religious ideology. One may infer that herdsmen invaded seminary to intentionally disrupt the peace and worship at the seminary. Shared belief about the herdsmen as suspect and ‘illegal migrant’ revealed that herdsmen are attacker but because of the incumbent President the reporter is being careful on how to refer to them. This also foregrounds ethnic ideology because the face of herdsmen is being saved because they belong to the same ethnic extraction with the president. The consciousness of the ethnic affiliation of herdsmen with the President reveals the shared belief of participants and promotes ethnic ideology. Excerpt 87 also supports this.

Excerpt 87. Umuowa Ibu community in Okigwe Local Government Area of Imo State, said they cannot cultivate and harvest their crops due to fear of attacks by Fulani herdsmen. ...were said to be finding it difficult to carry out farming activities in their own land.

[www.thevoicenewspaper.com](http://www.thevoicenewspaper.com)

In a community in Imo state, Nigeria, herdsmen grazed on the crops of farmers which prevented them from practicing their farming profession. They are also scared of going to their farms because of the activities of the herdsmen. The writer adopts presupposition and implicature to conceal the information in the excerpt that the farmers are losing their resources to the attack. By telling the reader they find it difficult to carry out their professional activities (farming), it presupposes that there are known farmers who cannot plant or harvest what has been planted. The communities are predominantly farmers who are surviving on farming activities for consumption and commercial purposes. It could be inferred that they are counting their losses because they are unable to harvest their labour. Fulani herdsmen are activated as the active agent that prevented farmers from enjoying their ways of life. The verb attack allocates the role of perpetrator to Fulani herdsmen and that of the sufferer to farmers. This further presents Fulani herdsmen as attackers, killers, and destroyers because farmers cannot harvest and are experiencing loss. The economic growth of the region depends on farming. The writer did not mention this explicitly, but readers could infer meaning, depending on the shared beliefs. It is in the general knowledge that farmers usually plant at the beginning of every planting season and harvest at the end of the season. Being unable to do this implies there is going to be

unemployment and shortage of food production. The reporter states that crop farmers cannot plant or harvest for the fear of herdsmen. Without stating that herdsmen are grazing on farmers' crop, shared beliefs between participants reveals that herdsmen are grazing on crop farms, killing, kidnapping, raping and destroying farm produce. The inference is made possible through shared beliefs. Readers are aware that herdsmen are attacking crop farmers on their farm and destroying their properties to take over the communities. This informs the reason for fear of planting and harvesting. One can infer that farmers cannot cultivate because they are prevented from going to their farm for the fear of attack from herdsmen. We can also infer that they cannot harvest because herdsmen's animals have grazed on the planted crops and destroy them. We can also infer that there cannot be harvesting since there was no planting. Participants in the discourse are aware that planting predates harvesting. This representation negatively presents herdsmen as destroyers, invaders, killers, and creates negative ideologies such as ethnic and terrorist.

Finally, the reporter nominates the community where the attack occurred as Umuowa Ibu community in Okigwe Local Government Area of Imo State to create ethnic ideology. Participants in the discourse believe that the two ethnic groups are not friendly. One could infer that the representation of herdsmen attack of Ibo communities is an attempt to exterminate the race by first destroying their economic activities and means of livelihood. Participants believed that there is an ethnic cleansing agenda in the country as alleged by some citizens. This shared beliefs help to unravel the presentation of herdsmen as killers, destroyers, and attackers. This reveals ethnic and terrorist ideologies.

Shared beliefs remain a veritable tool in revealing the role of context in negotiating meaning in any discourse. It helps to interpret presuppositions and implicature in discourse. This is instrumental in HFD to reveal different representations and ideological stances.

#### 4.3.4. **Background knowledge**

Background knowledge is the information that are not shared in the discourse but understood by participants in the discourse. It helps to conceal information and actors in text. It also helps in interpreting what participants meant in discourse but not said nor written. For example, whenever the name herdsmen appears, the ethnic group that comes to mind in Nigeria is Fulani and when crop farmers are mentioned, what comes to mind are

the communities that host herdsmen on whose farm their animals graze. In the following paragraphs, we shall take instances from sampled newspapers to explain the relevance of background knowledge to understand context of the discourse and negotiate meaning. The following excerpt captures this.

Excerpt 88. We are hungry. How can somebody suffer to cultivate in his land and when the time comes to harvest the crops, Fulani herdsmen will go and destroy the whole thing?"

[www.vanguardnewsn.com](http://www.vanguardnewsn.com)

*Vanguard* newspaper reports an attack by the herdsmen on villages in Imo state of Nigeria. In the report, the lawmaker representing the constituency in the National Assembly expresses his frustration over the incessant killings by the herdsmen in Imo state. The reporter lexicalised the report with farming registers such as cultivate, land, harvest, and crops which help to understand the occupation of the people. These words also help to understand why people are hungry. The background knowledge of participants about the activities of herdsmen on farms aids an understanding of the reason for the hunger. Villagers are hungry because they could no longer cultivate their land and herdsmen have grazed on the planted crops. The background knowledge helps to present herdsmen as destroyers and farmers as victims. Participants are able to understand that herdsmen have destroyed farm produces because of their grazing method. The rhetorical question '**How can somebody suffer to cultivate in his land and when the time comes to harvest the crops, Fulani herdsmen will go and destroy the whole thing?**' is a calculated attempt to construct herdsmen as destroyer and farmers as victims. The statement implicates that after the stress of planting, herdsmen do not allow farmers to reap the fruit of their labour. Premodification of herdsmen with the tribal name, Fulani is aimed to promote ethnic ideology. It will promote discrimination against the tribe and consequently aggravate the conflict between herdsmen and their host communities. One could also infer terrorist ideology in the presentation. By representing herdsmen as destroyer which is the instrument of conflict, one will conclude that they are terrorists because they resist the rules and regulations about grazing system in the community. Excerpt 89 aligns with this.

Excerpt 89. The state Governor can no longer continue to turn blind eyes and deaf ears to the tensed situation. "...over 30 primary

schools have been shut down, health facilities closed and economic activities paralysed.”

<https://www.punchng.com/herdsmen-attack-ogun-communities-sack-30-schools/>

*Punch* newspaper reports the Ogun State governor lamenting the effect of herdsmen attacks on villagers and the economy of the state. The report manages the voice of the governor with the use of quotations to show direct speech from the speaker and detaches the reporter from the source of the news. The reporter however lexicalised the report to reveal the background knowledge of participants. Farmers, sent away, from their farms, schools have been shut down, health facilities closed, economic activities paralysed are registers that reveal the background knowledge of participants. These registers reveal that participants include farmers and that they have been chased from their farms. The governor uses possessive pronoun, to possessivate the victims. It is a solidarity strategy that includes the governor in the suffering of his people. This promotes political ideology because people believe that the governor is responsive and responsible. The background knowledge shared by participants reveal the offenders. With the setting as farm and participant, it is easier to identify participants, their roles, representations and ideologies. It reveals that herdsmen are offenders while farmers are victims.

It also helps to develop and sustain negative ideologies about the herdsmen. The governor laments that the villagers have been sent away (from their villages and profession). This is adversely affecting the economy of the state. The villagers are farmers who contribute positively to the economy of the state. We could deduce that they are farmers because of such words as farmers and farms. The understanding of their profession helps us to know why the economy of the state is paralysed. The economy is paralysed because people are sent away and they can no longer contribute to the growth of the economy in the state. The reason for the poor performance of the economy would not have been known if readers do not know the profession of the villagers. Readers also share common ground on the on-going activities between the villagers and herdsmen. This promotes the belief that the government is weak and that herdsmen are invaders and attackers. It also validates the representation of villagers as displaced. The following excerpt supports this.

Excerpt 90. Seven people were confirmed killed among them men, women and children. Many sustained injuries others are still missing. “The attackers also burnt several houses and farmland, as we speak the entire area has been deserted. ...the Logo local government council Chairman, ...said seven bodies had been recovered from the scene of the attack.

<https://www.vanguardngr.com/2018/04/herdsmen-attack-another-benue-church-kill-seven-idps/>.

*Vanguard* newspaper reports herdsmen attack in Benue State. The attack affected churches and claimed seven lives in the churches and the internally displaced centres (IDC). The excerpt begins with number of people that were killed. The report states that seven people were confirmed killed which include men, women and children to reveal the horrible experience that occasioned the negative activities of the attacker. The report backgrounds the agent, but the background knowledge of participants reveals the agent. In the third sentence, the report states that houses and farmland were burnt. Background knowledge about the activities of the herdsmen helps to reveal the actors in the discourse. It also reveals that farmers and herdsmen are the major participants in the discourse. That the attackers also **burnt** ... presupposes that there are conflicts between the participants. It also presupposes that they perpetrate other nefarious actions. The word, **also** enables the presupposition. Background knowledge and previous activities reveal that herdsmen are the attackers while farmers/villagers are the victim of the activities of herdsmen. The report nominates locations that are attacked by the attackers with impunity. The locations include: churches, houses and farms. The nomination of the locations is an attempt to promote ethnic, religious and terrorist ideologies. The report functionalises the Chairman of the Local Government to understand his position in the local government. Readers could infer, through background knowledge, that he has the constituted authority to confirm the number of death and give orders on what to do at the local government concerning the death. The role of the Chairman in the report presents government as responsive to the problem of the villagers. Background knowledge also helps to imply that villagers are suffering from the attack believed to be carried out by herdsmen.

Through background knowledge, we understand that the significance of the attack is to exterminate villagers and church goers. This, if achieved, would help them extend their territory and religion to the area. Background knowledge helps to also understand different

representations such as destroyer and invader. To burn properties means destruction and the actor may be described as destroyer. In addition, to invade means the person that carried out the action is an invader. The background knowledge therefore helps to understand that those that invade the churches are invaders and those that burn houses and farmland are destroyers. Nominating the actors helps to understand their relationship and contribution to the conflict. While readers are able to identify herdsmen as offenders, farmers are presented as sufferers.

In this section, we identified different contextual variables that help to foreground the newspaper representation of social actors in HFD. The representations also promote certain ideologies. The variables identified include, participants and their roles, setting, shared knowledge, and background knowledge.

#### **4.4. Ideologies in newspaper representation of HFC**

Ideology is simply the belief held by people about a particular event in society for self-interest. Ideologies according to van Dijk (2015) are belief shared by a group of people to promote their interest. The newspapers sampled reveal different ideologies. There are ethnic, religious, pacifist, humanist, egalitarian, and political ideologies in the discourse. This section shall discuss the ideologies identified in the sampled newspapers. To achieve this objective, we shall take insight from van Dijk's sociocognitive approach to CDA because the approach emphasis a multidisciplinary, triangular analysis of text and talk integrating a discursive, cognitive and social component and according to van Dijk (2015), the approach is interested in the study of the ways social power abuse, is (re)produced and resisted by text and talk. However, ideology is not only about domination and discrimination. According to van Dijk (1998), ideologies such as anti-racism, feminism, socialism, pacifism, or environmentalism are not with the function to found and legitimate domination, but precisely to provide the sociocognitive basis for the struggle against it. In the following paragraphs, identified ideologies in HFD will be discussed.

##### **4.4.1. Ethnic ideology**

Ethnic ideology is the belief in the superiority of one ethnic over the others, a situation where a group of people that share similarities in terms of language and culture

believe are superior to others who do not share their affinity. They thereby discriminate and segregate against other ethnic groups. The discrimination may lead to deliberate invasion and killing to marginalize or exterminate other groups of people. The following excerpt captures this.

Excerpt 91. Six days after Fulani herdsmen invaded Logo local government area, home of ex-governor, Gabriel Suswam killing about twenty people, the insurgents between Tuesday and Wednesday again made a violent incursion into the Mbavuur council ward of the local government killing four people and injuring 16 others. The herders also proceeded to Mbaya council ward in neighbouring Buruku local government area where they killed two people and overran the entire council ward with more than 4, 000 cattle grazing freely in the area. This brings to six the total number of people killed during the week.

