

The Third Coming of the Fulani and its Security Implications for Southwest Nigeria

Fulani'nin Üçüncü Gelişi ve Güneybatı Nijerya için Güvenlik Etkileri

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Abstract: The modern Southwest region of Nigeria, particularly during the presidency of Muhammadu Buhari, was formerly a playground for bandit Fulanis and killer Fulani herdsmen, who are notorious for their insatiable thirst for violence. This study, however, applied a historical lens to explain why Fulanis of dubious character are drawn to the present-day Southwest region of Nigeria. This work adheres to the argument of Ikime (2018), who argued that a thorough understanding of the past is necessary for mastering the present. In light of this context, this study took a historical perspective on the Third Coming of the Fulanis to the Yoruba region of Nigeria. Fulani and Yoruba people coexisted in Ilorin, Kwara State, until Nigeria's official establishment in 1960. This research indicates that the Fulani people moved to the southwestern part of Nigeria on three consecutive occasions. The First Coming was characterized by nomadic people who were less concerned with Islamic values; the Second Coming embodied rigid Islamic values comparable to those of Uthman Dan Fodio; and the Third Coming is characterised by a disregard for human lives in host communities, endangering the Yoruba/Fulani identity in the Southwest as the

host community has developed a fear of the Yoruba-Fulani as a result of the bandit Fulanis' questionable conduct. In this study, analytical methods like critical thinking and descriptive-analytical analysis were employed within the premise of primordialism and instrumentalism theories of ethnic conflicts. The majority of the information was obtained from internet sources such as peer-reviewed academic journals, news websites, and study reports. The research revealed that identifying and recognising Yoruba-Fulani in the Southwest will help minimise ethnic stereotyping and aid in tracking down the troublesome alien Fulani who are a threat to the region's stability. If the Yoruba-Fulani were to be forcibly expelled from the Yoruba region of Nigeria, the lives of a significant number of Yorubas living in Fulani communities in the northern region would be radically impacted.

Keywords: First Coming, Second Coming, Third Coming, Yoruba/Fulani, Insecurity

Öz: Nijerya'nın modern Güneybatı bölgesi, vahşi davranışlarıyla tanınan haydut Fulani'ler ve Fulani çobanlar tarafından sıkıntıya sokulmuştur. Ancak bu çalışma, günümüz Nijerya'nın Güneybatı bölgesine şüpheli karakterli Fulani'lerin niye çekildiğini açıklamak için tarihsel bir perspektif benimsemektedir. Bu şekilde, tarihçiler, Fulani ve Yoruba halklarının, Nijerya'nın resmi olarak 1960 yılında kurulmadan önce bile Ilorin Kwara eyaletinde yan yana yaşadıklarını öğrendiler. Bu araştırma, Fulani halkının Nijerya'nın güneybatı bölgesine üç ayrı göç yaptığını öne sürmektedir. İlk Geliş, İslami değerlere daha az önem veren göçebe insanlar olarak tasnif edilmiştir; İkinci Geliş, Uthman Dan Fodio'nun değerlerine benzer sert İslami değerlerle karakterize edilmiştir; ve Üçüncü Geliş, misafir topluluklarda insan hayatına olan saygısızlıkla karakterize edilirken, Güneybatı'da Yoruba/Fulani kimliğini tehlikeye atmıştır çünkü misafir topluluk, haydut Fulani'lerin davranışları nedeniyle Yoruba/Fulani'den korkmaya başlamıştır. Bu çalışmada eleştirel düşünme ve açıklayıcı-analitik analiz gibi analitik teknikler kullanılmıştır. Bilgilerin çoğu, değerlendirilmiş bilimsel dergiler, haber siteleri ve çalışma raporları gibi çevrimiçi kaynaklardan elde edilmiştir. Araştırma, Güneybatı'da Yoruba/Fulani'leri tespit etmenin etnik klişeleştirmeyi önlemeye ve bölgedeki istikrarı tehdit eden sorunlu Fulani'leri takip etmeye yardımcı olacağını bulmuştur. Nijerya'nın güneybatı bölgesinin dışında yaşayan birçok Yoruba, Fulani yerleşimlerinde yaşamakta ve Fulani'ler Yoruba bölgesinden zorla çıkarılırsa yaşamları büyük ölçüde etkilenebilir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Birinci Geliş, İkinci Geliş, Üçüncü Geliş, Yoruba-Fulani, Güvensizlik

