

## THE ROLES OF MUSIC AND FILM IN THE SUPPRESSION OF FULANI HERDSMEN TERRORISM IN NIGERIA

By

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### **Abstract**

*Music and Film are two sides of the same coin. Two distinct but inseparable art forms. Both art forms have from their inceptions contributed significantly to the growth and development of societies. Their ability to enhance societal growth and development is unquantifiable. This paper examines the roles of Music and Film in the suppression of Fulani Herdsmen Terrorism in Nigeria and the sustainability of an enduring peace in the country. The study adopts Emile Durkheim's functionalist theory, otherwise known as functionalism, to drive its thesis. The study argues that despite sundry entreaties to the Fulani herdsmen to halt their offensive cattle rearing method that provoke farmer-herdsmen conflicts and ultimately civil unrest, little or no anticipated result has been recorded. The study further asserts that the primordial abilities of music to engender peace and tranquility still subsists. It submits that film has the capacity of effective dissemination of impactful information. It submits that music and film, combined and electively deployed, will go a long way to facilitate needed reorientation of the herdsmen and enable peaceful and enabling environment that is desirable for sustainable quality life, growth and development in Nigeria. The paper, among other things, recommend that Nigerian Government should invest in the music and film industries so as to enable the sectors thrive and perform their functions effectively. It is also recommended that music education and film training should be prioritised in Nigeria while adequate monitoring of musical and cinematic products is institutionalised.*

**Keywords:** Music, Film, Fulani Herdsmen, Terrorism and functionalism

## Introduction

Music and Film are works of arts and like other forms of arts such as theatre, dance, poetry, prose and drama, entertained, educated and informed the society for as long as they have existed. The Holy Bible records in 1 Sam. 16.24-26, that:

Now the Spirit of the LORD had departed from Saul, and an evil spirit from the LORD tormented him. Saul's attendants said to him, "See, an evil spirit from God is tormenting you. Let our lord command his servants here to search for someone who can play the lyre. He will play when the evil spirit from God comes on you, and you will feel better." So Saul said to his attendants, "Find someone who plays well and bring him to me."... Whenever the spirit from God came on Saul, David would take up his lyre and play. Then relief would come to Saul; he would feel better, and the evil spirit would leave him.

The account given above is in the Old Testament which preceded the birth of Jesus. Such was the potency of music, and phenomenally speaking, nothing has change. If at all, the power of music to ameliorate social dysfunctionalities has increased. Unfortunately the abuse of this powerful art form is rendering it an agent of social vices. African culture is deeply ingrained with music, and suitable music permeates every stage of life. Whether for enjoyment, emotional stability, sociopolitical, cultural, religious, or educational purposes, music is fundamental to human existence. The fact that music is enjoyed in all societies at different times is further evidence of its ageless quality. "In Greek cultural history, it is believed that theatre, as we know it today, actually began as music and poetry performed (or 'recited') by the earliest Greek actors during the festival of Dionysus, the Greek god of fertility and wine".<sup>46</sup>

Though ubiquitous, music is defined and understood differently in different cultures. Though it is a universal phenomenon that exists in all nations and cultures, music varies greatly in form and contents. In all honesty, a people's mentality, both individually and collectively, is revealed in the lyrics and performance of her music. Mutual feelings of emotional power, spiritual fulfillment, and physical fitness are fostered by music, a sociocultural innovation. Similar to how African music is anchored in tradition. That being said, its uses are universal worldwide. "Music is undoubtedly old in nature and primeval in the story of man. As an art, music predates any other forms and it's more effective as a means of expression. Mankind has, in every culture, engaged music in the process of creation, production and communication".<sup>46</sup>

Music is a facet of human behaviour, particularly when it comes to how individuals interact within the confines of established guidelines and social norms, concerning beliefs and perspectives on life, the universe, and existence as a whole. "Many of the mysteries of life are given explanations. Some of these mysteries include the

cosmology, the purpose of man's endeavour and life after death. Arising from these explanations, souls are consoled, doubts are cleared and hopes are raised".<sup>46</sup> Summarily, the potential of music to ameliorate social vices cannot be over-emphasized.