<http://thevoicenewspaper.ng/fulani-herdsmen-attack-two-benue-communities/>

This report is from the *Voice* newspaper. It narrates how the herders invaded and killed farmers in two communities in the Benue State of Nigeria. The reporter describes the Fulani herdsmen as invaders and killers. He also represents the villagers as victims. The verbs **invade** and **kill** allocate the role of actor to Fulani herdsmen while assigning the role of patient/sufferer to villagers. This report negatively presents Fulani herdsmen and positively presents villagers. The intention of the writer to nominate the ethnic name (Fulani) is an attempt to foreground and label the tribe negatively in the discourse. The attempt is a threat to the public self-image of the ethnic group. This has created two groups in society, the offenders and the victims. To foreground the negative presentation of Fulani herdsmen, the reporter uses Lexicalisation. War registers such as **invade**, **killing**, **violent incursion** and **insurgents** are used to lexicalize the report and present negative ‘Them’ (invaders) and the positive ‘Us’ (the victims). It helps to also understand the victims and the offenders. The reporter also evokes antecedent of herdsmen with the word **again**. Evocation of antecedent presents the action as habitual. We could infer that herdsmen are habitually invaders and killers of other ethnic groups that are different from theirs.

This is another instance that foregrounds ethnic ideology in the discourse. Readers will by this representation describe herdsmen as making effort to dominate and marginalise



other ethnic groups in the country. Herders are presented as ‘stronger’ by **invading** and **killing** others while villagers and farmers are ‘weaker’. This has a cognitive effect. The farmers feel intimidated and cheated while herders will feel superior to other dominated groups. The ideology may set ethnic groups in the country against one another because according to John (2014), the subjective report by newspapers is aggravating the conflict between herdsman and farmers as farmers feel they are not positively represented in the media. Other ethnic groups in the country may be united against the Fulani ethnic group. This is already reflecting in the dichotomy of North against South in the country and thereby aggravating the HFC. The following excerpt supports this.

Excerpt 92. When President Buhari returned from his sick leave last year, he made a speech which showed, by its contents, that it was primarily addressed to members of IPOB over their agitations for a separate state. In that speech, he described the killings by Fulani herdsman as “farmers versus herdsman clashes,” at a time thousands of people had been killed by the Fulani herdsman. It showed his attitude to the killings. As far as Buhari is concerned, it is a mere misunderstanding between farmers and herdsman and nothing more. And in that misunderstanding, the farmers are usually the aggressors (having been named first by him), while the herdsman are usually the victims who merely respond to defend themselves “against those who don’t want them to survive.”

<https://punchng.com/why-buhari-will-not-act-on-fulani-herdsman-killings/>

The excerpt is culled from *The Punch* newspaper’s editorial opinion. The editorial chronicles the reactions of the President to the herdsman attack in the country. The writer compares President Buhari’s attitude towards another agitator in the country (such as IPOB) which, according to the writer, is not as deadly as the Fulani herdsman. He refers to the statement delivered by the president after his medical trip abroad. The writer asserts that the President trivialises the actions of herdsman that exterminate lives and emphasises that of the IPOB that are agitating for separation without bloodshed. To the writer, this type of treatment reflects ethnic bigotry. The editorial represents President Buhari and the federal government as bias.

The President is reported to have referred to the killing by the herdsmen as **a mere misunderstanding** and sent troops to deal with other militants in the country. The opinion implicates that the President is nonchalant towards the killings believed to be carried out by the herdsmen who are his kinsmen. The editor intends to make readers infer that the President sympathises with the herdsmen as if they are the victim of the conflict. This validates the nepotism allegation against the President and consequently shows that the attack has ethnic colouration. It shows inequality among the ethnic groups in the country. The violent dominance of herdsmen over others is obvious in the discourse and encouraged by the federal government of President Buhari. Such beliefs will lead to hostility within and among ethnic groups which will eventually be between the two groups. That the address of the President is directed towards IPOB also implicates that the President deliberately foregrounds the actions of the IPOB negatively but background that of the herdsmen so that people will ‘crucify’ IPOB but ignore the actions of the herdsmen. The ‘Them’ vs. ‘Us’ representation is achieved where the IPOB is negatively represented and the herdsmen are positively represented by the President.

However, the editor negatively represents the President as biased and a bigot by evoking his antecedents. This is achieved with the use of lexicalisation. The editor started by manipulating the cognition of readers and the society at large to infer ethnic belief through lexicalization. The editor lexicalised his opinion with words and expressions such as **agitations, killings, clashes, thousands of people had been killed by herdsmen**. The author also foregrounds the killings with the use figures, which he uses to state the number of people killed by herdsmen but the President ignored it. The use of such statistics appeals to the emotions of readers. We could infer that human lives mean nothing to the President as long as the killing is carried out by the herdsmen and targeted at other ethnic groups. With this, other ethnic groups are left vulnerable to herdsmen attacks, and they feel dominated by the herdsmen who are majorly perceived to be Fulani. This expresses the mind of the participant which is in tandem with van Dijk’s (2002) submission that what people discuss is what is on their mind. Discourse is an expression of the mind which has a significant influence on the mental status of readers. *Punch* newspaper, like *The Voice* and *Vanguard*, presents the government as biased and pretender. This is evident in the representation of President Buhari. The President is expected to be neutral, but the comment insinuates that he

is biased because of the way he handles the situation. His disposition to the situation attracts public criticism; people feel he protects the interest of the Fulani. The representation reflects ethnic ideology where the Fulani is seen as dominating other ethnic groups through attacks, invasion, destruction, and so on. using herdsmen attack on farmers/villagers as an instrument and aided by the President and the Federal government.

While *Punch*, *Vanguard* and *The Voice* newspapers present herdsmen as invaders, attackers, killers, destroyers, *The Triumph* newspaper presents them as victims. The three newspapers present the attack on farmers as an unprovoked attack. *Triumph* newspaper presents the attack as a defence of the business of the herdsmen. The newspaper presents herdsmen positively while presenting farmers negatively. The following extract from *Triumph* newspaper explains further.

Excerpt 93. However, all these have now become history due to prevailing reality, arising from population explosion and the springing up of infrastructural development in hitherto virgin and undeveloped lands. As a result, available open land for grazing cattle is restricted due to constant encroachment of herdsmen and their cattle into farming land, which in recent years have been pitching farmers and herders at loggerheads, with fatal consequences in most cases across the nation. Also, the issue had and continued to generate heated debate between the protagonist and antagonists of open-grazing in the country.

<http://triumphnews.org/ganduje-mitigating-farmers-herders-conflict-through-creating-economic-opportunities/>

The above is an editorial opinion of *Triumph* newspaper discussing the efforts of the Kano State governor to curb the menace of herdsmen. In doing this, the editorial represents the herdsmen as victims. The newspaper believes that there is an encroachment on the farmland which is the reason for incessant attacks by the herdsmen. The editor foregrounds farmers by putting them first in the report as if they are the culprits while herdsmen is placed last to background them. The positioning of the actors in the statement is used to manipulate the mind of readers to believe that farmers are the trouble makers. This is different from what other newspapers do in representing the two actors. Other newspapers placed the herdsmen first and activate them as the agent. Instead of the editor to present the herdsmen as attacker or invader like other newspapers, the editor presents the attack as a

conflict between two groups of people. This newspaper is owned by the Kano State government which represents the voice of the north. The presentation of the newspaper implicates that the newspaper does not see herdsmen as attackers. The newspaper presents the herdsmen positively. The ethnic ideology about the herdsmen is positive. This presents other ethnic groups as discriminating against the herdsmen. Excerpt 95 is in tandem with this.

Excerpt 94. Worst still, the Fulani herdsmen have been rightly or wrongly accused of all sort of atrocities, such as: raping, maiming; arson; robbery; kidnapping; destruction of farm produce and outright killing of inhabitants of rural communities. Also, the infiltration of foreign Fulani-herdsmen armed with sophisticated weapons has worsened the situation, making it difficult to differentiate between local herdsmen and foreign herders.

<http://triumphnews.org/ganduje-mitigating-farmers-herders-conflict-through-screating-economic-opportunities/>

In another instance, *Triumph* newspaper believes the herdsmen are being accused of the allegations. This positively represents the group as victims. The representation backgrounds the negative actions of herdsmen. While other sampled newspapers represent herdsmen as invaders, **killers**, **destroyers**, *Triumph* newspaper contradict this by representing them as the victim through inference. *Triumph* editorial records that the herdsmen are foreigners. This is in tandem with the Federal Government allegation that the attackers are foreigners. The newspaper backgrounds herdsmen by fronting infiltration and nominalising it. This projects the foreigners as culprits and presents local herdsmen as insignificant in the discourse. It helps to background the negative insinuation by the Fulani ethnic group. The representation foregrounds the positive belief about the Fulani ethnic group. Its representation will have a positive influence on the cognitions of readers because phrases such as **wrongly accused and infiltration of foreigners** are used to manipulate the mind of readers to believe that local herdsmen are not guilty as reported in other newspapers.

The 'Us' and 'Them' representation of social actors in the herdsmen discourse helps to promote ethnic ideology. Ethnic discrimination informs of racism is evident in the news reports and editorial opinions in discourse. While *The Punch*, *Vanguard* and *The Voice* newspapers project negative beliefs about herdsmen, *Triumph* newspaper projects positive beliefs. This can be likened to the North and South dichotomy in the country. Although *The*

*Voice* newspaper is from the north in term of political demarcation of the country, the newspaper still projects negative ideology about herdsmen which foreground ethnic discrimination and domination. The action words (verb) are used to reveal the activities of social actors and project the two camps (victim and offender) in the discourse through role allocation. Lexicalisation remains a major linguistic tool in the discourse. By and large, newspapers successfully present the negative activities of the herdsmen to readers and the victimhood of villagers/farmers. This has made the herdsmen a common enemy to all while farmers/villagers are seen as friends. Ideological formation according to Ramanathan and Bee (2015) foregrounds positive self-presentation and negative others presentation. This is seen in this discourse as the selected newspapers polarise the Nigerian society into positive ‘We’ and negative ‘Them’. Basically, we can identify two races in the country, namely, the positive and negative races (victims and offenders).

#### 4.4.2. **Egalitarian ideology**

Those that hold this ideology believes that equality must be maintained in society. In other words, there must be no form of discrimination in society. To these people, irrespective of age, race, religion, language and culture, every human being is equal and must be treated as such. In HFD, this ideology is evident in the newspapers as seen in the following excerpt.

Excerpt 95. “Section 33(1) of chapter (iv) of the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria 1999 (as amended) provides that every person has a right to life and no one shall be deprived intentionally of his life, save in the execution of a court sentence in respect of criminal offence of which he has been found guilty in Nigeria. “The Africa Chapter on Human and Peoples Right of which Nigeria is a signatory, also provides for Right to Life and Respect for Integrity of Persons, Freedom from Slavery, Torture, Cruel, Inhuman and Degrading treatment. “Section 43 of the constitution provides that every citizen shall have a right to acquire and own immovable property anywhere in Nigeria.

<https://www.vanguardngr.com/2017/06/herdsmen-attacks-another-boko-haram/>

*Vanguard* newspaper’s editorial opinion describes herdsmen attack as another Boko Haram experience. The newspaper describes the attack as similar to that of Boko Haram. This is why some people believe the herdsmen must be proscribed as terrorists. In the

opinion, the editor refers to the debate at the floor of National Assembly where the Senators harp on the constitutional provision of equality of all in Nigeria. The editor copiously cites the Constitution to foreground that every Nigerian has equal right except where the court of competent jurisdiction pronounces otherwise. The editor also refers to the 'The Africa Charter on Human and Peoples' Right of which Nigeria is a signatory. These are efforts to foreground the right of every individual in the country. This implicates that nobody can be sent out of any region and no one also has the right to kill anybody. This is foregrounding the negative of the killer herdsmen and those seeking eviction of others from their region. The editorial believes that killing innocent people is denying them their fundamental human rights. The newspaper also believes that if equality is observed, no one will kill another which is leading to different agitation in the country. The ideology foregrounds every Nigerian as 'Us' with equal right and killers as 'Them' who should recognise the right of others. The editor copiously cited section 43 of the constitution, 'Section 43 of the constitution provides that every citizen shall have a right to acquire and own immovable property anywhere in Nigeria' to manipulate the minds of readers and inspire them to agree that all Nigerians are equal. This superimposes the Constitution on all Nigerians and makes them respect and obey it.