Introduction

Among the greatest dangers to the security of the Nigerian state in the twenty-first century are terrorism, banditry, and secessionism. While Nigerian society has endured numerous political storms in the past, such as terrorism, banditry, and secessionism, the country has never experienced simultaneous security challenges. Unfortunately, all six geopolitical zones in Nigeria are vulnerable to at least one of the aforementioned security threats. For example, terrorists and seasoned bandits tend to gather in the north. Numerous kidnappers and armed Fulani herders have infiltrated the northwest, southwest, southeast, and southern districts.

In response to attacks by armed Fulani herders, the Biafrans in the southeast and the descendants of Oduduwa in the southwest adopted separatist tendencies. Fulani herder incursions into places outside of northern Nigeria have sparked rumours that the Federal Government of Nigeria is aiding the Islamification and Fulanisation of the nation. This study will distinguish between Fulanisation and Islamisation for the sake of clarity and to avoid misunderstandings surrounding the terms.

Terrorism and banditry, on the other hand, have spread over northern Nigeria and its northern neighbours, Niger, Cameroon, and Chad, all of which are in the Lake Chad basin. All four countries in the Lake Chad Basin contain a permanent Fulani population, albeit as a minority that is nonetheless rather sizeable, particularly Nigeria, where Hausa and Fulani identities have merged despite their diverse beginnings.

Sangare (2019) estimates that there are 16,800,000 Fulani in Nigeria, or 7.6 percent of the total population; 2,900,000 Fulani in Cameroon, or 22 percent of the total population; 1,600,000 Fulani in Niger, or 6.3 percent of the total population; and 580,000 Fulani in Chad, or less than 4 percent of the total population. Even though Nigeria is home to the largest Fulani population in the Lake Chad region, Fulani makes up less than 6% of the country's population (Statista, 2021).

The historical accounts of Islamic Fulani conquests have left an indelible mark on the societies of Mali and Nigeria, especially in the north and a small territory in southwest Nigeria. This study will therefore establish a connection between the present and the past to demonstrate how Fulani ethnic expansionism was successful in its first and second comings but encountered resistance from the host community in what was thought to be its Third Coming, particularly in the Yoruba-dominated Southwestern region of Nigeria.

This study aims to shed light on the causes and effects of insecurity, strategic efforts to halt the invasion, a cry for regionalism (self-determination), and secessionist aspirations in the Yoruba region of Nigeria since the Fulani attempted to enter the contemporary age. In no way does this imply that the Fulani people adhere to an Islamist ideology. Their second arrival to Ilorin in "modern-day Kwara State" was distinguished by Islamic influences that have continued to the present day (Omoiya, 2014). The article examines the Fulanis' First, Second, and Third Comings in Nigeria's Southwest Region, as well as a brief evaluation of the First and Second Comings and how they have influenced the emergence of Yoruba-Fulani identity in Ilorin and Yoruba-Fulani migration to the interiors of Southwest Nigeria. The Third Coming would be described in detail, with an emphasis on how it precipitated a humanitarian crisis in the region in question. Finally, the host region's reactions to the mythical Third Coming will be analysed to discover if there is a plan to Fulanise and Islamise Nigeria. Similarly, the Yoru-

ba/Fulani identity that emerged because of the Fulani influx in Nigeria's south-west region and its ramifications for security in the region under examination would be emphasised.

The conceptualisation of the Fulanis' First, Second, and Third Comings in the Southwest

First Coming: In this study, the term "the First Coming of the Fulani" refers to the migration of Fulani herders and pastoralists to Ilorin, as described by Abdulwahab (2007:67). According to Abdulwahab, the first Fulani arrived in Ilorin, with Al-Fard as the pioneer. In addition, the Fulani cattle herders are nomads who frequently relocate, especially during times of drought. Due to their antiquated worldview, the Fulani hold a neutral attitude toward Islam. In contrast to the severe treatment, they suffered from Hausa landowners and farmers elsewhere in Nigeria, Abdulwahab reports that Ilorin's beautiful vegetation and absence of taxes drew the Fulani herders to the city. The Fulani people also moved their herds to the market city of Ilorin. There was evidence of cattle and milk trading for textiles, salts, and other products. Ilorin, the capital of the present Nigerian state of Kwara, was the site of an ancient Fulani village that had no Islamic law or philosophy.

