

FURA DA NONO; A PROBE INTO THE FULANI LIVELIHOOD

BY

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DECLARATION

I declare that this project work is based on a study carried out by me in the Department of fine and applied Arts, Faculty of environmental sciences, University of Benin, Benin City. Under the supervision of Prof Franklyn Chu EGWALI And Dr. Kenneth .I. NJOKU for the purpose of acquiring a Bachelor of Arts degree in Sculpture.

All ideas and, findings in the study are products of my personal research, and where the views of others have been used and expressed, they were duly acknowledged.

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CERTIFICATION

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DEDICATION

I dedicate this project to God Almighty, the source of my strength, wisdom, and inspiration. His grace has guided every step of this journey, turning challenges into opportunities and ideas into reality. Without His unending mercy, favor, and presence, this work would not have been possible. To Him alone be all glory, honor, and praise.

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ABSTRACT

This study examines Fura da Nono a traditional fermented milk and millet delicacy as a lens for exploring the Fulani people's livelihood, political governance, socio-economic impacts, and the controversies surrounding their cultural and political roles in Nigeria. The research situates Fura da Nono not only as a nutritional staple but also as a socio-cultural marker of identity, migration patterns, and economic exchange among the Fulani. The work further probes the intricate structures of Fulani political governance, including traditional leadership systems, and assesses the socio-political impacts both positive and contentious of their presence in multi-ethnic Nigerian society. The study reveals that while Fura da Nono represents a unifying cultural symbol, issues such as herder-farmer conflicts, land use debates, and national integration challenges continue to generate public discourse and controversy. Findings contribute to broader discussions on cultural preservation, conflict resolution, and socio-economic development.

The research concludes with recommendations for strengthening inter-ethnic harmony, supporting Fulani livelihood sustainability, and fostering inclusive governance frameworks. Using sculpture as a medium to convey the message, this project explores the rich cultural heritage of the Fulani people through the lens of Fura da Nono, using sculpture as a powerful medium to communicate their livelihood, political governance, impacts, and controversies in Nigeria.

The sculptural representation captures the intricate process of marketing fura da Nono; a traditional fermented milk and millet delicacy highlighting the role of Fulani women in preserving this cultural practice and sustaining household economies. Beyond aesthetics, the sculpture embodies the broader socio-political narratives of the Fulani, reflecting their traditional governance systems and the contemporary challenges they face, including land disputes and ethnic tensions. Through form, texture, and symbolism, the artwork invites viewers to engage empathetically with Fulani identity, fostering cultural appreciation and dialogue. This artistic inquiry underscores the capacity of sculpture not only to preserve intangible heritage but also to provoke critical reflection on socio-economic realities and promote peaceful coexistence in Nigeria's diverse society.

Socio-political dominance	-		-							
Sculpture as a medium of cultural communication	-		-		-				30-31	
Art, Politics and socio-cultural commentary	-	--			-		-		31	
CHAPTER THREE: METHOD OF EXECUTION										
Materials	-		-		-		-		-	32-36
The Work Process	-		-		-		-		-	36-42
CHAPTER FOUR: VISUAL ANALYSIS	-				-		-		-	42-46
CHAPTER FIVE: SUMMARY, CONCLUSION										
Summary	-		-		-		-		-	46
Conclusion	-		-		-		-		-	46-47
REFERENCE	-		-		-		-		-	47

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

The Fulani people, also known as Fulbe in their native tongue, represent one of the most widely dispersed and culturally distinct ethnic groups in West Africa. Spanning across more than twenty countries, including Nigeria, Mali, Senegal, Guinea, and Cameroon, the Fulani have historically maintained a semi-nomadic pastoral lifestyle centered on cattle rearing, dairy production, and long-distance migration (Azarya, 2021). Among the numerous cultural symbols that define the Fulani identity, Fura da Nono a traditional delicacy made from fermented cow milk (nono) and millet balls (fura) holds a special place, not only as a dietary staple but also as a representation of socio-economic and cultural heritage (Blench, 2019). In Nigeria, the Fulani constitute a significant ethno-cultural group with a population exceeding 20 million (National Population Commission [NPC], 2022). Their livelihood revolves around cattle breeding, milk production, grain cultivation, and petty trade, with Fura da Nono serving as both a nutritional and commercial product. The delicacy is widely consumed for its rich protein and energy content, making it a valuable commodity in both rural and urban markets (Abdullahi & Mohammed, 2020).

The preparation process is traditionally a female-centered activity, where Fulani women play a central role in production and marketing, thereby contributing substantially to household income and economic sustainability (Kawu, 2018). Beyond its nutritional value, Fura da Nono functions as a medium of cultural expression and social bonding. It is often shared during festivals, communal gatherings, and market days, reinforcing

kinship ties and promoting inter-ethnic interactions. The production process itself is deeply embedded in indigenous knowledge systems, involving fermentation techniques, hygienic practices, and aesthetic presentation that have been passed down through generations (Ibrahim, 2021). However, the contemporary Fulani experience in Nigeria extends far beyond culinary heritage. The Fulani also possess a unique political governance system that blends traditional chieftaincy with modern state structures. Historically, the Fulani emerged as a politically influential group following the Sokoto Jihad of 1804–1808, which established the Sokoto Caliphate a theocratic state governed by Islamic principles (Last, 2017). Today, traditional Fulani rulers, such as the Emir, Ardo, or Lamido, maintain both symbolic and practical authority in conflict resolution, land management, and cultural preservation. This political influence has often placed the Fulani at the center of national discourse, particularly in relation to land use policies, migration control, and inter-ethnic relations.

