

Analysis of Online Reporting of and Audience Commentaries on the National Grazing Bill in Nigeria

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Abstract

For a long time, successive governments in Nigeria have attempted to enact grazing law or create a legal framework for the establishment of grazing route and grazing reserves. The paper investigated the opinion of the Nigerian masses on the National Grazing Bill given its reportage online. The content analysis research design was used for the study. The population of the study was composed of a total of 45 online reports (excluding PDF documents and scholarly articles/papers) that showed up on the 12 page Google search results under the search command 'Reports in 2016 on National Grazing Reserve (Establishment) Bill 2016' and 163 commentaries that followed each of the selected reports. Purposive and systematic sampling techniques were used to select 10 online reports that had commentaries underneath and 84 commentaries respectively. The units of analysis were headlines, lead and comments. The coding sheet was used as instrument for data collection. The study found from the commentaries that the masses have a highly negative opinion toward the National Grazing Bill. It was then recommended that if lasting solution to the violent clashes between the herdsmen and farmers must be achieved through the National Grazing Bill, strict attention must be paid to opinions of the masses that can be gleaned from their communication activities especially online where people freely express their real positions.

Keywords: Online Reporting, Audience Commentaries, National Grazing Bill, Farmers, Herdsmen, Conflict, Participatory Journalism