Second Coming: The Fulani's Second Coming refers to the second major meeting between the south-west (Ilorin), slave soldiers (jamma), and the Fulani, when Aare Afonja of Ilorin invited Fulani Muslim cleric "Sheu Alimi or Al-Salih" to fight the Oyo Empire for the establishment of an independent Ilorin, free from the hegemony of the Oyo Empire (Abulwahab, 2007; Omoiya, 2014).

Islam had a definite influence on the Fulanis' Second Coming to Ilorin. In his evaluations of the Fulanis of the town, Abdulwahab categorised Sheu Alimi as a Fulani and a conservative Muslim cleric. Abdulwahab (2007) and Omoiya (2014) shared an identical perspective regarding Sheu Alimi's Islamic ancestry. Sheu Alimi was said to have avoided politics despite being a devout Islamic cleric; based on this premise, the Second Coming of the Fulani featured a rigorous Islamic civilisation component, but not necessarily Jihadism (Danmole, Hermon-Hodge, & Johnson cited in Abdulwahab, 2007:76; Omoiya, 2014).

Atanda, as described in Abdulwahab (2007), gave a cynical but critical view of Sheu Alimi's role in Ilorin, which he labelled "Jihadism." Scholars who exonerated Sheu Alimi of jihadist accusations and those who labelled him a jihadist agree on one point: Sheu Alimi was the pioneer of Islam in Ilorin. Similarly, Fulani's Second Coming in Ilorin signified the subjugation of the host community's political culture and the formation of an emirate.

Sheu Alimi's accounts in Ilorin, as recorded by Atanda in Abdulwahab (2007), reflect Nwambara's (1963) remarks about Sheik Uthman Dan Fodio's Fulani conquest of Hausa territorial enclaves.

In contrast to Johnson, Danmole, and Hermon-Hodge's portrayals of Sheu Alimi, Nwambara and Atanda's accounts of Sheu Alimi may be considered as bleak. The Second Coming of the Fulani was characterised by a fusion of Islamic values and conquest, which has impliedly been a source of discontent for some Yorubas up to this point.

Third Coming of the Fulani: The sporadic and organised incursions of killer Fulani herdsmen from outside Nigeria into the modern-day southwest region of Nigeria have prompted speculations of the Third Coming of Fulani herders and robbers. However, this cannot be attributed to Jihad, but rather to political or economic objectives. Although renowned people such as Wole Shoyinka, former President Olusegun Obasanjo, the late Dr. Obadiah Mailafia, Afenifere, and others have cautioned the public that there is a plan to Islamise and Fulanise Nigeria, however, there is no scientific evidence to support these claims (Gbadamosi, 2021; Olawoyin, 2021; Akhaine et al., 2019). According to the Federal Government of Nigeria and a number of scholars, it is an exaggeration and propaganda fanned by some elites. Numerous instances have demonstrated, though, that criminal Fulani herdsmen in Nigeria kidnap and demand ransom from commuters. The confessions of some criminals, most of whom are from the Fulani axis, have prompted widespread racial profiling. Bishop Matthew Hassan Kukah, on the other hand, cautioned against ethnic profiling, arguing that it contributed to the Biafran conflict (Abdulaziz, 2019; Antonio, 2019). Farmers are attacked and kidnapped on their farms or from their homes, as was the case in the southwest of Nigeria, where Pa Fasoranti's daughter, "Mrs Funke Olakunrin," was attacked and murdered by suspected armed Fulani herdsmen on the Ondo highway.

Pa Fasoranti, the Yoruba elder whose daughter was murdered by suspected Fulani bandits, asserted that the state was reluctant to properly investigate the homicide, most likely because the culprits were Fulani. Some Yoruba believed Fulani herdsmen were responsible for the murder of an innocent woman, while the Bola Ahmed Tinubu axis rejected such charges as premature and based on ethnic profiling (Akingboye et al., 2019). In fact, President Buhari issued an order mandating that any herdsman armed with a firearm would be executed by the Nigerian military or paramilitary (Ugbodaga, 2021). This edict demonstrates the government's awareness of the danger presented by the murderous Fulani herdsmen.