Despite their contributions to Nigeria's cultural and economic landscape, the Fulani have been embroiled in a series of controversies in recent decades. Rising tensions over grazing land, herder–farmer clashes, and allegations of political favoritism have generated public debate and, in some cases, violent confrontations (International Crisis Group, 2018). These conflicts are often exacerbated by environmental factors such as desertification and climate change, which push pastoralists further south in search of pasture, leading to competition with sedentary farming communities (Okoli & Atelhe, 2014). In this context, Fura da Nono becomes more than just a meal it is a symbolic reminder of the Fulani's pastoral roots, cultural resilience, and economic adaptability. Yet, it also serves as an entry point for exploring broader issues surrounding Fulani livelihood,

political governance, socio-economic impacts, and the controversies that shape public perceptions. This research therefore seeks to investigate these dimensions, using Fura da Nono as a cultural lens through which the Fulani way of life can be understood, appreciated, and critically examined.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

The Fulani people have long been recognized for their pastoral livelihood and unique cultural practices, with Fura da Nono standing out as a hallmark of their socio-economic identity. However, despite their significant contributions to Nigeria's agricultural economy and cultural diversity, the Fulani have increasingly become entangled in controversies that threaten their traditional way of life and national cohesion (Blench, 2019). One of the critical problems stems from escalating conflicts between Fulani pastoralists and sedentary farming communities over access to land and water resources. These disputes, often violent, have led to loss of lives, displacement, and economic disruption, attracting national and international concern (International Crisis Group, 2018). The contentious nature of these clashes has resulted in polarized narratives that sometimes depict the Fulani negatively, overshadowing their contributions and cultural richness. Moreover, the Fulani's political involvement, especially through traditional emirate institutions and contemporary political offices, has been both a source of influence and controversy. Allegations of ethnic favoritism, unequal resource distribution, and politicization of pastoral issues have strained relationships between the Fulani and other ethnic groups (Mustapha, 2006).

The challenges also extend to the preservation of cultural practices like the production and consumption of Fura da Nono. Urbanization, modernization, and market competition threaten the traditional methods of production, impacting livelihoods, especially for Fulani women who rely on this trade (Kawu, 2018). In light of these issues, there is a pressing need for an in-depth study that contextualizes the Fulani experience beyond conflict and controversy. This research aims to fill the gap by exploring the cultural significance of Fura da Nono while examining the political governance, socio-economic impacts, and controversies associated with the Fulani in Nigeria. Understanding these dimensions is essential for fostering cultural appreciation, promoting peaceful coexistence, and formulating effective policies that support sustainable livelihoods.

1.3 Research Questions

To guide this study, the following research questions are posed:

1. What is the cultural and economic importance of Fura da Nono in Fulani livelihood?
2. How are the traditional and modern political governance systems structured among the Fulani people?
3. In what ways do the Fulani contribute socio-economically to Nigeria, particularly in agriculture and culture?
4. What are the main controversies and conflicts associated with the Fulani in Nigeria?

5. What strategies can be employed to address these controversies while promoting cultural preservation and socio-political harmony?

1.4 Aim and Objectives of the Study

The aim of this study is to critically examine Fura da Nono as a cultural lens through which the livelihood, political governance, socio-economic impacts, and controversies surrounding the Fulani people in Nigeria can be understood. Using sculpture as an interpretive medium, the study seeks to highlight both the tangible and intangible aspects of Fulani heritage and socio-political life.

The objectives to the study is to:

1. Investigate the historical and cultural significance of Fura da Nono within Fulani communities.
2. Analyze the socio-political dominance of the Fulani in Nigeria, with particular emphasis on governance and power structures.
3. Explore the economic and cultural contributions of the Fulani to Nigerian society, especially in agriculture, trade, and pastoralism.
4. Identify the key controversies and socio-political tensions linked to Fulani activities, particularly in the context of herder–farmer relations.
5. Use sculpture as a medium to visually represent and critique the Fulani way of life, political influence, and cultural resilience.
6. Propose recommendations on how art can be leveraged to foster dialogue, cultural preservation, and conflict resolution in Nigeria.

1.5 Significance of the Study

This study is significant for several reasons. First, it provides an interdisciplinary approach by linking the cultural element of Fura da Nono with broader socio-economic and political dimensions of the Fulani people. This holistic perspective enriches understanding beyond the common narratives that often focus only on conflicts and controversies. Secondly, the research contributes to the preservation of indigenous knowledge systems, particularly regarding the traditional production and consumption of Fura da Nono. Documenting these cultural practices supports efforts to sustain Fulani heritage amid rapid modernization and globalization. Thirdly, the study offers insights for policymakers and development practitioners on the complexities of Fulani livelihoods and governance. By highlighting both the contributions and challenges faced by the Fulani, the findings can inform strategies that promote peaceful coexistence, conflict resolution, and inclusive governance in Nigeria's multi-ethnic society. Finally, this research adds to the academic discourse on ethnic identity, political power, and cultural resilience, making it a valuable resource for scholars, students, and anyone interested in Nigerian socio-political dynamics.

