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Radicalising Pastoralists and Farmers in Sustained Violence: A Theoretical Construct

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Abstract

Violence has the chance of escalating whenever the parties involved attain extreme ideologies and have access to weapons. Several crises in the world started with unabated localised violence. This violence becomes sustained when political powers are used against one group as opposed to other groups. The violence can take a new turn of sustenance whenever religion and ethnic cognitions and colorations are given to the crises. This study focuses on the theoretical construct of radicalisation of pastoralists and farmers in sustained violence in Nigeria. The variables of access to weapons, political power, economic interest, religious bigotry and ethnic chauvinism are related together to see how violence becomes radicalised using the violence between pastoralists and farmers in Nigeria as a case study. The game theory and tyre burning

theory are used to reveal the dynamics of manipulation techniques and their end results. The study concludes that the radicalisation of pastoralists and farmers in sustained violence in Nigeria did not occur suddenly; the variables of access to weapons, political power, economic interest, religious bigotry and ethnic chauvinism are the agents that have propelled its continuous manifestation.

Keywords: Economic Interest, Farmers, Pastoralists, Political Power, Religious Bigotry, Ethnic Chauvinism and Violence

Introduction
Violence is a phenomenon that does not happen without causes. It does not hang in a vacuum. It hangs around events, circumstances, imbroglio, misunderstandings, unresolved strains and agitations of a group or groups of people. Therefore, violence is ubiquitous. All over the world, there are different forms of violence occurring. Some are on the large scale in form of wars, some are on a medium scale in form of guerrilla warfare, cold war, insurrections among others while others are on a small scale such as land disputes, ethnic conflicts and occasional violent protests among others.

   Regardless of the form or magnitude of occurrence, violence always has negative and devastating effects on the host community, domino effect on the neighbouring communities and a traversing effect on the entire region or the world.

This implies that violence has the chance of escalating; it can grow from a small form of disputes within a party (intraparty) or among various parties (interparty) (Wallis, 2020). It further escalates whenever the parties involved obtain extreme ideologies which may be political, economical, religious or ethnically motivated against the country or a perceived target. The escalated violence reaches its peak whenever the groups have access to or acquire weapons (Aluko, 2019 a; Nwargwu, 2020).

Several crises in the world started with unabated localised violence such as the Libyan war, Syrian war, Sudanese war, India-Pakistan conflict, Russia-Ukraine war, Israeli-Palestine war, and the Iran war, among others. Some started as land disputes, food crises, disagreement over exploitation of mineral resources such as crude oil, religious disputes, gender marginalisation, and ethnic crises among others. Such localised cases of violence are seen as little issues which should die a natural death over time without much ado. However, these crises take some other dimensions by acquiring new orientation, dimensions and ideologies, therefore the crises become elongated and escalate.

However, violence becomes sustained when political powers are used against a group as opposed to other groups (Aluko, 2017; Thaut Vinson, 2020). Whenever politics of sentiments, nepotism and favouritism is introduced in the means of settlement by the mediating agent or government, a group will be exonerated while the other will be exterminated. This will further strengthen the regime of oppression and marginalisation instead of the rule of law,

equality, equity, freedom and liberty of all groups in such a country. Therefore, violence takes a new turn becoming sustained whenever religion and ethnic cognitions and colorations are given to the crises (Aluko, 2019b) and more importantly, whenever any group acquires more weapons and political backup.

This study focuses on the theoretical construct of radicalisation of pastoralists and farmers in sustained violence in Nigeria. The variables of access to weapons, political power, economic interest, religious bigotry and ethnic chauvinism are related together to see how violence becomes radicalised using the violence between pastoralists and farmers in Nigeria as a case study.