On the other hand, the Third Coming of the Fulani to Southwest Nigeria is characterised by blatant banditry. Indeed, it was reported that on October 22, 2021, Fulani bandits assaulted the Oyo State jail facility and freed the leader of the Fulani bandits, "Wakili," as well as other convicted convicts. The violent release of the captured Fulani bandit leader prompted numerous journalists to conclude that the bandits were foreign mercenaries (Bodunrin, 2021).

Primordialism and Instrumentalism Theories

Primordialism is based on the primacy of consanguinity, which is the major basis of social or group cohesion. This idea asserts that ethnic identity is inherited from birth and is immutable. Therefore, members of an ethnic group enjoy hospitality, mutual recognition, loyalty, security, and cooperation. Members of the same group are greeted with respect and acceptance (Harowitz, Smith, Hammond, and Axelrod, cited in Che, 2016). Whereas groups alien to or external to a local group are met with historical odium, prejudice, mutual fear, expulsion, and slurs (Geertz, cited in Che, 2016).

Primordialist theory is predicated on the premise that dissimilarity in ethnic identities is a possible source of rivalry; thus, sporadic conflicts are inevitable in an ethnically diversified society or geographical territory (Vanhanen, cited in Che, 2016). Primordialism is relevant to the examination of the rivalry that occurred between the Yorubas and Fulani during the First and Second Comings because it suggests “we against them.” Contrary to the notion of primordialism, instrumentalism asserts that cultural variation within each society is not the major cause of conflict, but rather the manipulation or politicisation of primordial loyalties. In the context of resource allocation, government acts of commission and omission is the primary cause of conflict, not ethnic differences. Cederman et al. (2011) have shown that horizontal inequalities between politically significant groups are the key driver of ethnic conflicts, hence validating the theory of instrumentalism’s assertion that cultural heterogeneity is not the fundamental driver of ethnic conflicts. For instance, the Yorubas were alarmed by the Federal Government of Nigeria’s refusal to curb the excesses of the cattle-Fulani, given that President Buhari himself is of Fulani ethnicity. The adoption of primordialism and instrumentalism theories will aid a detailed analysis of the insecurity ravaging

The emergence of Yoruba/Fulani identity in contemporary Nigeria has a historical context.

Yoruba/Fulani identity is not innate, but rather the result of migration and Aare Afonja’s invitation of Sheu Alimi, which brought Fulani livestock and city dwellers to Ilorin (Abdulwahab, 2007). Omoiya describes the political issues that led to Afonja inviting Fulani mercenaries to Ilorin, Afonja’s downfall, the Fulanis’ takeover of the Ilorin monarchy, the Fulanis’ attempt to take over Oyo through expansion, and Oyo’s three consecutive defeats at the hands of the Fulanis, who then asked the Sultan of Sokoto for assistance against Oyo (2014).

After declaring independence from the Oyo Empire, Aare Afonja invited the Fulani preacher Sheu Alimi for spiritual protection against the Oyos. This indicates that Oyo dominated the region prior to the Fulani’s conquest of Ilorin and its various city-states. As a vassal state prior to the Fulani takeover, Ilorin was

obligated to pay taxes to Oyo. Based on the treaty binding on the empire and its units, the Alaaḥin descends ruthlessly upon any province or vassal of the Oyo empire that defaults on payment, known as *ishakole*. Aare Afonja enlisted Sheu Alimi's spiritual and military support out of fear of the Alaaḥin's anger; nevertheless, Sheu Alimi's objectives greatly transcended those of Afonja. According to Omoiya (2014:79), Danmole believes that the animosity between Aare Afonja and Alaaḥin Aole derives from their common history. In the end, the rivalry led to Alaaḥin Aole's demise, and Afonja became the supreme monarch of Ilorin with the assistance of Sheu Alimi, whom Sholagberu introduced to him. The loss of Alaaḥin Aole marked the beginning of the Oyo Empire's decline. The advent of the Ilorin Emirate gave birth to the continued presence of the Yoruba-Fulani identity in the South-west region of Nigeria.

Replacement of Afonja's Monarchy by the Emirate.