Excerpt 96. ...Anyone who wants to live with us here must obey the law. "The law is meant to protect the lives of the people of the state and herdsmen alike". No one is discriminated against and everyone must obey the law because it is what is obtainable everywhere.

<https://www.vanguardngr.com/killed-herdsmen-sack-benue-village-fresh-attack/>

*Vanguard* also reports an attack believed to be perpetrated by herdsmen in some Benue State villages. Samuel Ortom's voice is managed by the reporter with the use of quotation marks as in "**The law is meant to protect the lives of the people of the state and herdsmen alike**". The governor was quoted to have condemned the activities of the herdsmen. He condemns open grazing that is leading to different forms of attack which by extension claiming lives and properties. However, the report promotes the belief in equality among citizens in society. The report negates the condemnation with the use of the negator, **but**, to project an egalitarian belief. The negator helps to understand that the governor is not

against the herdsmen but their activities which involve killing, kidnappings, and so on. To negatively foreground the activities of the herdsmen, the governor evokes the existence of the anti-open grazing law. The evocation presents everyone that openly grazed as the enemy of society and will be seen as ‘they’. The governor foregrounds the positive of citizens and the state government with the use of negators, **not** targeted and no one and citizens and state government will be seen as ‘We’. These negators contradict the belief that the government of Benue State is against the Fulani herdsmen, but foreground egalitarian belief. Three negators are used in the excerpt to manipulate the cognition of readers and make them believe that the state is not against herdsmen but their activities. Egalitarian ideology, as shown in the report, has a positive effect on the cognition of readers as it helps them to realise that all are presumed equal in the state, despite the unprovoked attack. Excerpt 97 captures this.

Excerpt 97. ...such interventions should not be seen as lopsided, biased and selective. For instance, unlike the approach adopted in dealing with the IPOB agitators, ... not much has been done to curb the excesses of the rampaging Fulani herdsmen.

<https://punchng.com/ending-deadly-herdsmen-attacks/>

*Punch* newspaper also foregrounds the egalitarian ideology in its editorial opinion. The newspaper calls on the Federal Government to find every possible solution to the menace of herdsmen which, according to the newspaper, is similar to terrorism. The editorial observes that the Federal Government has not been fair enough to other ethnic groups in the country. The reporter lexicalises the report with words such as **lopsided**, **biased** and **selective**. These registers are used to manipulate readers to believe there is inequality in the country. The newspaper further makes references to the Federal Government’s effort in dealing with other agitators in the country, **For instance, unlike the approach adopted in dealing with the IPOB agitators**. The reference is the evocation of antecedents where the editor foregrounds what the Federal Government has done in the past to convince readers that citizens are not equal in the country. The editor uses a negator to foreground nepotism on the part of the Federal Government. The editor states that not much has been done to curb rampaging Fulani herdsmen. This presupposes different ethnic

groups and different agitators are contending peacefully in the country. One could infer from this that there is no equity in dealing with the agitators. It is against this background that the editorial calls on the Federal Government to shun lopsidedness, biasness and selectiveness. The implicature is that the country belongs to everyone irrespective of their tribes, languages and affiliations and they must be treated equally. The shared knowledge, however, reveals that the Federal Government, under President Buhari, has not been fair to all. The newspaper condemns this by campaigning against lopsidedness, biasness and selectiveness which are foreground as the hallmark of the government at the centre. This constructs the Federal Government as ‘They’ and the citizens as ‘We’. The newspaper believes in equality among citizens, hence the projection of egalitarian ideology. The following excerpt provides evidence.

Excerpt 98. It has been alleged that while IDPs in other parts of the country, ... are being treated well by the federal government, those displaced by activities of armed herdsmen have been ignored by agencies ....the Federal Government should treat all fairly. ...to protect lives and property of the citizenry, and equally care for the people in need, not in any way considering regional preferences.

<https://thevoicenewspaper.ng/sema-accuses-fg-of-favouritism-in-handling-idps/>

*The voice* newspaper reports the accusation of a social organisation in Benue State. In the report, the organisation insinuates that the Federal Government is biased in dealing with internally displaced people (IDP) centres across the country. The report notes that, **IDP camps in the states are as vulnerable as those in other Northern states**. The newspaper makes use of evocation of antecedents by referring to what the Federal Government is doing in other IDP centres. This is to foreground the fact that the Federal Government is biased. The reporter manages the voice of the secretary of the organisation by referring to status and used referential signals, according to, to detach himself from the source of the news. However, the reporter uses lexicalisation to foreground the need for an egalitarian society. Expressions such as, **as those in Benue state and care for the people in need, not in any way considering regional preferences** lexicalises the excerpt. These lexes promote the egalitarian ideology. It reveals that every citizen should be treated equally. The use of the phrase, **not in any way considering regional preferences**



presupposes that there is discrimination in dealing with the IDPs in the country. The implicature in the expression is that all are equal and should be treated as such. With the negator, not one could infer that the reporter wants everyone to be treated equally. This represents the ideology of the newspaper about how to treat everyone in the country. The reporter is able to manipulate readers through lexicalisation and foreground the negative of the government.

Out of the four sampled newspapers, three (*The Vanguard*, *Punch* and *Voice*) foreground egalitarian ideology as presented by social actors in HFD. These newspapers believe in equality among citizens, and they are projecting it using different discourse strategies in HFD. The strategies they employ to negotiate the ideology include: implicature, negator, presupposition, evocation of antecedent, and lexicalisation. These are used to manipulate society to believe that citizens have to be equal in the country. The sampled newspapers condemn herdsmen activities, and represent their activities negatively while other citizens are presented positively to readers. The ‘We’ vs. ‘Them’ representation aids the formation of such ideology.

#### 4.4.3. **Humanist ideology**

Those that hold this ideology believe that human beings are superior to other beings. It talks about human dignity. It expresses man’s ability to survive through reasoning and scientific efforts. Humanist ideology believes that out of all creatures, human beings have the endowed ability to control other species and should be accorded the honour. They should not be treated like other species such as animals, and so on. In HFD, there are insinuations that the herders prefer their animals to every other creature. *Punch*, *Vanguard* and *Voice* newspaper foreground the humanist ideology. The following excerpt is an evidence from the selected newspaper.

Excerpt 99. The lawmaker... condemned the attack on one of his constituents and farmer, He further called on his people to defend themselves in line with the laws of the land as no amount of cow can be compared with the sacredness of human life.

[www.vanguardnews.com](http://www.vanguardnews.com)

*Vanguard* newspaper reports an attack that occurred in Ebonyi State of Nigeria and quoted a member of the Ebonyi State assembly advising members of his constituency to

defend themselves against the herdsmen. The reporter managed the voice of the speaker by mentioning his name to detach himself from the source of the news. The verbs **condemned** and **called** reveal the role played by the honourable member of the House of Assembly in the discourse. The reporter lexicalised the report with words that present human life as sacred and superior to any other being to manipulate the mind of readers to believe in the superiority of human being. Expressions such as, **no amount of cow and sacredness of human life present humans as more important than any other creature** lexicalised the report. Negator, **no** is used by the reporter to negate the significance of cow's life. The advice by the Honourable to his people implicates that no life can be compared to human life as against the belief of the herders that animal lives are important. The reporter successfully presents the 'We' and 'They' situations to show the sacredness of human life. The cow is represented as 'They' while human beings are represented as 'We'. The reporter manipulates readers' mind through his choice of words. Words such as defend themselves, present herdsmen, negatively as the enemy that needs to be confronted while the people of Ivo state constituency is positively represented as vulnerable and under attack. Choice of words enables the polarisation of society. The following excerpt further discusses this.

Excerpt 100. ...the blatant manner in which the unprovoked attacks are carried out on the defenceless, innocent and law-abiding members of communities across the country, as children and women are not left out in the violence against humanity. People have been made to become refugees in their abode. The incessant attacks in Benue and other parts of the country suggest that the government is not placing adequate premium on the lives of Nigerians.

<https://punchng.com/ending-deadly-herdsmen-attacks/>

*Punch* newspaper editorial opinion admonishes the Federal Government to find a lasting solution to herdsmen/farmers' attacks. The newspaper laments the high rate of lives and properties that are being lost daily as a result of the attack. *The Punch* foregrounds the humanist ideology by harp on the fact that human life is superior to other beings. He presents human lives in the affected states as vulnerable. The editorial is lexicalised with words such as **unprovoked attacks, defenceless, innocent** and **law-abiding** to construct villagers as vulnerable and victims of herdsmen attack. This presents the villagers positively

and the herdsmen negatively. To further present herdsmen negatively, the editor asserts that children and women are also killed. In war situations, children and women are expected to be preserved because they are presumed to be armless. The editorial foregrounds the superiority of human lives through lexicalisation as well. With words such as violence against humanity, government is not placing adequate premium on the lives, readers will infer that human lives are sacred. The editor uses negator, **not** to reveal the government's neglect of human lives. Presupposition and implicature are also used. That government failed to secure the lives of Nigerian entails that the government is placing a premium on other lives, which can be inferred to be cows considering the context of this discourse. The statement implicates that the government ignored what is more important, human lives, and focused on what is not important, cow lives. One can infer from this that human life is superior to other lives. The 'We' vs. 'They' situation is achieved through lexicalization. Government and cow are presented as 'They' while human life is presented as 'We'. This representation manipulates readers' minds to agree with the belief that human life is sacred and superior to any other life. The negative others and positive of self is achieved with the use of lexicalization, presupposition, implicature and the contextual variables which include the on-going event and the participants in the discourse. Excerpt 101 explains this further.

Excerpt 101. The scarce regard for the sanctity of human life, as callously exhibited by the spate of senseless killings of defenceless Agatu people by rampaging,  
<https://punchng.com/fulani-herdsmen-and-the-killing-fields-of-benue/>

In another report of herdsmen attack in Benue State by *Punch* newspaper, the reporter described human lives as sacred and superior. This ideology is foregrounded through lexicalisation, presupposition, implicature and entailment. The reporter lexicalised the report with words such as scarce regards, sanctity of human life, callous, senseless killings, defenceless, rampaging. These words show that lives are being terminated in the state with impunity. It presupposes that there is a conflict between the herdsmen and farmers that is leading to the extermination of human lives. The background knowledge presents the real situation in the state and show neglect of human lives. The word **sanctity** entails the superiority of human lives compare to other lives. This also foregrounds the humanist ideology. Senseless killings by **rampaging armed herdsmen** implicates that there are no

regard for human lives as they are being terminated by herdsmen. The reporter negatively presents herdsmen with the use of qualifiers. **Rampaging, armed** and the preposition, **by** are used to present herdsmen negatively while defenceless is used to present human lives as victims. The reporter manipulates readers' belief and achieved the negative representation of others and self-positive representation with the use of lexicalization, entailment, implicature and presupposition.

Excerpt 102. ...Whereas the constitution speaks about human beings, some northern politicians are lumping cows with humans. Do they mean cows and humans are now synonymous or that human rights are also cow rights?

<https://thevoicenewspaper.ng/Will-the-Nigerian-Cow-Push-Nigeria-to-the-Precipice>

*The Voice* newspaper editorial opinion discusses the menace of herders in the country. The newspaper opines that the havoc being caused by herders is more than their good considering the number of lives and properties lost. In the editorial, the editor foregrounds the humanist ideology. He opines that human life is more important and sacred compared to other lives. To sustain the belief, the editor refers to the provision of the Constitution. The expression, **whereas the constitution speaks about human beings** entails that human life is superior to animal lives which informs why the Constitution makes provision for humans and not animals. The editor foregrounds the provision of the constitution to achieve his communicative goal of manipulating readers' mental ability to believe the humanist ideology. The editor sustains the claim by foreground the negative of the '**northern politicians**'. The expression some northern politicians are lumping cows with humans implicates that '**the politicians**' extol animal lives above human lives. We could infer that human life is superior to animal lives. To further foreground the ideology, the editor uses rhetoric question where he query the equity between human life and that of animal. This is to show the sacredness of human lives, which foregrounds the humanist ideology. The northern politicians and cows are presented as 'Them' while human lives are presented as 'Us'. This foregrounds the negative activities of herdsmen and the positive of villagers.