1.6 Scope and Delimitation of the Study

This study focuses on the Fulani people in Nigeria, examining their cultural, economic, and political lives through the lens of Fura da Nono, a traditional fermented milk and millet delicacy. The research explores the preparation, consumption, and economic significance of Fura da Nono within Fulani communities and its role in cultural identity and livelihood. Politically, the study analyzes the traditional governance

structures such as emirates and their interaction with Nigeria's modern political system. It also considers the socio-economic impacts of the Fulani, particularly their contributions to agriculture, dairy production, and rural economies. However, the research is limited to Nigeria and does not extensively cover the Fulani populations in other West African countries. The study relies primarily on secondary data sources such as academic journals, books, and reports, supplemented by documented ethnographic accounts. Primary fieldwork or direct interviews are outside the scope of this project due to logistical constraints. Furthermore, while the study discusses conflicts involving the Fulani, it does not delve deeply into all aspects of the conflicts but focuses on those directly related to livelihood and governance.

1.7 Limitations of the Study

- 1. Geographical Scope:** The study focused primarily on specific Fulani communities within Nigeria. While the cultural and livelihood patterns documented may be similar across West Africa, regional variations in Fura da Nono preparation, governance systems, and socio-political dynamics may not have been fully captured.
- 2. Language and Communication Barriers:** Due to the predominance of Fulfulde as the native language, data collection relied heavily on interpreters in some locations. This could have resulted in minor loss of nuance, particularly when discussing sensitive issues related to political controversies and ethnic tensions.
- 3. Limited Access to Certain Communities:** Security challenges in some northern states, especially in areas affected by herder-farmer conflicts, restricted the

researcher's ability to conduct extended field observations. Consequently, first-hand ethnographic details from these regions were supplemented by secondary sources.

- 4. Subjectivity in Artistic Interpretation:** Since this project integrates sculpture as a communicative medium, the representation is inevitably shaped by the artist's conceptual vision. While every effort was made to remain authentic to Fulani heritage, some symbolic elements may reflect interpretive choices rather than objective historical accuracy.
- 5. Time and Resource Constraints:** The extensive nature of the Fulani's socio-cultural, political, and economic systems required a selective approach. Certain thematic areas, such as global trade in dairy products or the deeper comparative study with other pastoralist groups, could not be explored within the time frame.

CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE, KNOWLEDGE AND PRACTICE

2.1 Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework guiding this study integrates ethnographic cultural analysis, political anthropology, and visual communication through sculpture to explore the Fulani livelihood, governance, and controversies using Fura da Nono as a symbolic and cultural entry point.

Core Concepts

1. **Cultural Heritage and Livelihood:** Rooted in the anthropological understanding that food is both a sustainer of life and a bearer of identity, Fura da Nono is examined not merely as a dietary staple but as a cultural artifact reflecting Fulani pastoral traditions, gender roles, and intergenerational knowledge transfer.
2. **Political Governance:** The study draws on traditional governance theories to analyze Fulani leadership structures, decision-making processes, and conflict resolution mechanisms, contrasting them with contemporary political realities in Nigeria.
3. **Impact and Controversies:** Through a socio-political lens, the research examines the Fulani's contributions to the Nigerian economy, cultural diversity, and inter-regional trade, alongside the controversies surrounding land use, migration, and security.
4. **Sculpture as a Medium of Cultural Transmission:** Grounded in art communication theory, sculpture is used as both an interpretive and advocacy tool. By visually encoding Fulani cultural narratives into a three-dimensional form, the

artwork serves as a tangible bridge between academic research and public engagement.

2.2 Historical Background of the Fulani People

The Fulani people are one of the largest and most widespread ethnic groups in West Africa, with a rich history that dates back centuries (Blench, 2019). Originating from the Senegambia region, they gradually migrated eastwards, spreading across the Sahelian belt and integrating with various indigenous groups (Diallo, 2008). This migration facilitated their evolution from primarily nomadic pastoralists to diverse livelihoods, including settled farming and urban trade. The most significant turning point in Fulani history was the Sokoto Jihad (1804–1808), led by Usman dān Fodio, which established the Sokoto Caliphate a powerful Islamic theocratic state that unified much of northern Nigeria under Fulani rule (Last, 2014). This jihad not only spread Islam but also reinforced Fulani political dominance and social structures. The emirate system that emerged from this period continues to influence political governance among the Fulani today. The Fulani, also known as Fulbe or Peul, are one of the most widespread and culturally significant ethnic groups in West Africa. Renowned for their pastoral lifestyle, rich traditions, and deep-rooted influence in regional politics, the Fulani have a history that spans centuries and transcends modern-day national borders. This segment explores their historical origins, migratory patterns, settlement in Nigeria, and the socio-cultural transformations that shaped their identity. It is sequentially slated thus;

- **Origins of the Fulani:** Scholars generally agree that the Fulani originated from the Senegambia region, with their roots tracing back to a mixture of North African

Berber and West African populations. Their light complexion and unique physical features, coupled with their distinct language (Fulfulde), have often been cited as evidence of this mixed heritage (Last, 1980). From their early history, the Fulani demonstrated exceptional adaptability, often settling in diverse ecological zones from arid Sahelian regions to the fertile savannahs of West Africa.