In fulfillment of its geographical obligation, Alaaḥin Ojigi attempted to protect the Igbomina Yoruba from the Nupes, who had built a slave camp in the area. Due to this, the Oyo empire exerted tremendous influence over Ilorin; hence, it is not surprising that Alaaḥin Ojigi founded the city (I. Mustain, cited in Omoiya 2014:79). Oyo appointed a direct agent to lead Ilorin, who was succeeded by his prince Pasi and his son Alugbin, the father of Aare Afonja. During the reign of Aare Afonja, the Yoruba lost sovereignty to the Fulanis in Ilorin, and the land has remained an emirate to the present day.

Atanda, cited in Omoiya (2014), objectively stated that Afonja encouraged Sheu Alimi to relocate from Kuwo, a sub-city of Ilorin, to the metropolis of Ilorin, he also claimed that Afonja established Ilorin as a safe haven for slave troops fleeing from their Hausa owners in the north. Afonja encouraged Sheu Alimi to settle in Ilorin after he travelled to Oshogbo and Oyo Ile with his Islamic evangelistic mission. The army's habit of recruiting fugitive slaves precipitated the fall of Afonja. The slaves had no ties to Oyo, so it seemed reasonable that Afonja would want to prevent suspicions of treason or betrayal. Based on this notion, he utilised mercenaries extensively. Unfortunately, the well-fed slave troops abused their authority, turned on their leader, Afonja, murdered him, and publicly burned his body. Who among Aare Afonja and Sheu Alimi died first appears to be debatable. According to Johnson and Alesinloye, cited in Omoiya (2014:79), both Afonja and Sheu Alimi died in 1817. In contrast to Omoiya (2014), Abdulwahab (2007:74) stated that Sheu Alimi died in early 1823 and that this had the apparent effect of diminishing Afonja's political influence.

However, the deaths of Sheu Alimi and Afonja altered the political landscape of Ilorin as AbdulSalami, Sheu Alimi's son, and Bako from the Seriki Gambari lineage competed for the role of Imam. With the help of Sholagberu and other Yoruba leaders in Ilorin, Abdulsalami was able to win the election (Danmole, cited in Omoiya 2014:79).

According to the historical epistles of Omoiya (2014), the Second Coming of Fulani to the Southwest Region of Nigeria revealed that there was neither an incursion nor Jihadism. However, what might be termed “incursion” resulted from Aare Afonja’s failed policies and his machinations against the Jama. As put by Abdulwahab (2007:74), the tide turned against Afonja after Sheu Alimi’s death because he separated himself from the Muslim community and failed to crown a successor, Imam. All of these factors contributed to Afonja’s obscurity when Abdulsalami and his slave warriors murdered him. According to Omoiya (2014:82), Emir Shitta of Ilorin employed Jihad to combat the threat posed by Alaafin Oluewu and his Bariba warrior ally from the Oyo Empire, known as Eleduwe or Waru Kura. These factors unquestionably contributed to the foundation of an emirate in Ilorin, and they also explain the Fulani flight into the interior of Yorubaland. In addition, the construction of an emirate in Ilorin and the development of a Yoruba-Fulani identity are both consequences of the first and second coming of the Fulanis.

The foundation of an emirate in Ilorin, however, led to a fierce power struggle between the Islamic Emir of Ilorin and the Oyo Empire, prompting Emir Shitta to ask the Sokoto emirate for assistance in destroying the Oyo-Ibariba coalition. The foregoing historical accounts establish that the Fulani in Southwest Nigeria existed prior to the establishment of Nigeria and recognise the Fulanis’ First and Second Comings. The operations of identifiable bandits and livestock Fulanis continue to jeopardise the security of the Southwest area of Nigeria, which the Third Coming of the Fulani has invoked.

The Fulani Third Coming to Contemporary Nigeria’s Southwest and the Escalation of Insecurity

Unfortunately, modern-day Southwest Nigeria has become a breeding ground for kidnappers, ritual murderers, cult rivals, Fulani bandits, and devastating cattle Fulani horror shows (Usman & Akinrefon, 2017; Oluwafemi, 2021; Ojo, 2020; Akinrefon, 2021; Raheem, 2017; Umoru, 2021; The Nation, 2021). Insecurity has spurred widespread unease among both locals and visitors. Unfortunately, ethnic stereotyping has become more common due to the horrible atrocities committed by Fulani bandits and killer herders. The roadways, farms, and woodlands in contemporary Southwest Nigeria have regrettably become death or kidnapping traps due to the operations of alleged Fulani bandits, armed Fulani livestock raids on farmers’ property, and kidnappers from other ethnic groups.