The humanist ideology is achieved with the use of discourse strategies such as presuppositions, implicatures, negators, entailments, and lexicalisation and negative and positive presentations of actors used in the discourse.

#### 4.4.4. **Pacifist ideology**

Pacifists believe that war and violence are wrong. Those that hold this ideology oppose violence and refuse to participate and encourage people to engage in violent activities but a peaceful approach to issues. Pacifists rather appeal for peace. They prefer a peaceful approach to war and conflict situations. The following excerpt captures this belief.

Excerpt 103. “The Senate is sad that on May 22, 2017, these ravaging herdsmen entered into farmland located in Ewu community, Esan Central Local Government of Edo State, raping two women,... destroyed crops and sacked a lot of persons from their farmlands. ...the youths of Ewu engaged in a peaceful protest to draw the attention of the Federal Government to the problem.

<https://www.vanguardngr.com/2017/06/herdsmen-attacks-another-boko-haram/>

*Vanguard* newspaper editorial opinion opines that herdsmen attack can be described as another Boko Haram. The newspaper highlights different attacks believed to have been perpetrated by herdsmen. It also discusses their effects on the lives of their host communities. The newspaper observed that the host communities are not as violent as the herdsmen, otherwise the country would have been in serious crisis. In reporting this, the newspaper foregrounds pacifist ideology. According to the newspaper, **the villagers, rather than retaliate, considers peaceful protest as a means of solving the problem.** To achieve the pacifist ideology, the editor manages the voice of the Nigeria Senate to detach himself from the source of the news that discusses the activities of the herdsmen in Edo state. The verb, **is**, is used to assign the role of active actor to the national assembly. The editorial represents herdsmen using lexes as **destroyers, rapists, and criminals** to present them negatively to readers. The qualifier **ravaging**, describes herdsmen as destroyers while the verb **raping** describes them as rapists and verbs **strangle, destroyed, and sacked** helped to

describe them as criminals. These are negative representation of herdsmen. The negative representation is achieved with lexicalisation in words such as ravaging herdsmen, **strangle to death, destroy, and criminal activities**. The villagers/farmers are, however, described as victims. Lexicalisation also helps to understand that the villagers were **raped, strangled and killed**. In addition, we see that their farmlands are destroyed. The villagers are positively presented to readers as lovers of peace. Lexicalisation also aids this presentation. With expressions such as engaged in a peaceful protest. This entails that the youths do not want violence and war. The editorial also states that one **Ehimen Donald Abuya (a member of the village)** was shot and the victim is lying critically ill. This further presents the villagers as the victim and shows the villagers are not warmongers. Although the editorial backgrounds the agent in the expression through passivisation, readers able to identify the agent through the linguistic context, role of participants and their shared belief about the herdsmen. The ‘We’ vs. ‘Them’ categorisation of the country is achieved through positive and negative representations of the actors. The categorisation helps to foreground the pacifist ideology. While the editor presents his mind in the discourse, he manipulates the minds of his readers through lexicalisation and implicature. Excerpt 104 captures this further.

Excerpt 104. ...“A peace meeting was immediately initiated with the chairman of the LGA and the Head of the Fulani Community in the area,... “Unfortunately, as the search and peace meeting were ongoing, some herdsmen surreptitiously went on rampage, resulting in matcheting to death of 15 persons...

<http://triumphnews.org/farmers-herders-clash-over-grazing-in-benue/>

*Triumph* newspaper reports a clash between herdsmen and youths in Benue State. The report narrates how the two groups clashed and terminated lives and destroyed properties. This was narrated to the reporter by the police in the state. The reporter manages the voice of the police to detach himself from the source of the news. The verb **stated**, reveals the speaker to readers. In the report, the role of actor is assigned to the youth by the verb **engaged** to show that the youth confront the herds. To further present the youth negatively as destroyers, *Triumph* newspaper uses the lexis maiming to allocate the role of agent to the youth. The newspaper describes the youths as **attackers, kidnappers** and

**killers**, with the use of lexicalisation in the report. Words such as **fight**, **maiming** some **cows**, **herders missing**, and **killing**, strengthen the description of the youth. The herdsmen are presented as victims with words such as missing herdsmen and maiming of cows. In retaliation for the attack, **the herdsmen also went on rampage, resulting in matcheting to death of 15 persons**, mainly **women** and **children**. This also presents the herdsmen negatively. However, to achieve peace, the police called for peace meeting. This implicates that the police prefer peace and believed the crisis can only be solved through peace meetings. This presents the police as agents of peace in the country. It is a positive representation of the Nigerian police command.

The positive and negative presentations foreground pacifist ideology. Nigeria police are presented as agents of peace mediating between the two groups. Instead of being biased by supporting one group and punish the other, the Nigeria Police prefer peaceful settlement of the conflict. To achieve the ideology, the reporter manipulates the mental ability of readers through lexicalisation. Voice management is also a significant instrument used to construct Nigerian police as agents of peace.

Excerpt 105. ...the president ignores the report of the 2014 national conference ...traditional and religious leaders should intensify efforts by appealing to their subjects to embrace peace while those apprehended should be severally punished.

<https://punchng.com/herdsmen-attacks-villages-in-benue-state/>

*Punch* newspaper reports that herdsmen attack other villages in Benue State. The report narrates the number of lives terminated and properties destroyed. The report also condemns violence but embrace peace. In this report, a community leader was interviewed. He gave his admonition to the government on how to solve the problem between herdsmen and farmers. The report condemns the government of President Buhari through proposition. The reporter asserts that **the president ignores the report of the 2014 national conference**. This implicates that if 2014 report had been adopted, peace would have been achieved. The reporter uses negator, not to present the government as irresponsible. *Punch* newspaper presents the President negatively to readers. It concludes by inviting traditional rulers to attend to the peace of their communities. This presupposes that the effort towards peace-building is not enough in the areas and also entails that the reporter desires peace and that war or crisis is not the way to go. The expression that the traditional

rulers should appeal to their subjects implicates that peace can only be achieved through appealing. In other words, violence cannot bring peace but only peace begets peace. To sustain the peace, if achieved, the report asks the security agents to arrest and prosecute perpetrators to avoid retaliation. This further foregrounds the pacifist ideology. It means the reporter wants the society to be peaceful, hence, he did not only report that but also foregrounds it through different strategies. The reporter is able to manipulate the mind of readers through negator, implicature, entailment, and presupposition. The negator, **not** and entailment help to present self-positive by the reporter, as an agent of peace and representative of citizens while negative others presentation is achieved as well with the use of negator to condemn activities of herdsmen.

The pacifist ideology is achieved through different linguistic tools such as negator, entailment, presupposition, implicature, voice management, and lexicalisation. Available data show that all newspapers selected project pacifist ideology in HFD.

#### 4.4.5. Political ideology

Political ideology is the belief of a group of people that explains how society is or should work. They offer political, social and cultural manuals on how society is managed. The following excerpt captures this.

Excerpt 106. This is not acceptable. “All that we seek is justice and justice must be given to our people; that is why we were elected to lead. Anything outside that is not acceptable...the Miyetti Allah who had threaten must be arrested...to kill farmers...

<https://www.vanguardngr.com/killed-herdsmen-sack-benue-village-fresh-attack/>

*Vanguard* newspaper reports an attack believed to have been carried out by the herdsmen. The attack occurred in communities in Benue State of Nigeria. It claims lives and properties. The governor of the state lamented the poor handling of the situation by the federal government. He demands the arrest of the leadership of Miyetti Allah in the state because of their roles in the attack. The reporter manages the voice of the governor by using quotation mark to show the direct source of the information and detach self from the source of the news. The reporter uses relativisation, **who had threaten attack** to represent Miyetti Allah as a threat. The relative pronoun, **who** helps to label the association as a threat in the expression **who had threatened**. They have gone scot-free and move freely,



shows that they are offenders. The association is also labelled as killers with the use of the verb, **kill** which allocates the role of agent to the association, Miyetti Allah. Negator in the expression, **not acceptable** is used to contradict the activities of the association. It (not acceptable) is repeated to emphasise the need for justice in the state. The word justice is repeated twice to show its importance if peace must be achieved. The governor, as the chief executive, expressed how the society should be managed to foreground the political ideology. According to him, justice must be given to the people in the society. No society can experience peace without justice. The reporter managed the voice of the governor with the use of quotation marks. This is to detach the reporter from the source of the news. The first person plural pronoun, we is used to include the governor as a member of the political class who decides how the society is expected to be managed. This also helps the governor to score political points, as citizens will see him as a responsive governor.

The reporter lexicalised his report with lexicons such as **threatened**, **kill** and **mercenaries** to present the association (MACBAN) negatively to readers. The governor foregrounds the ideology by accepting responsibility for a good society. He states that **that is why we were elected to lead**. This statement commits the governor and political leaders to the responsibility of maintaining a good society. Political ideology is achieved through the assertion which manipulates the cognition of readers to believe the ideology. Excerpt 107 also supports this.

Excerpt 107. When criminals – no matter their political, ethnic or religious leaning – brazenly hack other Nigerian citizens to death in their homes, the President should go beyond issuing a belated press statement. This is what statesmen do in other climes when the corporate existence of their polity is at stake.

[www.punchng.com](http://www.punchng.com)

*Punch* editorial opinion condemns the look warm attitude of the President and the Federal Government towards the herdsmen attack. The newspaper believes that the federal government is expected to be proactive in handling the attack as done in other climes. *Punch* newspaper uses implicature to indict the president of nepotism. The expression **no matter their political, ethnic, or religious leaning** implicates that the president discriminates based on ethnic, political and religious leaning. **Belated press** statement as used in the opinion

presupposes that the President is expected to comment on the report of attacks by herdsmen but failed to do so. It also entails that the president is not proactive as expected of a good political leader. The president is presented as a statesman to foreground his leadership status. These are used to show that the President has failed in performing its duty. With this, it is expected that he will decide what happens in the country. He is expected to determine how society is managed. The editor relates this society to another through comparison. Lexicalisation is used by the editor with words such as late, belated, and not reached out to present the president's action negatively.

The presentation creates the 'We' vs. 'Them' situation. The president is categorized with herdsmen as 'Them'. Society is presented as victim of the president's attitude towards the herdsmen attack. *The Punch* newspaper is able to manipulate the mental capacity of readers through lexicalization, implicature, and presupposition. The editor foregrounds the belief that a group of people are elected to manage the affairs of society. The group is represented by the President here who failed to act as expected. Excerpt 108 aligns with this.

Excerpt 108. The President should not pretend otherwise, as his predecessors in office did, looking the other way and allowing the herdsmen to overrun defenceless farmers.

<http://triumphnews.org/farmers-herders-clash-over-land-invasion/>

*Triumph* newspaper reports a clash that occurred between herdsmen and farmers as a result of land invasion by the herdsmen in Zamfara State. The clash as usual claimed lives and properties. *Triumph* laments that the Federal Government is not being proactive in handling the situation. The report alleged that the government has roles to play in society to maintain peace and order and secure lives and properties. This is to foreground the political ideology which is the belief that political leaders determine how society is managed. In the report, the reporter foregrounds the negative of the herdsmen and the positive of farmers. The foregrounding helps to show that those that are responsible for maintaining the society have failed. The reporter also uses comparison, evocation of antecedent, negator, presupposition, implicature, and lexicalization. The reporter uses negator (**not pretend**) to warn the incumbent to desist from **pretence**. This is to tell the incumbent that they have

roles to play in managing society. That the **president should not pretend** implicates that the president is pretending. The warning not to pretend presupposes that the president as a political leader has role to play in the society which is to secure lives and properties but has not been doing that as expected. The warning is challenging the president to wake up to his responsibility as the ‘manager’ of the country. The antecedents of the president are also evoked by informing readers that the previous president did not manage the Boko haram insurgent properly and it led to terrorism. This is a revelation that the previous president failed. The reporter evokes the antecedent to warn the present president against failure like his predecessor. To label herdsmen negatively and alert the President on the need to be proactive, the reporter compared herdsmen to Boko haram insurgents. Boko haram has been labeled an international terrorist. The reporter is warning the president on the herdsmen case to prevent another terrorist organization from emerging. To show that the political leaders have roles to play in the society, the reporter lexicalised the report with expressions such as not **pretending, looking the other way, allowing the herdsmen to overrun defenceless farmers, official pretence**. The qualifier, Defenceless in Defenceless farmers shows that farmers are vulnerable and victims of herdsmen attack.