Sustained Violence between Pastoralists and Farmers in Nigeria

Pastoralism is the system of rearing of animals, domesticated livestock, and migrating in an established territory to find pasturage for the animals. Most pastoralist groups have focal sites that they occupy for considerable periods of the year. Pastoralists may depend entirely on their herds or may also engage in hunting for wild animals or practice some agriculture or trade with agricultural peoples for grain and other goods. They are organised around the migration of livestock between mountain pastures in warm seasons and lower altitudes the rest of the year. The seasonal migration may also occur between lower and upper latitudes. Some pastoralist groups in South-west Asia and North Africa cultivate crops between seasonal moves

while those of West and Central Africa depend majorly on migration with their animals in search of pastures. The patterns of pastoralism are many, often depending on the type of livestock, the topography, and the climate (Aluko, 2017;Ojo, 2020).

Pastoralist societies are in many respects the direct opposite of forest horticulturalists. They are usually the most nomadic of primitive societies. They occupy arid grasslands rather than rainforests; they have a nearly total commitment to their animals, and their socio-political system is nearly always that of a true hierarchical chiefdom rather than of egalitarian villages and tribal segments. Elman (2020) opined that a society largely committed to herding has more military advantages than a settled agricultural society. If military power is important to survival, it will increase the commitment to the herding specialisation, mainly because of the advantage conferred by mobility. This increased commitment, however, will result in the gradual loss of certain previously acquired material developments such as weaving, metalworking, pottery, substantial housing and furniture, and, of course, variety in the diet. Wealth is a burden in such societies.

The farming community on the other hand has little mobility which results in the upgrading of acquired skills for material development such as weaving, metalworking, pottery, substantial housing and furniture, and, of course, variety in the diet (Elman, 2020). Wealth is a necessity in such societies. However, successful farming societies normally have some kind of symbiotic relationship with pastoralists. The symbiosis may be through peaceful trade

(Oshita and Ikelegbe 2019; Rehman, 2020). However, often, the military advantage of the pastoralists has led to raiding and violence against their host farming communities rather than exchange. Therefore, the game play which is a symbiotic game relationship often turns into a parasitic game plan because the pastoralists often become violent against the farming communities.

Theoretical Framework

Game theory is the branch of decision theory concerned with interdependent decisions. The problems of interest involve two or more participants, each of whom has individual objectives related to a common system or shared resources. Because game theory arose from the analysis of competitive scenarios, the problems are called games and the participants are called players. A game as well refers to any social situation that involves two or more participants, but these techniques apply to more than just sport, and are not even limited to competitive situations. Therefore, game theory deals with any problem in which each player's strategy depends on what the other players do such as the pastoralists and farmers relationship. Moreover, all players are intelligent in the sense that they understand the structure of the economy, the right and duty of each other and the modus operandi in the interaction.

Specifically, a game always has three components; first, when specifying a game we need to be explicit about who the participants are. These are called players. The players in this scenario are the

pastoralists and famers in the middle belt of Nigeria. It is important to note that Nigeria has over two hundred and fifty ethnic groups and about twenty percent are in the middle belt of the country. The game is the survival of man, animals and the quest to possess the region. Secondly, we also need to be explicit about what every player can conceivably do, their capability and the extent of threat they can foment against other players. In this case both pastoralists and farmers are capable of both offensive and defensive violence provided that the government is not suppressing a group to favour the other. The third component in a game is the payoff function for each agent. The trade-off or payoff includes what an actor loses to gain another thing. In this case, neither the pastoralists nor the farming communities have a trade-off. This form of game entails the "winner takes all" syndrome which leads to violent clashes and tyre burning syndrome.

The tyre burning theory explains the phenomenon of onset of violence where individuals are provoked from a state of peaceful protest to violence occurrence (Aluko, 2018). Tyre burning theory gives the indication that burning of tyres is the indicator of chaotic violence occurrence in a community. It is an aftermath indication or sign of chaotic violent attacks and breakdown of law and order in the society. The theory holds that peaceful process of agitations due to marginalisation of a group precedes the violent occurrence of burning of substances most importantly tyres. Other substances destroyed may include vehicles, farmland, houses and cars. There may also be killing of human beings and vandalising

of other valuables leaving behind abandon wreckages of broken shops, windows and houses in the event of dispute be it socio-political or economic related disputes.