Regular Fulani armed bandit attacks and Fulani attacks on the locals’ cattle have prompted the locals’ desire to expel the Fulani from the Southwest’s geographic boundaries. This is evident in Igangan, Oyo State, and other locations. Indeed, the actions of a handful of misguided Fulanis have sparked widespread outrage and justified the use of ethnic profiling. According to Atanda, cited in

Abdulwahab (2007), Fulanis commit retaliatory violence by nature. Similarly, historical records indicate that an attack against the Fulani is typically met with Fulani reprisal aggression. This was proved in Igangan, where Fulani invaders murdered 15 people and destroyed property.

In Oyo State, intruders stormed into a jail where a prominent Fulani bandit commander was being kept. Inmates were released and the detained Wakili could not be located after the incident. The identity of the attackers remains unknown; however, Fulani bandits have been the subject of conjecture. As seen by the assassination of Aare Afonja in precolonial Nigeria by Fulani and slave warriors, the Fulanis have a well-earned reputation for retaliatory attacks. In reprisal, Fulani attacks were launched against the states of Benue, Plateau, and Kaduna. The current governor of Kaduna State avowedly stated that the Fulani people will always resort to violent retaliation (Vincent, 2021; Sahara Reporter, 2021; Sahara Reporter, 2021; Reporters, 2021; Ibrahim, 2020; Dada, 2021; Daily Trust, 2021). According to Atanda, cited in Abdulwahab (2007), the Fulani habitually fight in one other's defence; hence, it is valid to attribute this mindset to the Fulani people. However, he did not specify whether or whether they seek retribution when cheated upon, but he noted that they believe in retaliation.

Case Studies of Yoruba/Fulani Identity, Bandit Fulani Attacks, and Culture of Reprisals and its Implications on Security

Attacks by Fulani herders in Igangan, Oyo State, and the Eviction of Yoruba/Fulanis

Farmers in the Ibarapa-Igangan axis of Nigeria's Oyo State claim that Yoruba-Fulanis and Fulani herdsman abducted, demanded ransom, and murdered their children. Consequently, the Yorubas threatened to expel the Yoruba/Fulani people who had resided in the area for decades, compelling them to leave (Sahara Reporters, 2021; Akintun, 2021). Ethnic tensions and violent retaliation occurred because of Fulani herder attacks on members of host communities. The Yorubas' retaliatory attacks led to numerous Yoruba-Fulani absconding to an unknown location. A widely distributed clip captured the aftermath of the Fulani assault in the Igangan axis. According to accounts, Fulani herders attacked the Igangan community on June 6, 2021, killing twenty people and torching the king's palace and a gas station in the host town (PM News, 2021; Ajayi, 2021). As proof of the Fulanis and Yorubas' battle, victims, property damage, and eyewitness reports were recorded (Kilarigbo Live, 2021; SaharaTV, 2021).

A counter-story, to the claim that Fulani Assassinated Dr. Fatai Aborode

The eviction of Yoruba and Fulani from Igangan and the ensuing retaliatory attacks by Fulani herders are complex problems. This is because fresh evidence has emerged identifying the root cause of the issue. According to Oyetimi and

Alimi (2021), the assassination of Dr. Fatai Aborode, a leader of the People Democratic Party and a former candidate for the House of Representatives, who was allegedly killed by two Fulani herders, was the primary cause of the conflict between Fulani and Yoruba in Ibarapa, Oyo State.