In the same vein, film art is a veritable tool of cultural representation and the restoration and propagation of societal sanity. Film, as a global art, has its origin rooted in the invention of photography in 1826<sup>46</sup>. The film medium came into existence in America during the 1890s in the wake of industrial revolution. The early movie camera was a scientific piece of equipment that developed into the foundation of a great business, a novel form of leisure and a new creative channel<sup>46</sup>. The first motion picture camera was invented in 1890, thus marking the genesis of motion picture otherwise referred to as film,

The combination of a flexible, transparent film base, a fast exposure time, a mechanism to pull the film through the camera, an intermittent device to stop the film, and a shutter to block off light was achieved by the early 1890s. After several years, inventors working differently in many countries had developed several different film cameras and projection devices, the two most important firms were Edison in America and Lumiere in France.<sup>46</sup>

When it arrived, the motion camera was but for a merely exhibiting moving pictures at circuses and other locations to elicit amusement. It provided the cheapest way of providing entertainment for the masses of the Victorian age. Actors were recorded. The medium remained soundless till 1927 and was referred to as the silent film.<sup>46</sup> However, some musical sound effects and at times voice-over narration as well as dialogue cards were added to the silent films. The silence of the silent film was in actual fact the absence of spoken dialogues or lines by the actors as there were sound effects. However, after a couple of experiments, sound was finally added to the moving pictures in 1927. The film medium, despite its technological origin and in some way, it's without controversy an art form, and as such has been employed right from inception to represent life in various degrees.

According to Olayiwola; "The cinematic adaptation of Wole Soyinka's *Kongi's Harvest* of the same title produced in 1970 eventually became the reference point of the take-off of independent film production in Nigeria".<sup>46</sup> Controversy has consistently trailed the issue of who was the first producer of the video film in Nigeria. A school of thought credits the introduction of the video film in Nigeria to the initiative of the duo of Ade Ajiboye (Big Abass) and Alade Aromire who produced *Soso Meji* in 1988 and *Ekun* in 1989 respectively<sup>46</sup> and Kenneth Nnebue of Nek Video Links who produced *Living in Bondage* in 1992.<sup>46</sup>

There is, however, no gainsaying the fact that the dates quoted above and the existence of the video films mentioned are enough to reconcile the disparity in the historical accounts. The commercial successes of the video films however, spurred on more production thus heralding the advent of the film industry in Nigeria. This industry has however, passed through several transformational stages and the transformation continues. Film in Nigeria today, as it is the case in other clans, has been deployed as a culture agent. It preserves legacies, popularise and propagate culture. It has the power to present a people to the global community as the people so wish. Information disseminated via film penetrate people's minds like medical injections penetrate one's system. What some people know about America, India, Europe etc., interestingly is through their films. It is a means of cultural exportation and importation. It is an audio-visual medium that informs while it entertains.

### **Theoretical Framework**

One of the main theoretical stances in sociology is that of the functionalist perspective, or functionalism. Its roots can be found in the writings of Emile Durkheim, who was particularly interested in the question of how society might maintain relative stability or maintain social order. As a result, this theory concentrates on social structure at the macro level as opposed to daily living at the micro level. In many countries, the state finances the education of the family's children, which is funded by taxes that the state needs to remain in operation. The family looks to the school to assist youngsters in developing into successful adults who can lead fulfilling lives and provide for their own families. As a result, the kids grow up to be law-abiding, tax-paying citizens who help the government. According to the functionalist viewpoint, when everything works as it should, society's constituents provide productivity, stability, and order. If things don't work out as planned, society's components will have to change to create new kinds of productivity, stability, and order. Functionalism places a strong emphasis on social consensus and order, emphasising shared public values and societal stability. According to this viewpoint, systemic disarray, like aberrant behaviour, forces change since social structures need to adapt in order to become stable. A broken component of the system affects the others, leads to societal difficulties, and forces social reform.