In the process of unresolved disputes leading to burning of substances such as the pastoralists and farmers crises in Benue State and other states in the middle belt region of Nigeria, the commuters got invoked by perceived political, economic, social or geographical favouritism, nepotism, aggrandisement, patron-client, patrimonial politics, ethnicity and negligence by the government and law enforcement agencies in favour of the nomadic pastoralists. Therefore, the farmland owners resort to self defence which is not commensurate with the extent and magnitude of violence wielded by the pastoralists who had been radicalised.

Models of Pastoralists' and Farmers' Radicalization

Radicalisation is a state of being violent. It is a stage of perpetration of extreme violence by a group. It is the situation of extreme brutal interaction between a person and another. Radicalisation is a gradual manoeuvre from soft chaos to mild violence then to extreme violent reaction due to the use of sophisticated weapons and back up of political powers. This is usually attended by the suppression of the rule of law so as to give a group an upper hand over the other. The variables of radicalisation include the following: access to weapons, political power, economic interest, religious bigotry and ethnic chauvinism. Others include suspension of the

rule of law and the psychological manipulation of the masses through the mass media.

Models are created to explain how a group turns from having a general communal ideology to a radical ideology leading to radical indiscriminate attacks. Access to weapons, access to political power and access to economic power are related to religious bigotry, ethnic chauvinism and political party extremism to see how violence becomes radicalised using pastoralists and farmers violence in Nigeria (Benue State) as a case study.

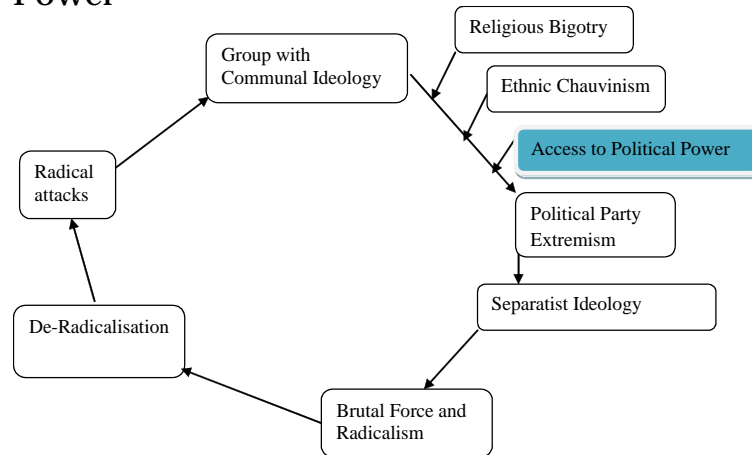## Model 1: Radicalisation through Access to Weapons
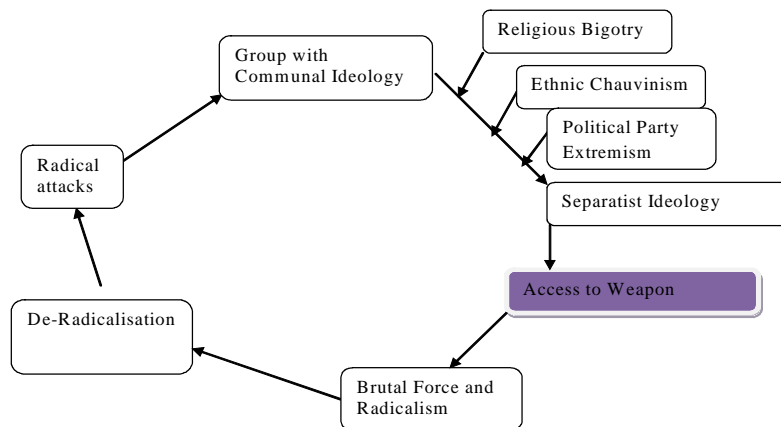
Model 1.

Model 1 shows the radicalisation of groups with initial communal ideology through access to weapons. Access to weapons in itself is not the primary or singular factor that makes a group to become radical as such. The intricate factors such as the infiltration of extreme religious beliefs leading to religious bigotry makes other groups without such

religious views to be seen as aliens. Also, ethnic group superiority notions which breed chauvinism coupled with the extremist political party ideology will lead to separatist group ideology. This group originally have no power to foment trouble but depend on the key critical factor which is the access to weapons.