Crimes such as murder, rape, and kidnapping are attributed to groups of Fulani herders in these reports. All of these problems led to the decision to force out the Yoruba/Fulani and Bororo/Fulani who had lived in the area for decades. Citizens of Ibarapa took matters into their own hands after realising that the Nigerian security agencies, especially the Nigerian Police Force (NPF), were doing little to help. On a live show broadcast by the Broadcasting Corporation of Oyo State (BCOS) in February, the current governor of Oyo State declared that new intelligence proves the late Dr Fatai Aborode was not slain by Fulani herdsmen (Politics Today, 2021). In the opinion of Governor Seyi Makinde:

I spent two days in Ibarapa and I interacted with the people. I spoke with the father. I asked him what happened. They told me that, Dr. Aborode was not the one that drove himself to the farm. He was carried on the motorcycle when they were going. He sat at the back. But when they were coming, it was another person. I asked where the person is that drove the motorcycle, they said that he came to the house to seek help. They told me that some people who saw them during the interaction said that those people are not Fulani. They were speaking Yoruba. The father told me that the death was political. And I called the Commissioner of Police (Daily News24, 2021).

This does not suggest, however, that Fulani herders and bandits have not penetrated and exploited Southwest Nigeria. The appalling and horrible conduct of the criminal Fulani herders have prompted a nationwide discussion about whether there is an effort to Fulanise or Islamise Nigeria. The comments of Noble Laurette Wole Soyinka, Chief Olusegun Aremu Obasanjo, “the former President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria,” the Afenifere, the late Dr. Obadiya Meilafia, and Cardinal Okogie, among others, all claimed shared a similar view regarding the assumed Fulanisation and Islamisation agenda (Awa & Nwachukwu, 2019; Ige, 2019; Oluwole, 2019; Gbadamosi, 2021; Eyoboka, 2019; Akinterinwa, 2021). The invasion of the Bororo-Fulani, who are frequently encouraged by the Yoruba-Fulani, has sparked ethnic and religious consciousness, as seen by the leaders’ worries that powerful Nigerians intend to Fulanise and Islamise the nation.

Fulanisation (pastoralism and politics), Islamisation (jihadism), and their Snowball Effect on Security in Southwest Nigeria

The bandit Fulanis and murderous cattle Fulanis have sparked a chorus of unfavorable assumptions throughout Nigeria’s southwestern region; this has inadvertently morphed into a widespread belief that secessionism guarantees security because it will protect their region from the incursion of unwanted and unwelcome Fulani herdsmen aggressors. On the other hand, patriotic Nigerians

insist on a unified Nigeria and urge the Federal Government of Nigeria to act vigorously. Principal proponents of the Fulanisation and Islamisation hypotheses are mostly secessionists and opposition leaders such as the late Dr Obadiah Mailafia, Lt. Gen. Theophilus Danjuma, former President Olusegun Obasanjo, Professor Wole Soyinka, and the incumbent Governor of Benue State (This Day, 2022).

Separatists in the Yoruba region of Nigeria are of the assumption that a balkanised Nigeria will protect their homeland from the homicidal cattle-Fulanis. The Fulani are widely believed by academics, politicians, and businesspersons to be committed to Islamising and Fulanising Nigeria in the same way that Uthman dan Fodio did in the country's north prior to the establishment of Nigeria (Campbell & Quinn, 2021). One historical fact that seems to unsettle the average Yoruba's perspective of the Fulanis to this day is the story of Abdulsalami, the son of Sheu Alimi, who transformed the Yoruba monarchy into an emirate in Ilorin.

The government's initiative to construct grazing routes for the Fulanis, the Miyetti- Allah's statements, and the militant Bororo-Fulani's are all realities that contributed to the growing suspicion of Fulanis in the Yoruba region. On the other hand, pundits like Imam Sulaimon Antonio and the FGN assert that the pretensions that there is Fulanisation and Islamisation agenda are fabrications meant to drive a wedge amongst Nigerians (Punch Nigeria, 2019; TVC News Nigeria, 2019). However, South-westerners remain sceptical that the Fulanisation and Islamisation agendas are unreal. For the record, it is ethical to admit that Fulani herdsman and farmer clashes are not new to Nigeria, as they have occurred on a sporadic and recurring basis since the country's first republic.

Some scholars argue that confrontations between Fulani herders and farmers were fueled by multiple variables, such as climate change-induced drought (Popoola et al., 2020), while others claim Fulanis are culturally Jihadist and expansionist (Hiskett, 1963). The latter position is commonly attributed to Uthman dan Fodio's past accomplishments in Sokoto and the events that transpired in Ilorin under the reigns of Afonja and his associate Sheu Alimi. The viewpoints are consistent with the assertions of fulanisation and Islamisation, yet there is insufficient proof that there is an effort to pursue such a costly aspiration. However, this sentiment is the result of precolonial Fulani practices, the actions of contemporary Boro-Fulani, and the government's desire to urge non-Fulani populations to welcome Fulani pastoralists' grazing traditions.