The evocation of antecedents and negative labeling of herdsmen through comparison and the description of farmers as victims polarise the country into ‘Us vs. ‘Them’ groups. The polarisation easily helps to manipulate readers’ cognition to believe that society is vulnerable. The vulnerability exposes readers to the belief that political leaders are saddled with the role of managing society and securing lives and properties. Excerpt 109 below also supports this.

Excerpt 109. ...when the Nigerian Governors Forum (NGF), at its 25th virtual meeting, in a historic move,... It was historic in the sense that it was the NGF groups APC, APGA and PDP governors! Meaning: Pain does not care about political alphabets, tribal marks, ethnic labels, faith or geographical locations!

<https://thevoicenewspaper.ng/Will-the-Nigerian-Cow-Push-Nigeria-to-the-Precipice>

*The Voice* newspaper editorial opinion expatiates the menace of herdsmen in the country. According to the newspaper, the herdsmen that have been killing and destroying

properties in the country is capable of pulling the country apart. The newspaper, however, believes that the political leaders have roles to play in managing society. *The Voice* newspaper narrates the actions of the Nigerian Governors' Forum (NGF) in taking responsibility. Qualifier, **historic** is used to reveal to readers that such action has not taken place in the past. The action of NGF is described as historic. This description presupposes that there has been NGF in the past that did not unite on the issue of national interest. The implicature, however, is that the present NGF is responsible to the people. Proverb, **Pain does not care about political alphabets, tribal marks, ethnic labels, faith or geographical locations!** is also used to foreground the 'oneness' of the country irrespective of ethnic, linguistic, or geographical differences. The editor evokes the antecedent of Governor Ortom of Benue State by identified what he did. This is used to reveal the significance of political leaders taking responsibility as and when due. The editor successfully manipulates the mind of readers by expressing and foregrounding the belief that political leaders determine how society works by assigning roles to the NGF through the use of presupposition, implicature, proverb, and qualifier. These linguistic tools help to foreground the negative acts of the herdsmen, failed government and the positive of the vulnerable citizens who are victims of the failed government.

The four sampled newspapers foreground the political ideology. The newspapers believe that the political leaders have roles to play in determining how the country runs. 'Us' vs. "Them' groups are foregrounded where the herdsmen are labeled negatively (as killers, invaders and destroyers) and farmers are labeled positively (as victims and negative acts of herdsmen and Miyetti Allah are foregrounded by the newspapers while the positive acts (as vulnerable and victim) are foregrounded. The newspapers, using their editorials and news reports, achieves the ideology through relativisation, labelling, voice management, negator, lexicalization, implicature, presupposition, comparison, evocation of antecedents, and qualifier.

#### 4.4.6. **Religious ideology**

The herdsmen discourse in the newspapers also presents religious ideology. Religious ideology is the belief in the supremacy of a being that is controlling the affairs of the universe and whosoever fails to believe in it is inferior. There are different approaches to worshipping the superior being. It is believed that each approach is superior

to others and whosoever that does not believe in one approach can be manipulated by all means to believe. Believers follow the tenets of their religion and believe it is the best. This belief polarizes society into ‘We’ vs. ‘They’ to create in and out-group. It is insinuated by some Nigerians that there is a plan by some Muslim elites who are in the position of authority to ‘Islamise’ Nigeria. The insinuation further claims that they (Muslim political elites) want to eliminate all other religions in the country (*see: Sahara Reporter June 1, 2016 and The Punch, November 11, 2017, and so on.*). There is the belief that the empowerment of the herdsmen who are mainly Muslims, is to exterminate Christian communities. This is seen in the continuous attack on Christian communities/churches such as in Benue and Jos and other states of the country. The incessant killing in Christian dominated areas and churches and killing of Christian priests by herdsmen who are presumably Muslim brothers are evident in the herdsmen attacks. This is captured in excerpt 110 below.

Excerpt 110. Again, herdsmen attack another Benue Church,... killing seven persons who were taking refuge in the church after being displaced by the raging herdsmen..

<https://www.vanguardngr.com/2018/04/herdsmen-attack-another-benue-church-kill-seven-idps/>

This is a report of the attack by herdsmen on churches in Benue State by *Vanguard* newspaper. In the above extract, the word **again** and **another**, are used to evoke the antecedent of the herdsmen in the attack against churches which reflect habitual actions by the herdsmen. The verb **attack** is used to allocate the role of agent (attacker) to the herdsmen and that of the sufferer to the churches to present herdsmen as the perpetrator of the actions and churches as victims. The word **again** entails that it has happened in the past. There is also implicature in the word, which is that there is a deliberate and continuous attack on Christian centres. The news continues by informing the readers that the church was not just attacked but worshippers were killed in the church. The church, according to the report, has been playing host to the displaced people. This shows the humanitarian efforts of the church. However, it was attacked by those who are planning to exterminate churches and their activities. The presentation is used to induce readers’ emotion to see churches and members as victims of herdsmen. The reporter lexicalised the report with

words such as killing, raging, displaced, militants and so on, to appeal to the emotion of readers by presenting churches (and by extension Christians) as victims.

The report also states that catholic priests and worshippers were killed. This implicates that the attack is not accidental as it does not occur in a single location. The use of the qualifier, sporadically describes the action as deliberate and continuous against churches. These incidents buttress the assumption that there is religious discrimination that upholds the belief in superiority among religious groups in the country. Lexicalisation enables the insinuation that there is an agenda that is targeted at churches. Words such as killing of priests, worshippers and displaced people in the church aided the formation of the ideology. The media emphasises the nominal choices to foreground the ideology. Lexicalisation also helps to manipulate the cognition of readers through emotion-induced words. This ideology foregrounds the ‘bad’ of the attackers and the ‘good’ of the churches, as a refuge for displaced people. The attackers are thus seen as ‘agents’ of religious agenda. Excerpt 111 below supports this further.

Excerpt 111. A Reuters report back in 2016 noted that while these clashes are usually brushed off, “Islamist militants are exploiting Fulani anger to spread jihad from the thinly populated north to its center”. ...So the jihadists came and said ‘OK, join our group and we will help you fight to get it back.’”

<https://thevoicenewspaper.ng/herdsmen-attack-and-their-religious-agenda/>

This is opinion news from *The Voice* newspaper, narrating the experience of the churches and their priest in the hand of the herders and the activities of the herders in the villages. Referencing and evidentiality are used here to foreground the religious belief. The editor relates herdsmen to Jihad through reference and evidence. Jihad is an Islamic militant which according to Ogungbemi (2018:58) has several phases. According to Ogungbemi, the Jihad of Uthman dan Fodio constituted another milestone in the spread of Islam into Northern Nigeria. Between 1804 and 1810 Uthman dan Fodio, a Fulani man waged serious war claiming he wants to purify Islam and to wipe out idol worshipping and flush out all forms of distortion and foreign heretical innovation from the religion. To him, anything non-Islam is an idol. The comparison of herdsmen and Jihad implicates that the herdsmen have come to

complete or further what Uthman Dan Fodio started. Since Jihad is an agenda to spread Islam, the editorial opinion entails that Fulani herdsmen are promoting Islam as well. This informs the reason for different attacks on churches. The editor evokes the antecedent of Jihad, by narrating what they have done in the past to strengthen the belief. The relationship between herdsmen and Jihad as created in the editorial opinion to manipulate and appeals to the emotion of readers and makes them agree with the ideology.

Religious ideology cannot be jettisoned in any discourse of this nature since the nation is a multi-religious nation. There is the possibility of religious polarisation as seen in the discourse. Religious ideology is formed with the use of lexicalisation, evocation of antecedents, presupposition, implicature, penchant for figures, and evidentiality. Since churches and priests including church members are targeted in the attack, it is easier to form the ideology in favour of religious discrimination. The verb, are, is used to express the state of being of the Fulani. It is used to describe the Islamist militants as a body using the Fulani as an agent of religious agenda. According to Brubaker (2013:5), Language and religion are basic sources and forms of social, cultural, and political identification. In this discourse, linguistic tools such as lexicalisation, evidentiality, evocation of antecedents, presupposition and foregrounding are used to present Islam and its agent (herdsmen) negatively and positively presents Christianity.

#### 4.4.7. **Revolutionist ideology**

Revolutionists are groups of persons who believed in fighting for themselves and/or beliefs at all cost. Whatever it takes revolutionists, they fight for what they believed. The case of the Fulani herdsmen is not different from this considering their actions and subsequent representation in newspapers. The Fulani conflict with other tribes in the country is not a new phenomenon. It is an age-long crisis. The Fulani jihads have been able to conquer some parts of the country in the past while they are unable to conquer some. As earlier mentioned, the states they were unable to conquer include: the present-day Plateau, Benue, Taraba, Nasarawa and Kogi states. Perhaps, this forms part of the reasons they are aggressively facing this part of the country, especially Benue State. Newspapers make use of some linguistic choices that make the herdsmen/farmers' conflict look like the Fulani is back to complete the assignment they started several years back. The choice of words

presents the revolutionary ideology. This has arisen some feelings in the society about the herdsmen attack. The kind of representation given to them in the newspapers enables such assumption within and among readers. The umbrella body of the Fulani herdsmen (MACBAN) has on several platforms claimed that the attack is a result of infringement on the right of Fulani and cattle rustling. The following excerpts, from the selected newspapers, reflect the ideology. Excerpt 112 below captures this.

Excerpt 112. ...the marauding herdsmen resorted to sacking the community after their entreaty to be allowed into the community... ...“they later came back and claimed that the cows had been killed...They insisted that it was a ploy ...

The attack was between herders and villagers in Gwer Local Government, Benue State, Nigeria. The herders had forcefully attempted to enter the village after being turned back by villagers in earlier attempts. It is clear that they wanted to claim some things by entering the host communities. They believed they must graze in the community and wanted to use every available means to enter the community. The following expressions reveal their activities as invaders, **entreaty to be allowed** and **sent emissaries to the village**. These expressions entail that they had earlier indicated interests in entering the community but were rejected. They believe it is part of their human right to graze anywhere in the country. Every revolutionist has a particular interest they are protecting. In the case of the herdsmen, they are protecting the interest of their animals, willing to give them (animals) feed at all cost. The herdsmen need free grazing land without bothering on who suffers the consequence. The verb ‘**turn down**’, reveals the action of the villagers who do not want the herders in their community for fear of attack and destruction. The herders later ‘**came back**’. This is another verb that reveals the insistence of the herders in entering the village. This shows they never give up, a trait that is similar to that of a revolutionist. The word ‘but’ is also used in the extract to negate the request of the herdsmen from the communities. The refusals of the villagers to what the herdsmen are requesting led to the attack on the villagers, and it eventually claimed lives and properties. This goes to tell readers that the herdsmen are resolute in fighting for what they presumed is their right in the country. The ongoing activities, herdsmen conflict reveals the reason for the insistence of the herders and enables the interpretation of their come back. The relationship between



the participants involved enables the interpretation of the ideology. The hostility between the herdsmen and farmers is known to readers and this helps the interpretation of such expressions as entreaty to be allowed and sent emissaries to the village, turn down and come back to mean refusal and insistence. The insistence reveals the revolutionary belief. Herdsmen are negatively represented as invaders, destroyers, and threats while villagers are represented as victims and innocents. The representation polarises the country along ‘They’ vs. ‘We’ and strengthens the negative and positive representation. This is captured further in excerpt 113 below.

Excerpt 113. Governor Ortom wrote to the Vice President, then Acting President, on 7th June 2017 protesting a newspaper publication where the leadership of Miyetti Allah was reported to have stated that it was opposed to the Open Grazing Prohibition law of the state and that they would mobilize to resist the law. “The Miyetti Allah had written to the Vice President on the 5th of June 2017 on the same law protesting several sections of the law...