From the foregoing, it can be deduced that functionalism revolves round the responsibilities of every sector of the society to contribute their quotas to the stability, growth and development of the society. The theory is relevant and appropriate to drive the thesis of this paper because music and film arts and by extension, musicians and cineastes are stakeholders on their societies and as such, are expected to function within the context of fostering orderliness, peace and an enabling environment for societal stability, growth and sustainable development. As such, since the focus of this paper is the examination of the roles of music and

film *Suppression of Fulani Herdsmen Terrorism in Nigeria*, the theory is appropriate and adequate.

### **Terrorist Activities of Fulani Herdsmen in Nigeria**

When we say Fulani herdsmen, what exactly is been referred to? The answer to this is not far-fetched. They are itinerant cattle shepherds. They go from place to place in search of green pastures for their herds. They are of two categories; nomadic and semi-nomadic. The semi-nomadic Fulani herdsmen follow planned migrations, but the pure-blooded nomadic Fulani herdsmen typically follow random ones.<sup>46</sup> Chukwuma, attempting a historical survey of the criminality of the notorious Fulani herdsmen in Nigeria, opined that the “phenomenon has progressively metamorphosed from rudimentary communal skirmishes to organized armed confrontation in its apparent dynamics of degeneration”.<sup>46</sup> In nearly every state in Nigeria, Fulani herdsmen graze wherever they please, destroy crops, obstruct traffic, rape women, beat up hunters, and occasionally unleash (wage) deadly attacks on villagers where there is the slightest resistance to their depredations.<sup>46</sup> In its most recent manifestation, the phenomenon depicts a genre of violence characterised by immense arms bearing and brutal sophistication.<sup>46</sup> Nigeria has had multiple violent clashes in numerous rural areas between 1999 and 2012.<sup>46</sup> There have been conflicts that have claimed hundreds of lives and forced thousands of Nigerians to flee their homes.

Beginning in late 2012, the Middle Belt's killings by Fulani herdsmen became a logical and systematic pattern that increasingly suggested a planned strategy to eliminate the native ethnic groups in the area by forceful means, such as killing or driving them out in order to seize control of the region's resources and crops. People lost their lives as a result of the fighting between Tarok and Fulani herdsmen in Plateau State on March 28, 2015. Likewise, the conflicts between Fulani herders and locals in Bokkos, Bokko LGA in Plateau State. More than five thousand people died in Benue state's ethnic clashes brought on by Fulani herders in the first half of 2014. Thousands of refugees were forced into the Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) camp in Makurdi, and the victims, who included women and children, were looted from over 100 localities. In Shengev Community in Gwer West Local Government Council, Fulani herdsmen previously killed around two hundred people with what seemed to be biochemical weapons.<sup>46</sup>

The situation is not in any different in Taraba, where Fulani herders have also killed and attacked numerous times. The relationship between the Fulani and Tiv in both Taraba State and Benue became more strained due to the Fulani's constant attacks on the Tiv, which have resulted in very human casualties and property loss.<sup>46</sup> The southern senatorial zone of Taraba State experienced an unusual and sudden influx of Fulani herdsmen for a few months. The Tiv people of Taraba

State had to flee their homes in search of safer locations due to the destruction of lives and property. The threat posed by Fulani herdsmen still exists in eastern Nigeria. Seldom does one find a village without Fulani herdsmen. These herdsmen's actions in some areas of Abia State is of great concern. This is because the crops and farmlands have suffered significant harm from the livestock that these herdsmen own.