- **Migration and Expansion into Nigeria:** The Fulani began migrating into present-day Nigeria around the 14th century, driven by the search for fertile grazing lands and trade opportunities. By the 15th and 16th centuries, their presence became more pronounced in the Hausa city-states such as Kano, Katsina, and Zaria.

Their movement into Nigeria can be categorized into two main waves:

1. Early Migratory Phase : Pastoral Fulani moving southwards into Hausa territories for seasonal grazing.
 2. Political Expansion Phase : Following the 1804 Jihad led by Usman dan Fodio, the Fulani established the Sokoto Caliphate, which brought large parts of present-day northern Nigeria under their political control.
- **Fulani in the Pre-Colonial Era:** The most significant turning point in Fulani history in Nigeria was the Sokoto Jihad (1804–1808). Usman dan Fodio's religious and political movement aimed to purify Islam and establish a theocratic governance system. This led to:
 - > The overthrow of several Hausa rulers.
 - > The establishment of emirates under Fulani leadership.
 - > The spread of Islam across a vast territory.

The Fulani integrated their nomadic lifestyle with governance, often using Islamic law (Sharia) as the basis for administration.

- **The Fulani during the Colonial Period**

With the arrival of British colonial administration in the late 19th century, the Fulani political structure was significantly altered. While the British dismantled the central power of the Caliphate, they retained many Fulani emirs under the Indirect Rule system.

This allowed the Fulani to maintain political influence while serving as intermediaries between the colonial authorities and the local populace.

- **Fulani Settlement Patterns in Nigeria**

Fulani settlement in Nigeria is divided into two main categories:

Nomadic/Pastoral Fulani (Bororo'en) – Constantly on the move with their herds, practicing transhumance.

Settled/Town Fulani (Fulbe Wuro) – Residing in towns and cities, often involved in trade, politics, and Islamic scholarship. The duality of their settlement patterns has shaped their role in Nigerian society, balancing between rural pastoralism and urban political administration.

- **The Role of Cattle and Dairy Culture in History**

Historically, cattle ownership was central to the Fulani economy, social prestige, and cultural identity. The production of Fura da Nono; a millet and fermented milk delicacy originated as part of this pastoral tradition, serving as both a staple food and a

cultural symbol. Fura da Nono played a role not only in nutrition but also in trade, with Fulani women often selling it in markets, thereby integrating the Fulani economy into broader regional trade networks.

2.3 Cultural Significance of Fura da Nono

Fura da Nono is more than a traditional dish; it embodies the Fulani's pastoral heritage and cultural identity. Made by combining fura (millet balls) with nono (fermented milk), the delicacy is a staple in Fulani households and markets (Abubakar, 2017). Its production is labor-intensive, predominantly carried out by women, and involves skills passed down through generations (Adebayo, 2015). Nutritionally, Fura da Nono is valued for its high protein, energy content, and probiotics, which contribute to health and well-being in Fulani communities (Oladipo & Jadesimi, 2012). Economically, the trade of Fura da Nono supports rural livelihoods, especially for women who sell it in local markets, contributing to household income and community sustenance.

2.4 Fulani Political Governance:

Traditional Fulani political governance combines Islamic law (Sharia) with indigenous customs (Pulaaku), emphasizing discipline, respect, and social responsibility (Ahmed-Gusau, 2003). Leadership structures include Emirs at the top, followed by district and village heads, who manage administrative and judicial functions (Blench, 2019). Modern Nigerian politics have incorporated these traditional institutions, with Fulani leaders holding significant influence at local and national levels. However, this integration has generated tensions, particularly when political power is perceived to

disproportionately favor Fulani interests, exacerbating ethnic conflicts and political rivalries (Mustapha, 2006). The political governance of the Fulani people is deeply rooted in both historical traditions and the transformations brought by colonial and post-colonial developments. The Fulani, being a prominent ethnic group spread across West Africa, have played a significant role in Nigeria's political landscape. Their governance systems evolved from decentralized pastoral leadership to highly organized emirate structures, and eventually into influential roles within Nigeria's modern political system (Last, 1967).