The access to weapons makes the group to become radical, using brute force on any other groups that is not in alignment with their ideology. The use of brute force will lead to radical attacks on all other groups that are perceived to be against its ideology. Therefore, access to weapons is a critical agent of radicalisation of a group. In order to de-radicalise such a group, the accessibility to weapons must be cut off and such group can then only operate on the communal level.

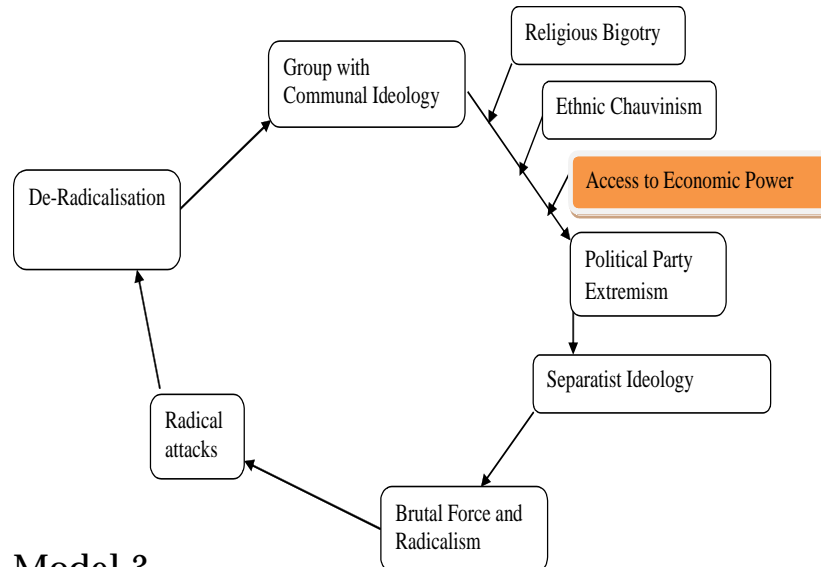## Model 2: Radicalisation through Access to Political Power

Model 2

Model 2 shows the radicalisation of groups with initial communal ideology through access to political power. Access to political power in itself is not the primary or singular factor that makes a group to become extremely radical as such. The intricate factors that as well stimulate radicalism are the infiltration of extreme religious beliefs leading to religious bigotry which makes other groups without such religious views to be seen as aliens. Also, ethnic group superiority notions which breed chauvinism coupled with the extremist political party ideology will lead to separatist group ideology. This group originally have no power to foment trouble but depend on the key critical factor which is the access to political power.

The access to political power makes a group to become radical because the mechanism of governance is in their hands. They have the executive, legislature and judicial backup in their sphere of operations in the country. Therefore, they can overcome all legal, political and social hurdles of government and use brute force on any other groups that are not in alignment with their ideology. The use of brute force will lead to radical attacks on all other groups that are perceived to be against its ideology. Therefore, access to political power is a critical agent of radicalization of a group. In order to de-radicalise such a group, the accessibility to political power must be cut off and such group can be subjected to the reality of the laws of interrelationships which will eventually makes communal living relevant.

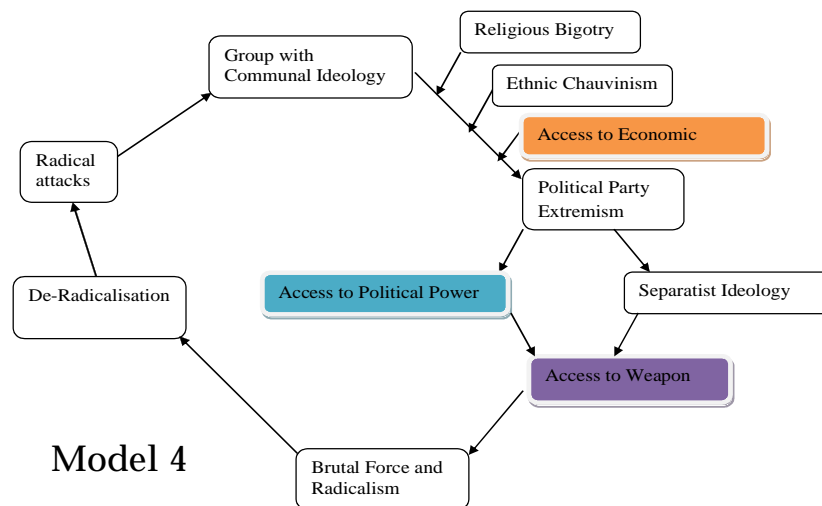## Model 3: Radicalisation through Economic Power