The Boro-Fulani incursion into southwest Nigeria is not the source of fear, but historical memories and random acts of violence perpetrated by alien Fulanis who have shown disregard for host communities. In addition, the reluctance of the Federal Government to clamp down on the excesses of the bellicose Fulani herdsman in the Southwest region equally spurred the assumption that there is a Fulaniization and Islamisation agenda.

Conclusion

In conclusion, The Third Coming of the Fulani describes the advent of a distinct Fulani people in the southwestern region of Nigeria, specifically because their entrance constituted a security threat to Nigerians in general. However, this does not indicate that all Fulanis in Nigeria have questionable morals; the actions of a few Fulanis from other countries have tragically tarnished the reputation of Fulanis in general. Although historical narratives do not favour the Fulanis, neither those in the north nor those on the northern border of Yorubaland, which is "Ilorin." The second arrival of the Fulani to Yorubaland was chaotic, and this, combined with Uthman Dan Fodio Jihad in the North during the pre-European era, had a detrimental effect on the Yorubas' perception of the Fulanis in contemporary Nigeria. This only suggests that the Fulanis had received odium prior to the establishment of Nigeria because of their Jihad in the north and Second Coming in the Yoruba region. Following the Fulani Jihad in the pre-European Northern region and the Second Coming in the pre-European Yoruba region, the Yorubas' perception of the Yoruba-Fulani majority-settled in Ilorin, Kwara State, Nigeria, has been badly damaged. As a result of historical prejudice, the Yoruba have been reluctant to embrace the Yoruba-Fulani identity; instead, the Fulani are viewed as pure Fulani despite living among the Yoruba for more than a century.

The outcome of the Yoruba's refusal to accept the Yoruba-Fulani identity has placed the Yoruba-Fulani in a position where "we neither belong here nor there." However, the Yoruba-Fulani appear to be attached to their primordial source, as events have demonstrated that they routinely seek the support or protection of the Northern and alien Fulanis during times of crisis. Abdulsalam, the son of Sheu Alimi, sought the assistance of the Sokoto Emirate when the Oyo Empire revolted against Ilorin. Similarly, Yoruba-Fulanis in the contemporary Yoruba region has been observed employing Fulani mercenaries against the Yorubas, as was the case in Igangan, Oyo State, to counteract repression. The evident historical fact regarding how the Fulanis migrated to the Yoruba region during the First and Second Comings strengthened the Yorubas' belief that the Yoruba-Fulanis are outsiders, even though they are encapsulated in an ancient Yoruba metropolis to this day and even hold the monarchy.

The threat posed by the rejection of Yoruba-Fulani identity is that it provides the Bororo-Fulani and bandit Fulanis, who are frequently housed by Yoruba-Fulanis, with a covert path. Not only are the alien Fulanis a menace to the Nigerian people in the Southwest region, but they also pose a challenge to the Nigerian government since many of them are undocumented nomads.

In the southwest region of Nigeria, the security threat is a reality due to the poor state of the economy, climatic, political, cultural, and historical factors, as

well as human vices. The response of the federal government to the region's instability has been the subject of unsubstantiated rumours, resulting in severe criticism and separatist ardour.

The Federal Government's proposal of a cattle ranch, incapacity to control the violent herders, and the blatant assertions of the Miyetti Allah all contributed to the region's separatist consciousness.

Peace and reconciliation initiatives with an emphasis on cultural competence for Yorubas, Yoruba/Fulanis, and Fulanis. To reduce incursions into farmers' plantations, the association of cow herders should be encouraged to seek a new and more contemporary alternative to primitive grazing. A cultural reconciliation between the Yorubas and Fulanis in Ilorin, to promote the acceptance of the Yoruba-Fulani identity, is one possible path ahead. The second setting is at the institutional level, where the National Orientation Agency (NOA) should be tasked with enlightening both Yorubas and Yoruba-Fulanis on the need to accept one another as patriotic Nigerians.

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