All around the state, there have been tales of conflicts between farmers and herdsmen. There have been instances of fatal conflicts between rural farmers and these cattle breeders in the Abia communities of Uzuakoli in Bende Local Government Area, Ebem and Akanu in Ohafia, and Umuchieze in Umunneochi. The threat posed by Fulani herders in Enugu State has grown more deadly. For instance, the attacks of Fulani herdsmen slowed down commercial and agricultural activities in the State's Ezeagu Local Government Area, which is home to over forty communities. They appeared to look away without any concrete attempt to resolve the issue, and the herders has access to very advanced weaponry.<sup>46</sup> Due to dread of violent attacks by herdsmen in the Ezeagu village, people no longer go farming or get a good night's sleep.<sup>46</sup> The Fulani herders in Enugu state summarily killed a seminarian and injured three Roman Catholic priests. It was really an unsettling situation.

Four persons died in Anambra State's Ayamelum and Awka North local government areas, and farmlands were devastated as a result of Fulani herdsmen's violent actions.<sup>46</sup> In Imo State, peasants and farmers have macabre stories to share. Tension was strong and emotions ran high when numerous irate youths from the state's Irete community blocked the heavily traveled Owerri-Onitsha dual carriageway in protest of the despicable actions of Fulani herders in their area.<sup>46</sup> People in Ebonyi State find the actions of Fulani herdsmen, who often turn violent at the "slightest provocation," to be intolerable. The infamous actions of the Fulani herdsmen are also present in the western portion of the nation. Raging Fulani herdsmen in Ogun State's Ojo Adam area killed a farmer and injured numerous others. The problem reached a breaking point when Fulani herders, attempted to kidnap Chief Olu Falae, the former Secretary to the Government of the Federation. Due to the Fulani herdsmen's violent actions in Ekiti State, the state governor signed a bill into law that restricts their ignoble activities there.

The effects of the activities of terrorist Fulani herdsmen in Nigeria cannot be over emphasised. Among other dastardly consequences of the crisis between famers and Fulani herdsmen in Nigeria are obstruction to food security, abysmal dislodgment of law-abiding citizens, immense decrease in farm produce and general social unrest. Also, the criminal and terrorist acts of the Fulani herdsmen have caused acute joblessness. Today the Nigerian economy is experiencing an unprecedented downturn, consequent upon the extraordinary rate of inflation in

the country. Thus, all the stakeholders in the Nigerian project must be functional in the area of suppressing Fulani Herdsmen's terrorism in the country.

### **The Roles of Music in the Suppression of Fulani Herdsmen's Terrorism in Nigeria**

Music by nature is the most mobile form of artistic products. It is the most accessible art form on the go. Radio can be accessed anywhere in the country through people's phones. Most of the herdsmen carry portable transistor radios with them wherever they go, listening to music most of the times. Music can be used for an advertisement purpose of public campaigns against conflict in Nigeria. There can be live performances through music showing the society the irrelevance of cultural conflicts. Music scope is unlimited; it can either be played or listen to at home, work place, war, sport, while in the market place/ shopping and there's music for all categories. So, it accompanies various functions in our society.

To produce meaningful performance, music needs human skills to take some major roles like vocalists, instrumentalists, sound engineers, people have always found music as a significant part of life that one can either listen to it by playing a music CD or singing along when seeing a music video on the television. So, one may listen (at home, in a car, on the computer, iPads, or attend a music function). Music sets mood; it either inspires an herdsman to see more reason while he should live in peace in his community or calm him to total submission against such an act of killing his fellow human being. As a form of communication, music can be used to inform the society of the danger ahead. There should be specific musical sounds for each community to alert them in case of danger from herdsmen. Once this music is played everyone takes to hiding or fighting back as the case may be.

Music can provide escape routes from everyday trauma and indeed we live in a traumatic environment. Herdsmen's terrorism is a sort of reaction to the unfortunate reality of our life. Some have ascribed it to ethnicity, insensitivity of Nigerian leaders, religious bigotry and so on and so forth. Whatever the cause, it is a reaction to an unhealthy situation, characterised by ignorance, intellectual, emotional and economic poverty to mention a few. This development has further aggravated the bad situation, in the country, in such a way that the victims of the herdsmen terrorism have become emotional wreck and daily swim in the trauma of it all. In other words they too must be stabilised and rehabilitated. Music can go a long way in achieving this. The content of music compositions should reflect how the emotionally ill can see the proverbial light on the other side of the tunnel.