- **Traditional Fulani Political System:** Before colonial intervention, the Fulani maintained governance structures largely influenced by Islamic principles. Leaders were chosen not only based on lineage but also for their piety, wisdom, and ability to mediate disputes within their communities (Hiskett, 1994). Authority often rested with clan leaders or Ardo'en (village and pastoral leaders), whose primary role included conflict resolution, protection of grazing rights, and preservation of cultural norms.
- **The Sokoto Caliphate and Fulani Political Expansion:** The 19th century Jihad led by Usman dan Fodio marked a turning point in Fulani political dominance. The establishment of the Sokoto Caliphate extended Fulani rule across much of Northern Nigeria, replacing pre-existing Hausa kingdoms and instituting an Islamic theocratic governance system (Boyd, 2019). The Caliphate introduced centralized emirate systems governed by Emirs, who acted as both political and religious leaders.
- **Colonial Impact on Fulani Political Governance:** British colonial administration adopted a system of indirect rule, which relied heavily on the

existing Fulani emirate structure (Crowder, 1964). Emirs retained significant local authority under colonial supervision, and this system further entrenched Fulani influence in northern Nigerian politics. This arrangement also reinforced a hierarchical governance style, with the Emirs as intermediaries between the colonial government and the people.

- **Fulani Political Influence in Post-Colonial Nigeria:** After Nigeria's independence in 1960, the Fulani retained strong political influence through leadership positions in both regional and federal governments. Prominent Fulani politicians and military leaders have shaped national policies, often in ways that reflect both their cultural heritage and political strategy (Falola & Heaton, 2008). Critics have sometimes accused this dominance of marginalizing other ethnic groups and centralizing power in the north.
- **Contemporary Fulani Political Administration:** In contemporary Nigeria, traditional Fulani political leadership coexists with modern democratic governance. The Emirate system remains culturally significant, though its formal political power is limited under the Nigerian constitution. However, Emirs still exert considerable informal influence, especially in conflict mediation, religious leadership, and cultural preservation (Paden, 2005).
- **Challenges in Fulani Political Governance:** While Fulani political leadership has historically brought stability to many areas, it has also faced criticism for issues such as favoritism, ethnic bias, and inadequate response to modern pastoralist-farmer conflicts. The politicization of ethnic identity has sometimes fueled tensions, particularly in states experiencing security challenges linked to

herding disputes (Okoli & Atelhe, 2014). Fulani political governance has evolved from clan-based pastoral leadership to sophisticated emirate systems, and eventually into a complex interaction with modern Nigerian politics. While their leadership has contributed to administrative order and cultural preservation, it has also been associated with ethnic tensions and accusations of political domination. Understanding the historical context of Fulani governance is essential to addressing contemporary political challenges in Nigeria.

2.5 Socio-Economic Contributions and Challenges

The Fulani have long contributed significantly to Nigeria's socio-economic landscape, particularly in livestock production, dairy farming, and rural commerce. Their expertise in pastoralism ensures a steady supply of meat, milk, and other animal products vital to Nigeria's food security (Blench, 2019). The trade and production of Fura da Nono exemplify the Fulani's role in agro-processing, creating value-added products that support local economies and women's entrepreneurship (Abubakar, 2017). However, the Fulani face considerable challenges amid changing environmental, social, and political contexts. Climate change and desertification have diminished grazing lands, forcing pastoralists to move southward, often into farming territories, heightening competition for land and water resources (International Crisis Group, 2018). This environmental pressure has intensified herder-farmer conflicts, resulting in violence, displacement, and socio-economic instability (Okoli & Atelhe, 2014). Moreover, modernization and urbanization threaten traditional cultural practices like the preparation of Fura da Nono, with younger generations sometimes disengaged from ancestral livelihoods (Kawu, 2018). Political

marginalization and negative public perceptions further complicate the Fulani's socio-economic integration, impacting their access to resources and development opportunities.

2.6 Fura da nono; Controversies and Conflict Dynamics

The Fulani people's traditional food, "fura de nunu," a milk and millet-based snack, has faced controversies related to hygiene and economic factors. Some studies have indicated potential health risks due to unhygienic production and handling practices, while others highlight the impact of rising costs on its affordability.

Hygiene Concerns:

Contamination: Fura de nunu, especially when produced and sold in unhygienic conditions, can be a source of bacterial and fungal contamination.

Sources of Contamination: These include the use of contaminated water, uncleaned mixing bowls, and improper handling by vendors.

Specific Bacteria: Studies have identified bacteria like *E. coli*, *Staphylococcus aureus*, and *Pseudomonas aeruginosa* in fura de nunu samples, with *E. coli* potentially indicating fecal contamination.

Health Risks: Foodborne illnesses can result from consuming contaminated fura de nunu, especially with the presence of *E. coli*.

Dye Reduction Test: Studies using the dye reduction test on fura de nunu samples have indicated gross contamination, leading to rejection of the product.

Economic Challenges:

Rising Costs: The price of fura de nunu has increased due to inflation and rising costs of ingredients like milk and millet.

Accessibility: Many consumers, especially those with lower incomes, are finding it difficult to afford fura de nunu due to the increased cost.

Impact on Fulani Women: The rising cost and decreased demand for fura de nunu can negatively affect the livelihoods of Fulani women who rely on its production and sale for income.

Shifting Preferences: Some Fulani women are now using bottled yoghurt instead of fresh milk due to availability and cost, which alters the traditional taste and culinary experience. So the phenomenon facing the staple food has also got a way of shaping the entirety of the Fulani people in which they have been stigmatised by it because in recent decades, the Fulani have become central figures in some of Nigeria's most persistent and contentious conflicts, primarily revolving around resource competition and political representation. The herder-farmer clashes, characterized by violent confrontations over grazing lands, water sources, and farmlands, have resulted in thousands of deaths and widespread displacement (International Crisis Group, 2018). These conflicts are not merely about land but also encompass ethnic, religious, and political dimensions that exacerbate tensions. The Fulani, while renowned for their pastoral heritage and resilience, face a complex web of contemporary challenges that affect their livelihood, cultural survival, and integration within the broader Nigerian society.