<http://thevoicenewspaper.ng/herders-attack-farmers-and-destroy-cassava/>

Governor Ortom of Benue State’s voice was managed by the reporter where he expresses his dissatisfaction with the forceful action of MACBAN. The participant explains, that the umbrella body (MACBAN) of the herdsmen is protesting against the state law that prohibits open grazing. The anti-grazing law was instituted to minimise, if not eradicate, the crisis between herders and farmers in Benue state. MACBAN as the mouthpiece of the herders is protecting the interest of their members in the country. They openly opposed the state regulations they perceived is against their members. The association is resolute and confrontational by insisting on what they want and antagonizing the state government. Verbs such as **opposed**, **mobilised**, **resist**, **protesting** assigned an active role to the association and used to present the association as against the law. Instead of negotiating or approach the court for redress, they decided to engage the state by taking laws into their own hands. They are not observing the process but rather protesting violently. The progressive verb, protesting is used to express an ongoing action. This shows that the action is in progress. The negative action of MACBAN is presented in the text while the positive of villagers and Benue state government is presented. There are two

camps as can be seen in the representation. The in- and out-group are created with the ‘We’ and ‘Them’ dichotomy. MACBAN is represented as ‘Them’ while villagers and the government of the state are represented as ‘We’. The negative and positive representations of the social actors promote the ideology. Excerpt 114 also supports this.

Excerpt 114. One of the most recent attacks by suspected Fulani herdsmen occurred on Friday, May 20, 2016, when two persons were killed and six others injured following an attack on Oke Ako in Ikole Local Government Area of Ekiti State. It was alleged that the assailants had attacked their victims for refusing to allow the herdsmen use their farmland for grazing their cattle.

<https://punchng.com/b-haram-fulani-herdsmen-kill-3000-buhari/>

Herdsmen attacked a village in Ekiti State and killed villagers. They are represented as killers, attackers and invaders while the villagers are represented as victims of the attack. The attack is said to be persistent. This is evident in the expression One of the most recent attacks. The expression implicates that the present attack is not the first. The above instance is another evidence to support the revolutionist ideology. The word **assailant** is used to label the herdsmen negatively and show that they use force to claim what does not belong to them. The reporter further states that the villagers **refused them**, hence the forceful attack. The verb attack allocates the role of agent to the herders who used force to enter a village to take what they believe is their right. The villagers are described as the sufferer. The verb attack helps readers to understand the actor, the action and the sufferer. Herders are negatively represented as **killers, invaders, destroyers** and **attackers** through their activities and enabled by the verbs while villagers are represented as victims. This appeals to the emotion of readers and makes them accept two camps in the country, ‘We’ vs. ‘They’ where the herders are presented as ‘They’ and farmers as ‘We’. This representation also promotes the revolutionist ideology in the discourse.

Ideology is a general belief held by a group of people who shared the same world view. According to van Dijk (1995a:248), ideologies are basic frameworks of social cognition, shared by members of social groups which constituted by relevant selections of socio-cultural values, and organised by an ideological schema that represents the self-definition of a group. Herdsmen can therefore be defined as a revolutionist by the society

based on the impression created in the media about their reaction to societal issues. They are seen as always responding to issues violently, to protect their interest and image rather than taking a civil approach and dialogue to resolve issues. Through lexicalisation, presupposition and entailment, *the Punch*, *Vanguard* and *the Voice* have been able to foreground revolutionary ideology in HFD.

#### 4.4.8. Terrorist ideology

Based on the continuous attack of the herdsmen on their defenceless hosts, they are seen as another phase or representation of terrorism in Nigeria. This is because, as some people assert, their mode of operation is similar to that of terrorists. In fact, it is on record at a time that they have killed more people than Boko Haram has ever done in Nigeria (*Premium News*, 26 July, 2018, *the Cable*, 29 April, 2016, and so on.). According Ogungbemi (2018:22),” the use of violence to achieve specific goals that are motivated by politics, religion, culture, or ideology is terrorism”. This may involve the use of sophisticated weapons to disorganise and threaten the peace of society. Herdsmen, as earlier mentioned, are represented as terrorists through different strategies. The representation supports the terrorist ideology. The operations and activities of the group mirror that of terrorists.

Excerpt 115. The Senate, yesterday, highlighted the need to deal decisively with herdsmen attacks across the country, describing the phenomenon as another form of Boko Haram. The Upper legislative chamber, which noted that the modus operandi of the herdsmen was not different from that of Boko Haram, also charged security agencies to put a check on the attacks, apprehend the culprits and bring them to justice.

<https://www.vanguardngr.com/2017/06/herdsmen-attacks-another-boko-haram-senate/>

The Nigeria National Assembly calls on the security agents to deal with the menace of the herdsmen in the country. In their sittings, they invited the security chiefs in the country to explain their efforts. They also called on the executive arm of the government to be alert to the situation. This was reported by the newspapers. The newspapers label herdsmen as terrorists through comparison. In the excerpts, the reporter refers to Boko Haram, a globally recognised terrorist group. Boko Haram is a terrorist group with its

stronghold in Northeastern Nigeria. It is said in the report that the mode of operation of herdsmen is similar to Boko Haram. The comparison foregrounds the menace of herdsmen to terrorism. The comparison is an expression of the participant's mind. The background knowledge of participants about Boko Haram makes the interpretation of the comparison possible. It makes the actions of herdsmen more frightening to society because the operation of Boko Haram involves killing, kidnapping, maiming, destruction of properties, and so on. The operations of herdsmen also involves killing, maiming, destructions, and so on. Herdsmen are negatively represented while their hosts are represented as their victims. The negative representation of herdsmen creates the in- and out-groups where the herdsmen are classified as 'Them' and their hosts as 'Us'.

This ideology strengthens the hatred people have towards the perpetrators. The action is equally and widely condemned by citizens because of the comparison. Sophisticated weapons such as **AK 47**, and so on are used by terrorists and the herdsmen also use it. Lexicalization is used to negotiate the ideology. Words such as **security, put, check, apprehend, attack, culprits**, and so on are used in the report. These words make the presentation of the operation of the herdsmen similar to that of terrorist and thereby promote the terrorist ideology. The reporter compares the activities of herdsmen to that of Boko Haram and lexicalised the report with security registers to foreground negative representation of herdsmen and manipulate readers mind to believe the representation. This is captured in excerpts 116 and 117 below.

Excerpt 116. Herdsmen have killed more Nigerians than Boko Haram has done in 2016. According to very conservative figures compiled in 2015, Boko Haram killed over 4,000 Nigerians within the calendar year, down from 6,347 in 2014. From 2009 to 2015, the insurgents put a halt to more than 30,000 lives – innocent civilians full of dreams of their own, dreams that could have been useful to the country's march to development. However, the current trend shows herdsmen may outrun Boko Haram for the cruelest killer group in Nigeria for the year 2016.

[www.vanguardnews.com](http://www.vanguardnews.com)

Excerpt 117. ...labeled Fulani herdsmen as the fourth deadliest terror organisation in the world after Boko Haram, the Islamic

State in Syria and Iraq and al-Shabab. “There have been reports of a link between Boko Haram and Fulani militants,... In 2013, GTI recorded 63 killings against the herdsmen, which jumped to 1,229 in 2014 because of the Nigerian government’s half-hearted approach to tackling them. ...Nigeria, in 2015, became the third most terrorised country in the world out of 162 countries, just behind Iraq and Afghanistan...

[www.vanguardnews.com](http://www.vanguardnews.com)

The two excerpts narrate the activities of the herdsmen in the country and link them to terrorism. The newspapers reports the number of lives exterminated by the herdsmen. In the excerpts, some lexical items and expressions present herdsmen negatively and describe them as terrorist group. Words like **insurgent**, **cruellest killers**, **put a halt to lives**, **organized crime**, and so on foreground the belief. The comparison of the herdsmen to Boko Haram, Al-shaba and Islamic state (ISS) in Iran is evidence that the group could be seen as a terrorist group. They are so compared because of their activities in the country which include killings, possession of deadly weapons, maiming, and so on. The global terrorism index also compares the group to other globally proscribed terrorist groups. This comparison entails that the group has terrorist beliefs. The reporter in the excerpts adopts terrorism registers, **insurgent**, **cruel killer** and idiomatic expression, **put a halt to** manipulate the mind of readers and achieve the ideology.

These words in the discourse at the time of the event are easily interpreted to refer to the action of the herdsmen as terrorism. The use of word such as the **insurgent** and expression such as **cruellest group to qualify the group** reflects the use of lexicalisation to form negative ideology. The words revealed that they are deadly and can only be compared to deadly groups. This is to foreground the terrorist ideological belief of the herdsmen. Herdsmen are also described as the fourth deadliest terror organisation in the world. This rating positions the herdsmen as the number four terrorist in the world, because of their activities. The report also narrated the number of lives they have exterminated between 2014 and 2015. This penchant for the use of figures by the reporters foregrounds the

dreaded nature of the group and represents them negatively. The reporter also uses negtaor to foreground the ideology where he asserts that the attack is not in self-defence. The expression reads, all these killings could not have been carried out in self-defence as a few apologists have argued. This implicates that the killings are for certain agenda motivated by the belief of the herdsmen. We could infer from this that the farmers/villagers have done nothing against them, but they are just projecting their beliefs. This implcature helps to positively present farmers/villagers.

The negative act of the herdsmen is foregrounded to present them to manipulate readers and the world as terrorists. Their mode of operation and the resultant effects as seen in the reports above portray the group as a terrorist group. The in-and out-groups are successfully created to condemn the herdsmen as ‘They’ against ‘We’.

Eight ideologies are identified in the sampled newspapers. They include; ethnic, egalitarian, humanist, pacifist, political, revolutionary, terrorist and religious ideologies. These ideologies are capable of deteriorating the security situation in society because they polarise society along different beliefs. This aligns with Ramanathan and Bee (2015) who state that ideological formation foregrounds the positivity and negativity of participants in discourse. The ideologies are achieved through the use of different discourse strategies and linguistic tools. The strategies and linguistic tools are used to negotiate the ideologies.

#### **4.5. Socio-economic and political implications**

Newspaper representation of herdsmen farmers’ conflict has different socio-economic and political implications for Nigeria society. In any conflict of this nature, society either benefits or suffers. The benefit the society derives from the media anchorage of such phenomenon is to proffer solutions to the conflict and possible subsequent ones. In this section, we shall examine the implications for the media, the farmers, the citizens, the government, the herdsmen, the international bodies and discourse analysts.

The killing, displacement, loss of properties and foods continue unabated as a result of the conflict between herdsmen and farmers/villagers. This has earned the nation different representations in the media and globally. Through the reviewed literature and media reports, we have identified some implications such as food shortage, human displacement,

loss of lives and properties, health hazards, ethnic and religious polarisation and so on. These have social, economic, political and academic implications.

#### 4.5.1. **Social implication**

The first implication that readily comes to mind is the social implication of the discourse. This is the direct effect of the reports on social actors that are involved in the discourse and the entire society. The participants in this discourse are the social actors in the herdsmen discourse in Nigerian media that have been mentioned earlier in this thesis. In the earlier section, we discussed different representations of the social actors such as herdsmen as killers, destroyers, invaders, terrorists, and so on, farmers as victims, displaced, vulnerable, and so on, government as bias, weak, pretenders, and so on.

The representations have triggered what Chebii (2015) calls oppositional metaphor where the choice of words is used to divide the society into two camps. This is in tandem with what van Dijk (1997) refers to as the 'Us' vs 'Them' dichotomy. The oppositional metaphor promotes divisions in society and leads to polarisation of society. It aggravates the conflict and acrimonies in the country. There are religious and ethnic polarisations. This is evident in different negative comments by different ethnic and religious groups and the ethnic and religious ideology foregrounded in the discourse. The 'Us' and 'Them' categorisation aids good and bad representation respectively. This is in support of van Dijk (2000) who opines that negative ideologies emphasise 'others bads' and de-emphasise 'their good things'. This shows that participants foreground the negative activities of others and background their positive activities in discourse. This is seen in the representation of herdsmen conflict in Nigerian newspapers. While the herdsmen are presented as attackers, killers, invaders and kidnappers, the farmers are presented as vulnerable and victims. This type of representation/ classification either boosts or threatens participant's face in the discourse. The herdsmen are seen in society as killers, attackers and invaders. This is making living with them in society a source of fear. It has threatened the social relationship that exists between them and their immediate society. While the farmers and other members of the society perceived herdsmen as bad, the farmers are also seen as intolerant. It has strengthened the polarisation that is leading to proliferation of conflicts and agitation for secession across the country.