Fulani Herdsmen are human and if they have recreational places around where they can listen to good music that can take their minds off killings which is like their everyday life, then there are chances of cooling off their temper or getting

them apprehended at that sport. Music is active and dynamic. Even though some people get to listen to music by proxy, without intending to on either of the medium mentioned earlier, you find them getting to respond to such by either listening to the text or moving to the rhythms. Music serve important role in shaping society and identities. Music speaks to us and silences us, sways and soothes us. It talks about ethics, culture and ways of life of a people. It's an integral part of life, announcing birth or death of a person, praising gods, passage of cultural heritage from one generation to other. Music accompanies spiritual cleansing to ward off evil in the affected area of the community. There are spiritual musical instruments *aro* and *seere* been used in the Yoruba speaking community of Nigeria.

### **The Roles of Film in the Suppression of Fulani Herdsmen's Terrorism in Nigeria**

Film is an audio-visual art that has limitless potentials of affecting people's attitude and capable of influencing attitudinal change. Technology has, more than ever before, made it possible to distribute short videos within seconds. This opportunity should be utilised to use the medium to reach out the all stakeholders on the evils of terrorism and to provide alternative resistance to the harsh socio-economic environment that we find ourselves. Film cannot function without the involvement of people, actors, production managers, camera men, film director etc. Film can be used to inform the society of the danger ahead. The film medium can be used to prepare people on what to do in cases of emergency. Some people are not able to remain calm in the face of trouble and most times they die well ahead of death. There are cases of people merely hearing gun shots and in a desperate bid to escape, without first evaluating the situation, jump into canals. The film medium can be used to disseminate governmental policies against terrorism and its attendant consequences. Film that can change the minds of Fulani herdsmen from killing, which is like their everyday life, can be available via the internet and sponsored to prop up on any internet enabled phone. Herdsmen carry android phones with them and a lot of them are on various social media, thus films that preach peace and emphasise the consequences of criminality and violence will go a long way to influence change of attitude.

### **Conclusion**

The article concludes that the violent acts of Fulani herdsmen have caused enormous unemployment, a decline in agricultural output and productivity, the destruction of lives and property, a severing of links between the herders and host communities, and the relocation of farmers from their homes. These problems all pose a major threat to Nigeria's national security. Music and film are two sides of the same coin. One is incomplete without the other. Musicians, in most cases, don't feel totally fulfilled after releasing albums or singles until they have produced the video versions of the album or singles. In the same vein, there is no

film without music, not even silent films. Music by nature is the most mobile form of artistic products. It is the most accessible art forms on the go. Radio can be accessed anywhere in the country through people's phones. Most of the herdsmen carry portable transistor radios with them wherever they go, listening to music most of the times

### **Recommendations**

As a result, the research offers these recommendations. In order to change the mindset of the herdsmen and teach them to obey the law of the land, the government should invest in the music and film industries and provide artists the freedom to produce herdsmen-farmers conflict related contents. Artists must think about the numerous social roles that the arts play and not just concentrate on making money. The government must offer greater job prospects and basic education because the majority of these herdsmen are illiterate and travel thousands of kilometres with their livestock. Access to employment will make them less aggressive.

Musicians and filmmakers should provide contents that inform ranchers about the significance of buying property and establishing cattle ranches in various parts of the nation so that these animals are taken care of and not allowed to roam free. The government should use movies and music as propaganda tools to spread its policies. For example, educating the ranchers about the repercussions of carrying unauthorised weapons and their illegality. It should supports the production of contents that highlight the necessity of abiding by the law and showing respect for the people and culture of the communities where ranches are built. Films and songs about peacefully resolving conflicts should be produced by radio and television stations. Singing and making movies about raising public awareness and the need for security authorities to scrutinise these pastoralists' activities is something that musicians and filmmakers ought to do.

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