These challenges include resource-based conflicts, socio-political marginalization, climate change impacts, and negative stereotyping in public discourse. This phsa examines these issues in depth, with emphasis on causes, consequences, and possible solutions.

- **Farmer-Herder Conflicts** One of the most persistent challenges is the recurrent clashes between Fulani pastoralists and sedentary farming communities. Root Causes ;Competition for land and water resources, destruction of crops by grazing cattle, and encroachment on traditional grazing routes. Escalation Factors ; Population growth, land-use changes, and proliferation of small arms. Consequences ;Loss of lives, destruction of property, food insecurity, and displacement of communities. Studies indicate that these conflicts are no longer localized but have spread across multiple Nigerian states, affecting national stability (Okoli & Atelhe, 2014).
- **Climate Change and Environmental Pressures:**Climate change is exacerbating pastoral challenges by altering the ecological balance in the Sahel and savannah regions. Reduced Rainfall and Droughts ;Shrinking water sources force longer migration routes. Desertification; Loss of grazing lands leads to increased pressure on fertile farmlands. Seasonal Migration Patterns ;The traditional north-south transhumance cycle is becoming more unpredictable, increasing the likelihood of conflicts with farmers.

2.7 Socio-Political Dominance

The Fulani occupy a unique and often controversial position in the socio-political fabric of Nigeria. Historically, their dominance can be traced back to the early 19th century when Usman dan Fodio led the Sokoto Jihad (1804–1808), establishing the Sokoto Caliphate; one of the largest pre-colonial states in Africa (Last, 1967). This Caliphate not only restructured governance in Northern Nigeria but also laid the

foundation for Fulani leadership in politics, religion, and culture. During British colonial rule, the policy of indirect rule preserved much of the Fulani emirate system, allowing Fulani elites to retain administrative and religious authority (Smith, 1988). Post-independence Nigeria saw a continuation of Fulani political prominence, with several heads of state, governors, and political influencers being of Fulani heritage (Nweze, 2020). In the 21st century, this dominance manifests in both formal political leadership and informal socio-economic influence. Fulani politicians often wield significant sway in policy-making, while their traditional leaders (emirs) maintain cultural authority in their regions. However, this visibility has attracted criticism, with detractors framing Fulani political prominence as disproportionate to their demographic size (Okoli & Atelhe, 2014).

Tensions and Perceptions

The socio-political dominance of the Fulani is complicated by contemporary challenges, including:

Herders-Farmers Conflicts: Climate change-induced migration and grazing disputes have led to heightened ethnic tensions.

Narratives of Political Bias: Allegations that the federal government favors Fulani interests fuel public distrust.

Media Representation: Selective framing often depicts the Fulani either as victims of marginalization or as aggressors in land disputes.

Scholars like Njoku (2025) note that the Fulanis had been seen good back in their prime before turning warthogs in modern day Nigerian politics (Njoku, 2025). Blench

(2019) note that these perceptions whether accurate or exaggerated—shape interethnic relations and public policy debates.

- **Stereotyping and Negative Media Portrayals**

The perception of Fulani pastoralists has been shaped by recurring reports of violence linked to certain groups.

Generalization Problem – The actions of a few have led to the stigmatization of the entire ethnic group.

Media Amplification – Sensational headlines and selective coverage exacerbate prejudice.

Impact – Discrimination in markets, limited employment opportunities, and strained inter-community relations.

- **Economic and Livelihood Pressures**

Market Barriers – Limited access to credit, veterinary services, and modern livestock management tools.

Price Instability – Livestock prices fluctuate with insecurity and market disruptions.

Youth Disengagement – Many Fulani youths are moving away from pastoralism due to insecurity, low income, and lack of modernization in the sector.

- **Insecurity and Banditry**

The rise in rural banditry in parts of northern Nigeria has disproportionately affected Fulani communities. Some groups have been accused of harboring or participating in armed gangs, further deepening mistrust between Fulani and other ethnic groups. Many Fulani settlements are caught between government security operations and reprisals from other communities.

- **Government Policies and Intervention Gaps:** While initiatives such as the National Livestock Transformation Plan (NLTP) aim to modernize pastoralism through ranching and grazing reserves, implementation has been slow. Resistance from some pastoralists due to cultural attachment to mobility. Inadequate funding and political opposition in certain states.
- **Pathways to Resolution:** Addressing these challenges requires a multi-faceted approach:
 1. **Conflict Mediation** – Community-based peacebuilding initiatives that involve both farmers and herders.
 2. **Climate Adaptation** – Promotion of climate-resilient fodder crops and water harvesting systems.
 3. **Political Inclusion** – Ensuring pastoralist representation in local and national decision-making.
 4. **Media Ethics** – Encouraging balanced and factual reporting to combat stereotypes.
 5. **Modernization of Pastoralism** – Gradual introduction of ranching, supported by veterinary services, feed production, and market access.