Religious groups have also graduated to the Us vs Them dichotomy. The religion an individual belongs to defines his camp in Nigeria. In the discourse, the herdsmen are believed to be Muslims. This is premised on the incessant attacks on churches and Christian religious centres including the killing of Christian clergies. The situation has then presented the Muslims as ‘bad’ and the Christians as ‘good’. This type of representation also threatens and boosts the public self-images of Muslims and Christians. Representation of Participants is strengthening the belief that the attack is targeted at religious and ethnic groups. Society is persuaded through the media representation to see one group as good and the other as evil. The following excerpt buttresses this further.

Excerpt 118. Suspected herdsmen... allegedly invaded the African Church killing seven persons. The attack came despite the outcry and condemnation...

In the above excerpt, the herdsmen are represented as the killers and invaders while the Christians are represented as the victims. This is inferred from the use of verbs such words as killing and invaded while the Christians are reflected through lexicalization in words such as church, worshippers, catholic and priest. The Christians are represented ‘positively while the herdsmen are represented ‘negatively. The verb, invaded, allocates the role of actor to the herdsmen and therefore labeled them as ‘invader’ while the patient (sufferer) role is allocated to Churches, Clergies, and Worshippers and thereby present them as ‘victims’. This labeling makes social relations and interactions among the concerned groups difficult in the country. It portends suspicion and hatred between the two groups.

Socio-cultural organisations are also involved. Depending on their ethnic background, they aligned with their people and thereby despise others. For example, the IPOB and MACBAN behave and react to each other as enemies. Media outlets have also been accused of bias in their reports of the discourse. MACBAN has on several occasions accused the media houses of supporting farmers and villagers. Society at large has also condemned President Buhari for supporting his ‘kinsmen’. These allegations and counter-allegations are to the detriment of societal peace and harmony. Interaction and interrelationship in society are no longer cordial. There are suspicions everywhere,



especially when it involves ethnic groups. These are partly a result of herdsmen conflict as reported in Nigerian newspapers.

#### 4.5.2. **Economic implications**

The discourse also has economic implications for the Nigerian society. This is evident in the way the investors treats the country. It also reflects in the performance of those activities that contribute to the growth of the society's economy. Whenever a conflict of such nature is reported, panic and fear grip citizens and force them to abandon their businesses. This has a negative effect on persons, his/her family and society at large. The fear disturbs the smooth running of the business in society and thereby creates economic hardship. The media is involved in the escalation and de-escalation of conflict. This allows the media to affect the economy of the nation depending on their presentation of news. It is imperative to state that conflict in itself may not be a bad thing because it is significant in human evolution and development. However, when conflicts escalates to destructive clashes, and claim lives and properties, it becomes unhealthy and counter-productive. This becomes a threat to the development and growth of society. When the media escalate the news of a conflict, it leads to fear in society which may lead to the imposition of curfew. This also paralyses business activities. Such is seen in the media report of herdsmen attack. It is evident in the action of the government in states like Benue state where the attack persists.

Media have the responsibility of informing society about happenings and events, including the herdsmen attack. This report is what foreign investors heard and read and form their decision to stop investing in the country or not. It has contributed to the existing investors leaving the country. Tonah (2006) reports that the crisis between crop farmers and pastoral farmers has been a common feature of economic livelihood in West Africa. This supports our argument that the report of the menace has economic implications for the Nigerian society. It does not go without having a positive implication. It aids the sales of newspapers and encourages patronage for the media. However, the negative effects outweigh the positive effect. The *Premium Times* of 15 April 2016 reports that Nigeria loses \$14 billion annually to herdsmen-farmers clashes ([www.premiumtimesng.com/news/headlines/201829-nigeria-loses-14-billion-annually-](http://www.premiumtimesng.com/news/headlines/201829-nigeria-loses-14-billion-annually-)

herdsmen-farmers-clashes-repor.html). Cow and crops worth millions of naira have been destroyed in the conflict. Crop farmers cannot plant in due seasons. Where they planted, they could not harvest because they are scared of herdsmen attack. Cattle can no longer graze and feed adequately for fear of rustling and so on. These show the extent to which the menace of herdsmen attacks is affecting the economy of the nation.

Investors have been fleeing the country due to the report of the herdsmen attack. The number of death reported in the media and the properties damaged are scary and capable of sending more investors away. Discouragement of investments ranges from industrial to agricultural investments. The fear of herdsmen attack as reported in newspapers can force investors to relocate to other countries where there is relative peace. The menace of herdsmen attacks as reported in newspapers has invariably resulted in food shortage, loss of jobs, lives, and so on. The country is faced with the menace of herdsmen and this is dangerous towards the development of the country. No nation can develop amid the conflict. Consequently, the herdsmen/farmers conflict is having a negative impact on the development of the country. Industrial and agricultural development is hampered in the country. It has also led to unemployment which prevents citizens from living a better life and contribute meaningfully to the growth of the country. This has also aggravated the security situation as more youth unrest are being experience in the country.

#### **4.5.3. Political implication**

The menace of herdsmen attack has some political implications. It is insinuated that the political elites have plenty to benefit from the crisis, the reason they do not pay critical attention to the solution. As it is severally reported in the media, there are political implications attached to the menace. Newspaper representation of HFC has polarised Nigeria society politically. It has divided the country along different political lines. Political campaigns are now anchored on herdsmen issues. The ruling party is heavily discredited based on the menace of herdsmen activities for their lack of political will to solve the conflict. There are insinuations that the incumbent President is in support of the herdsmen because he is of the Fulani extraction. This is evident in his silence towards herdsmen attacks on villages and farms. For example, the Benue state governor was a member of the ruling party (All progressive Party, APC) before he decamped the party to the People's

Democratic Party (PDP) because of the incessant attack of herdsmen on his state which he believes the ruling party is not handling well. Excerpt 119 below captures this.

Excerpt 119. It also threatens Buhari's popularity in the run-up to Nigeria's 2019 presidential Election...

From excerpt 110, it is obvious that the menace of herdsmen has political implications. Some opinion writers in the newspapers remark these implications in preparation for the 2019 general election as a means of campaign against the incumbent President. The writer understands that the opposition party will use the menace of herdsmen against the incumbent and the ruling party in the election. This was expected to affect the President second term election, especially in the area of security which is one of the cardinal points of the party's campaign in the 2015 general election. As we cannot submit that this affected the incumbent President in the election as the result was in his favour, the herdsmen conflict was used against him in the campaign.

The menace of herdsmen attack has represented the ruling party and the federal government in a negative way to the general society. It has created a lot of mistrust about the government of President Buhari as people believed the government is nonchalant in curbing the menace. This has distracted the attention of the country from focusing on good governance. It has presented the current government as having nothing good to offer the country. The menace of the herdsmen attack has created the in-group and out-group dichotomy between the people of the ruling party and others. Those supporting the ruling party are seen as 'They' while others are seeing as 'We'. The 'They' are seeing as bad while the 'We' represents the victims and are good. This kind of dichotomy is not good for the political landscape of the country. It may lead to anarchy in the society as citizens may take laws into their own hands. Miscreants also may use the opportunity to hijack governance especially in the area of security. Corrupt security officers are using the opportunity to enrich themselves and thereby discrediting the government. At the international level, international communities do not take the country serious in terms of security and protection of lives and properties. The country is perceived as incapable of handling its problems internally. This has damaged the public self-image of the country globally. Dealing with the country at the international level is also with serious suspicion.

#### 4.5.4. **Academic implication**

For the language experts and especially the discourse analyst, herdsmen discourse in newspapers is a good research platform and a useful material for researchers. Different discursive strategies explored in the discourse helps to situate different CDA approaches within HFD. The socio-cognitive approach of van Dijk to CDA is also engaged. Through different representations of social actors and different ideological formations in the discourse, researchers in these fields will be engaged. CDA experts are making effort to reveal the mental representation of different actors and the hidden ideologies in the discourse. This is relevant to the study of discourse analysis and analysts because it helps to interrogate the intention of participants in media discourse. The inference from the media intention also serves as an academic exploit for discourse analysts. The discourse helps language experts to expand the frontiers of language analysis. Linguists, sociologists, psychologists, conflict resolution, agricultural extortionists, food security experts, political scientists, conflict resolution experts, international relation scholars, and communication experts will also benefit from the herdsmen discourse as it will serve as a resourceful material for their research.

#### 4.6. **Summary**

This chapter analyses the data in the study. It reveals different media representations of the social actors in the discourse. The actors are negatively and positively represented depending on the prejudices and biases of the newspapers. The chapter also reveals different discourse strategies used in the discourse which are used to negotiate different ideologies. The chapter examines the contextual variables that help different ideological interpretations. Different ideologies are also identified in the chapter and discussed. The ideologies are formed using different linguistic tools. Finally, the chapter identifies and discusses the socio-economic and political implications of the discourse for society.

## **CHAPTER FIVE**

### **SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

#### **5.1. Summary**

This study delves into the ideological representations of herdsmen discourse in Nigerian media. In chapter one, the study observes that the relationship between the herders and farmers has a long history. The two groups of people lived and are still living complimentary lives. They have also lived together peacefully for long. However, this peaceful life has been punctured with daily killings and attacks as recorded in the media. This study shows that the two groups are relevant and making significant contributions to the economy of the country. The media as an independent unit in the country has been reporting the activities and interactions between the two groups. The report of HFC has therefore drawn the attention of the society to the activities and relationships that exist between the two groups. The chapter also notes that linguistic researchers have not devoted enough time to the study of the herdsmen discourse, especially in Nigerian media using CDA as an anchor theory. The study, pointed out the importance of this research undertaken to the academics, policymakers, and media practitioners as it reveals hidden ideologies shaping the discourse.

Chapter two presents a careful review of relevant existing literature. We show that despite the avalanche of scholar's efforts in studying conflict and crises within and out of the country, enough effort has not been deployed to the study of herdsmen discourse in Nigerian newspapers, especially from the linguistic perspective. We show that existing literature have engaged representation of Boko haram, Niger Delta crisis, Bakassi Peninsula crisis, local banditry, ISIS and other related crisis, but much has not been done in the area of media representation of herdsmen from a discursive analytical approach. Existing literature on herdsmen crisis are not linguistic in orientation. Those that have linguistic imports do not focus on how newspapers form ideologies with the use of discourse strategies and tools. The chapter also reviewed the adopted theories for the analysis. CDA

model is adopted in the analysis. The theory is adopted because of its efficacy in revealing different ideologies inherent in media discourse. CDA is relevant because of its emphasis on relating the text to context to understand what is meant but not said. It is also relevant because of its relevance in investigating how media participants use discourse to emphasise the ‘good’ of self and ‘bad’ of others which are dominant in the herdsmen discourse in Nigerian media. The chapter also discussed other relevant concepts, namely, discourse analysis, discourse and society. The study argues that the use of competitive language provokes conflict while the use of cooperative language promotes peace.

In chapter three of the study, we present different methods used in gathering and analysing data. We show that the study is a qualitative analysis that relies on data from four selected Nigerian newspapers, of which two are from the Northern part of the country, owned by state governments and two from the Southern part of the country owned by individuals. The study adopted the online versions of the selected newspapers not only because of their coverage and regional spread, but also because it gives the researcher ample opportunity to access the newspapers without travelling to the areas with security challenges in the country. News reports and editorial opinions that are related to herdsmen discourse in the selected newspapers between March 2018 and March 2021 constitute the data for the study. The data are analysed by identifying the interaction between words and their context. The data are grouped according to the identified phenomenon, and discussed within the ambit of CDA.