Model 3

Model 3 shows the radicalisation of groups with initial communal ideology through access to economic power. Access to economic power in itself is not the primary or singular factor that makes a group to become extremely radical as such. The intricate factors that stimulate radicalism remain the infiltration of extreme religious beliefs leading to religious bigotry that makes other groups without such religious views to be seen as aliens. Also, ethnic group superiority notions which breed chauvinism coupled with the extremist political party ideology lead to separatist group ideology. This group originally have no power to foment trouble but depend on the key critical factor which is the access to economic power.

The access to economic power makes a group to become radical because the mechanism of governance

is in their hands. They have the economic strength to operate effectively in a country. Such operations include the purchase of the government personnel such as top executives, judiciary and legislators. Therefore, they can use economic wherewithal to overcome all legal, political and social hurdles of government. With this economic advantage, they use brute force on any other groups that are not in alignment with their ideology. The use of brute force will lead to radical attacks on all other groups that are perceived to be against their ideology. Therefore, access to economic power is a critical agent of radicalisation of a group. In order to de-radicalise such group, the accessibility to absolute economic power must be cut off and such group can be subjected to the dictates of the laws much more in economic matters and interrelationships which will eventually make communal living relevant.

Model 4: Absolute Radicalism

Model 4

Model 4 above shows the absolute radicalisation of groups with initial communal ideology through access to political power, economic power and weapons. Access to political power, economic power and weapons ordinarily is the primary factor that makes a group to become extremely radical. However, the intricate factors that stimulate radicalism remain the infiltration of extreme religious beliefs leading to religious bigotry that makes other groups without such religious views to be considered aliens. Also, ethnic group superiority notions which breed chauvinism coupled with the extremist political party ideology lead to separatist group ideology.

Power corrupts and absolute power corrupts absolutely. Whenever a group has access to political power, economic power and weapons at the same time, they will control the entire mechanism of governance at will. They have the economic strength to operate effectively in the country; the political connections will give them access to top executives, judiciary and legislators to overcome all legal, political and social hurdles of government, therefore, their purchase and use of weapons will be unabated. With the access to political power, economic power and weapons, the use of brute force on any other groups that are not in alignment with their ideology will be a norm.

The use of brute force will lead to radical attacks on all other groups that are perceived to be against the group's ideology. Therefore, access to political power, economic power and weapons is a critical agent of extreme radicalisation of a group. In order

to de-radicalise such a group, the accessibility to political power, economic power and weapons must be cut off and the group can be subjected to the rule of law much more in economic matters and in interrelationships which will eventually make communal living relevant.

Conclusion

All violence across the world has an origin and also has effects. That violence has an origin means that it can be curtailed effectively. The pastoralist violence against farmers like every form of violence has cost Nigeria a lot in terms of death of human beings who are agents of change in the political, economic and social landscape of the country. The loss of properties and other valuables such as food crops are a source of concern to all. Efforts must thus be made towards engendering harmonious relationship among all the ethnic groups in the country.

The study concludes that the radicalisation of pastoralists and farmers in sustained violence in Nigeria did not occur suddenly but the variables of access to weapons, political power, economic interest, religious bigotry and ethnic chauvinism are the agents that propel its continuous manifestation. For peace to reign, the game surrounding the quest for land ownership and superiority agitation must be quenched by exerting the rule of law in the relationship between the pastoralists and farmers. Care must be taken to maintain a balance in the accessibility to weapons, political power, and economic wherewithal as critical agents of radicalisation of groups.

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