2.8 Sculpture as a Medium of Cultural Communication

In art history, sculpture has long been used as a medium for preserving cultural narratives and political commentary (Eyo, 1980). Unlike ephemeral forms of expression, sculpture offers a tangible, enduring medium capable of capturing complex socio-political realities. In African contexts, sculptural traditions have functioned not only as

aesthetic creations but also as vehicles for social education and political awareness (Okeke-Agulu, 2015). When applied to the Fulani context, sculpture can serve as a visual ethnography, translating the themes of livelihood, political governance, and the controversies surrounding them into an artistic form. For instance, a figurative sculpture depicting a Fulani woman preparing Fura da Nono can simultaneously speak to economic empowerment, cultural preservation, and the resilience of pastoral traditions. Similarly, symbolic elements such as cattle motifs, traditional attire, and calabash vessels can encode political histories and contemporary struggles. This aligns with McNiff's (2008) theory of art as inquiry, where the creative process becomes a method for understanding and interpreting cultural phenomena. In this study, sculpture is not merely an illustrative aid but an interpretive tool that distills the Fulani story into a form that transcends linguistic and academic barriers.

2.9 Art, Politics, and Socio-Cultural Commentary

Sculpture in contemporary African art often functions as a socio-political commentary (Onobrakpeya, 2002). By embodying lived experiences, artworks can address sensitive issues such as ethnic tensions, political power dynamics, and gendered labor without relying solely on verbal discourse. In the case of the Fulani, sculptural representation of Fura da Nono can evoke layered meanings:

Economic Meaning: Representing women's contributions to household income and community trade.

Cultural Meaning: Preserving traditions amid modernization pressures.

Political Meaning: Highlighting the visibility and influence of the Fulani in Nigerian governance and public debates. Through this lens, sculpture becomes a diplomatic language one capable of fostering empathy, reframing narratives, and challenging stereotypes.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

The method I used in executing this work is known as direct cement modelling. This encompasses the use of cement to build directly on the sculpture's skeletal framework after being wrapped up with mesh , build to a satisfactory structural volume followed by embellishments, in-signals, motifs and lastly the finishing and Patination.

Description of Materials And Equipment:

- **Welding machine:** An electrical machine used to join metals together
- **Welding shield:** used to protect the face when welding
- **Angle grinder machine:** used to cut metal of different dimensions and thickness to sizes.
- **Electrode:** this an item that works the welding machine for joining of the metals.
- **Cement:** this is material is mixed with sand and water which inturn being the mortal for direct application on the skeletal framework.
- **Iron rod:** used to build the skeletal frame of the structure with the aid of arc-welding and it also varies in size.
- **Chicken mesh:** this is used to wrap up already built amature for mortal application.
- **Binding wire:** this is used to tie and bind two rods and mesh together.
- **Metal Spatulas:** used for applying the mortal on the armature and builds till a desired shape is formed, aids textures and it also comes in different sizes and shapes.
- **Concrete blocks:** it is used to form the base level accurately after digging the ground so as to ensure balance and stability.

CHAPTER FOUR

VISUAL ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

This practical project was carried out with direct mortar (cement and sand) modelling. Reaching about 12 feet in height located at University of Benin opposite printing press at Ekenwan Campus. The project consist of a Fulani maiden with a calabash on her wearing Fulani attire marketing the Staple food (fura da nono).



Fig 1.

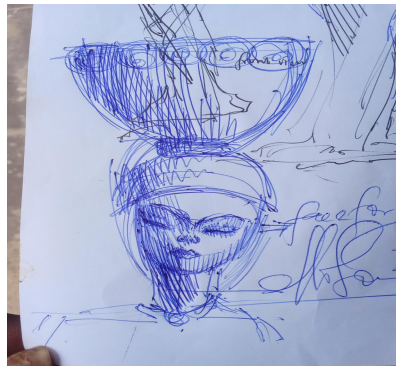


Fig 2

A detailed sketch of the Fulani maiden was created on paper, corrected, and approved by my supervisor before modeling began. (Photographs by Michael Lokona, 2025)



Fig

A small maquette was produced using resin and fiberglass to guide proportion, structure, and composition for the final sculpture. (Photographs by Michael Lokona, 2025)



Fig 5.



Fig 6.

The skeletal framework was built using 12mm to 8mm metal rods, welded to form the internal structure and posture of the figure. (Photographs by Michael Lokona, 2025)



Fig 7.



Fig 8.

The foundation for the project site was dug and leveled to ensure a firm and stable pedestal for the sculpture. (Photographs by Michael Lokona, 2025)



Fig 9.



Fig 10.

The completed armature was positioned and properly fixed on the prepared base at the allocated project site for stability. (Photographs by Michael Lokona, 2025)



Fig 11.



Fig 12

The first cement layer was applied to the armature to establish the basic form of the Fulani maiden. (Photographs by Michael Lokona, 2025)



Fig 12.



Fig13.

This images shows the form building of the hands volumetric structure. (Photographs by Michael Lokona, 2025)



Fig 14.