In chapter four, the data were subjected to critical analysis. The data are grouped and discussed. Data are discussed in line with the objective of the study. In accordance with the research questions, the chapter identifies different media representations of social actors in the discourse. Five social actors are identified in the discourse. They include the herdsmen, the farmers, MACBAN, religious groups/leaders, and the government. These social actors were differently represented using linguistic features such as labeling, lexicalisation, metaphor, implicature, and qualifiers. The van Leeuwen’s representation of social actors approach to CDA is adopted to achieve the first three objectives of the study. These linguistic tools are used to present both positive and negative representations of social actors. Different contextual variables that activate the representation of social actors are identified and discussed. The study identifies four variables, namely, participants and

their roles, setting, shared knowledge and background knowledge of participants. The chapter also identifies different discourse strategies that are also relevant in the discourse to negotiate different ideologies. Eight discourse strategies are identified. The strategies include passivisation, presuppositions, nominalization, labelling, use of pronouns, evidentiality, voice management and penchant for figures. The strategies are used to negotiate meanings and form ideologies. In the chapter, inherent ideologies are identified and discussed. Eight ideologies are identified in the study. They include: ethnic, egalitarian, humanist, pacifist, political, revolutionary, terrorist, and religious ideologies. The ideological representations are with different implications for society. The implications identified and discussed include social, economic, political, and academic implications. Finally, chapter five of the study outlined the summary, conclusion, and recommendations of the study.

## **5.2. Summary of findings**

Specific findings of this study are based on the objectives highlighted in 1.3.

The study revealed five social actors in the discourse namely, the herdsmen, the farmers, MACBAN, religious leaders, and the government. These social actors are represented differently. The herdsmen are discursively represented as attackers, killers, terrorist, invaders, threats, armed men, marauders, militants, and destroyers by all the selected newspapers (*the Punch, Vanguard, Triumph and The Voice*). Only Triumph Newspaper represents herdsmen as innocent citizens, foreigners, and positive addition to the country. The farmers are represented as displaced people, victims, and law-abiding citizens by the selected newspapers. All the selected newspapers represent MACBAN as killers and mouthpiece. Religious leaders are represented as victims, agent of peace while the government is represented as weak institution, pretender, law enforcer, and biased by the selected newspapers.

Eight discourse strategies were deployed by the selected newspapers (*the Punch, Vanguard, Triumph and The Voice*) to negotiate ideologies. They are passivisation, presuppositions, labelling, nominalisation, pronominal references, evidentiality, voice management, and penchant for figures (*Punch, Vanguard, Triumph and The Voice*). The

study also shows that the discourse strategies are enhanced with six contextual variables to show that the media engagement of HFC is characterised by different ideologies. The contextual variables are participants and their roles, setting, shared knowledge, and background knowledge.

The study identified and discussed eight ideologies of social actors in HFD projected by the newspapers. The ideologies include pacifist, ethnic, revolutionary, terrorist, humanist, egalitarian, religious, and political ideologies. The study submits that the ideologies projected connect inherent mistrust and hatred to promote the conflict between farmers and herders. The implications of the representations of social actors and different ideologies projected are also identified and discussed. The implications are identified as social, economic, political and academic implications.

### **5.3. Conclusion**

In the study, we have been able to show the interaction between text and context to represent the mind of media participants in creating positive and negative representations that aided ideological representation in selected Nigerian newspapers. Words, clauses, and sentences are situated within their contexts to reveal hidden meanings in the context. This also helped to identify who did what, to who, at what time, and for what purpose. The theoretical frames helped to reveal ideologies in herdsmen discourse in selected Nigerian newspapers.

Social actors in the HFD are represented differently. The representations are revealed with the description and categorisation of actors. The description and categorisation, using van Leeuwen's categorisation of social actors' strategies helped to identify the role individual actors played and revealed their representation in the discourse. While some (for examples, herdsmen, MACBAN, Islamic leaders and government) are represented negatively, some (such as; farmers/villagers and Christian leaders) are represented positively. These representations have polarised society along different lines. Society has been polarised according to religious and ethnic beliefs. The negative representations aid the aggravation of the conflict because they tampered with existing mutual relationships between the two groups. In most cases, the herdsmen and their mouthpiece (MACBAN) are negatively represented based on their actions. They protested



these representations in most cases by rejecting the actions of the herdsmen. They claimed that it is not only the Fulani that engages in herdsmanship. The association also claimed that some herders migrated from neighbouring countries. These rejoinders show that they are not happy with the representation. The representation also aggravates their anger. Negative representations of social actors in the discourse aggravate the conflict. Representations of social actors also help in forming different ideologies such as ethnic, humanist, egalitarian, pacifist, political, revolutionary, terrorist, and religious ideologies. Consequently, different ethnic groups in the country are suspicious of one another, especially the Northern and the Southern ethnic groups. Religious groups are also suspicious of one another. This has also aggravated the conflict because there is a stereotype against religion that is negatively represented in the discourse. Muslims are mainly represented negatively and presented as offenders while Christians are heavily represented as the victim. Other actors such as farmers, Christian religious leaders are positively represented. This also provokes the herdsmen and Muslims because they believe it is a prejudice against them. This is evident in their regular comment on herdsmen's reports in the media. It has polarised the country with different ethnic and religious sentiments.

Herdsmen discourse in Nigerian media is characterised by negative labeling and war, terrorism and kidnapping registers. The use of negative labels and the registers in the discourse is tantamount to *face damaging* in the discourse. This aggravates the tensions in society because the negative labeling aids the 'We' versus 'Them' situation. Representations of the herdsmen in newspapers have changed the orientations and beliefs of the people about the group (herdsmen) in society. The name 'herdsmen' is almost synonymous with kidnapper, invader, killer, and attacker as represented in the newspapers. This is premised on the belief that they are the ones carrying out all the nefarious activities in society, as reflected in newspaper representations. Such labeling promotes negative ideologies which further polarises society along different ethnic and religious lines.

There are different discourse strategies identified and discussed in the discourse. These strategies point at different beliefs and assumptions about the herdsmen in Nigeria. The strategies are used to negotiate different ideologies in the discourse. These ideologies have negative influences on the conflict. It is fueling the conflict between farmers and

herders because of mistrust and hatred generated through the negative ideologies. Obviously, ethnic groups in the country no longer trust one another as one will perceive the other as a group that is planning marginalisation and extermination. Citizens also do not trust the government having realised the vulnerability of citizens and therefore decided to take laws into their own hands. This action has also continued to exterminate lives and destroy properties. Security situation is more porous and gives more opportunities to miscreants.

Various ideologies in the discourse have different implications ranging from social, economic, political, and academic implications for society. The social implication has reduced the level of ethnic and religious tolerance and increase bigotry in the country. The effect of economic implication is adversely felt in the country as food items are now expensive in the market due to the inability of farmers to produce as expected. The food production in the country has worsened due to the conflict. As earlier mentioned, herdsmen discourse has become a source of political influence for the politicians. This is because the use of language in the media is easily spiraled and has damaging consequences if not well managed as we have experienced.

This study agrees with scholars such as van Dijk (1996), Fairclough (1994), Taiwo (2010), Chilwa (2011), and others that media discourse projects ideology through the use of language. They also argue that text and context are used to reveal peoples' minds which have social implications. They submit that CDA is a useful linguistic theory to reveal hidden and inherent ideologies in discourse. As this study has revealed, it is in tandem with the positions of previous studies that media discourse promotes ideologies. This study also agrees with Osisanwo (2016) and other scholars such as Ayoola (2010, 2011), Zachary (2014), Birhanu (2016), Taiwo (2007) and others who submit that media employed discourse strategies to manage social actors in discourse. This is evident in this study as different social actors are represented differently by the media to reflect different beliefs and assumptions about them. The negative and positive representations, as mentioned earlier, have further promoted conflict between stakeholders in the discourse. The present study, however, deviates from the earlier studies in terms of scope and contributions. It covers herdsmen discourse as reported in selected Nigerian newspapers between 2018 and 2021. The study contributed to the existing knowledge by interrogating

the interaction between text and context to reveal different linguistic tools used in representing media participants and generate ideologies in the herdsmen discourse. It showed different contextual variables and revealed ideological representations of herdsmen discourse in the Nigerian media. The study revealed the implications of these ideologies for the society. The study has also advanced the study of implicature, presupposition, metaphor, lexicalisation, and labeling as it shows how the pragmatic features are used to generate ideology. Based on these conclusions, the study makes the following recommendations.

#### **5.4. Recommendations**

Media participants should desist from the use of competitive language. Rather, cooperative language should be encouraged. This would reduce the conflict in society as there will be less focus on 'self'. It is better to seek peace than to vie for revenge. The use of competitive language in the media promotes revenge which usually resorts to killings and loss of properties. Competitive language provokes anger from other participants in discourse. As can be seen in the discourse under review, one group is represented using competitive language while the other is represented using cooperative language. This provokes the other group and motivates them to compete. It is important to state that this thesis does not in any way support killings or destructions of others' properties; our argument is to reduce killings by consciously choosing words that will not provoke others to anger. Media participants should be more sensitive in their choice of words.

Media participants must be objective and balance in their reports. It is often said that there is no bad race or ethnicity or religion but bad people and practitioners. In representing ethnic and religious groups, media participants should avoid over generalisation that will present every practitioner or member of an ethnic group as evil. It is good to avoid stereotypes because it has the danger of creating single stories which are detrimental to the peace and harmony of society. This usually leads to further agitation. It is also important to present the good aspect and bad sides of every participant in the discourse objectively rather than focusing only on the negative side of one group and the positive side of the other.

Deliberate efforts should be made to avoid *face* damaging linguistic choices in media discourse. When media participants decided to deliberately damage the public self-image of others, they resorted to conflict. Every individual in society wants their *face* to be maintained and boosted. Attempt to damage it will resort to conflict. Media participants should endeavour to use relevant registers. Registers have a significant effect on readers. The use of war and terrorist registers in conflict situations should be discouraged. This is because it presents the situation as a war situation, and creates panic. It also provokes anger among the people. The discourse of herder/farmer conflict in Nigerian media is replete with war and terrorist registers. Newspaper producers should be careful in choosing their registers. Registers that will promote positive ideologies should be encouraged. News writers and editors should also consider the oneness of the country as important while publishing. Patriotism and nationalism have been seriously downplayed, and it is affecting the nationhood and cohesive force of Nigeria. Choice of words in the media should not further destroy the fragile relationship that exists in the country. Choice of words by media participants should also not always be perceived as a deliberate attack on other participants. It should be considered as a wake-up call to those perpetrating evil to desist, and the government should see it as a way of calling them to their responsibilities. For example, war, kidnapping, and terrorism registers were used to provoke constituted authorities to action.

Government and media regulators should be active in performing censorship of media reports. This is important, especially in conflict situations because there is nothing that can be compared to a peaceful society. Peace should not be traded for anything. No society can grow where there is acrimony. In so far as this thesis is not set against freedom of information, a level of regulation on media by the Government is vital to censor media reportage and image-making efforts of news agencies and their employees.

Finally, further research should be carried out on HFD in the media from sociology, psychology, and communication perspectives. This will help to further situate the discourse in the fields and thereby contribute to knowledge. Since the present study is a qualitative approach, we suggest there should also be a quantitative and corpus approach to the study as it will help to collate data related to the discourse and present a further understanding of the discourse. Historians are also encouraged to trace the historical

background of the two groups (Herdsman and Farmers) to understand the point of their divergence and convergence.

### **5.5. Contributions to knowledge**

This study has interrogated ideologies in herdsman farmers' discourse in Nigerian newspapers. It has contributed in extending the frontiers of studies in the following ways:

1. In the first place, the study has identified and described the discursive import of specific discourse patterns inherent in the representation of HFC in the selected newspapers.
2. It has examined how context functions in explicating the roles of specific social actors in HFC.
3. It has revealed, through the tenets of van Dijk's model of CDA, how the connection between discourse, society and cognition functions in influencing the reader's attitudes and perceptions to the representation of HFC in the selected newspapers.
4. It has revealed the contextual import of CDA methodologies in the portrayal of HFC in the selected newspapers.
5. It has examined, from the Pragmatics perspective, how pragmatic tools interact in teasing out participants' orientations and assumptions in HFC discourse.
6. It has examined how media framing of HFC reveals inherent biases and interests of media practitioners towards HFC in the selected newspapers.

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