Fig 15.

This image shows the Embossing of African traditional motifs on the local Fulani calabash. (Photographs by Michael Lokona, 2025)



Fig 16.

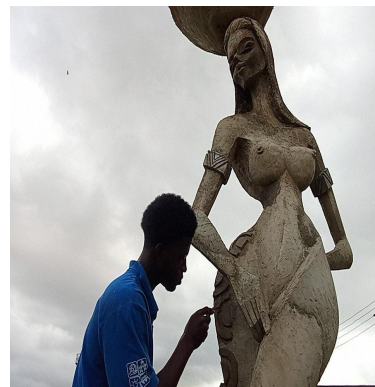


Fig 17.

The above image shows the embossing of African motifs on the right thigh of the Fulani maiden. (Photographs by Michael Lokona, 2025)



Fig 18.



Fig 19.

The image above Shows the engraving of the Fulani Lali tattoo designs on the figure's right arm using angle grinder. (Photographs by Michael Lokona, 2025)



Fig 19.



Fig 20.

The images above shows the finishing of the pedestal with addition of curvilinear designs to enhance the visibility of the sculptural work for patination. (Photographs by Michael Lokona, 2025)



Fig 21.



Fig 22.

The above image shows the process of patination thereby using black emulsion as the base-coat to create a sense of depth and vividity. (Photographs by Michael Lokona, 2025)



Fig23.



Fig24.

The above image shows the finished work whereby I used copper gold as my dominant Patina which gives the sculpture a bronze finish and also complements the environment. (Photographs by Michael Lokona, 2025)

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, RECOMMEND AND CONCLUSION

5.1 Summary

This project highlights the complexity of the Fulani people's history, culture, and socio-political dynamics in Nigeria. Historically, the Fulani have played a pivotal role in shaping Northern Nigeria through the Sokoto Caliphate and the emirate political system, embedding Islamic governance within their traditional structures. Culturally, Fura da Nono serves as a significant symbol of Fulani identity, encapsulating their pastoral livelihood and socio-economic resilience. The delicacy not only provides nutritional benefits but also fosters economic empowerment, especially among Fulani women. Politically, the Fulani's integration of traditional emirate governance with modern state systems presents both opportunities and challenges. Their influence in national politics is substantial but also contentious, contributing to ethnic tensions and debates over resource control. Socio-economically, while the Fulani contribute meaningfully to Nigeria's agricultural sector, environmental degradation and land pressures have heightened conflicts, notably between herders and farmers, leading to widespread violence and social disruption. Art, particularly sculpture, offers a unique method for communicating these complexities. By translating ethnographic realities into tangible, symbolic forms, sculpture serves both as cultural preservation and as political commentary.

5.2 Recommendations

Based on the findings, the following recommendations are proposed:

1. Promotion of Cultural Preservation:Support initiatives that document and promote traditional Fulani practices like Fura da Nono production, including skills transfer programs targeting youth and women.
2. Conflict Resolution Mechanisms:Establish community-based platforms that bring together pastoralists, farmers, and government officials to address land use disputes and promote peaceful negotiations.
3. Inclusive Governance:Encourage equitable political representation for all ethnic groups, ensuring that policies reflect diverse interests and reduce perceptions of favoritism.
4. Sustainable Livelihood Programs:Develop and fund sustainable pastoral development programs that incorporate climate adaptation strategies, veterinary services, and access to markets.
5. Public Awareness and Education:Implement awareness campaigns that foster mutual understanding between pastoralists and sedentary communities, reducing stereotypes and misconceptions.

5.3 Conclusion

In conclusion, this study examined the Fulani people through the cultural lens of Fura da Nono, exploring how livelihood, political governance, and social dynamics define their position within Nigeria's complex society. The Fulani are renowned for their pastoral lifestyle, mobility, and dairy economy, which have sustained rural communities for centuries. Their mastery of cattle rearing and milk production contributes significantly to Nigeria's food supply and agricultural balance, while Fura da Nono stands as both

nourishment and cultural identity, a symbol of resilience, simplicity, and unity with nature. Economically, the Fulani play an integral role in livestock trade, local markets, and inter-regional commerce, yet their nomadic structure often limits access to education, healthcare, and infrastructure. This marginalization fosters misunderstanding and perpetuates stereotypes. Politically, the Fulani have been highly influential since the Sokoto Caliphate era, shaping governance and Islamic scholarship. However, their dominance in national leadership has also generated controversy and perceptions of favoritism, deepening ethnic and political tension. Contemporary challenges, including land disputes, farmer-herder conflicts, and environmental degradation, have intensified national debates on identity, migration, and inclusion.

Despite these conflicts, the Fulani remain a vital part of Nigeria's socio-economic and cultural framework. Their lifestyle, though tested by modernization, continues to exemplify endurance and adaptability. In essence, Fura da Nono reflects the harmony between culture, survival, and social connection that defines the Fulani heritage. Understanding this heritage is essential for fostering dialogue and national unity. Though explored here, artistic representation particularly sculpture can serve as a subtle yet enduring means of preserving such cultural narratives and promoting empathy within a diverse nation.

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