

ASSESSING STAKEHOLDERS' RESPONSES TO FARMER-HERDER LAND CONFLICT: A CASE STUDY OF THE OKE-OGUN REGION, NIGERIA

Anthony Owolabi¹, Albert Ayorinde Abegunde², Henry Afolabi³, Temitope Ruth Adeyemi⁴,
Olorunjuwon David Adetayo⁵

ABSTRACT

Currently, in Sub-Saharan Africa, there has been a rise in various forms of violent conflicts. This study focuses on Farmer-Herder Land Conflict (FHLC) in the Oke-Ogun Region (OOR), Nigeria, assessing stakeholders' responses to FHLCs. Using both primary and secondary data, the study employed correlation analysis. Findings revealed that the stakeholders- commonly used peaceful settlement methods during the FHLCs in OOR. It further revealed that 43.4% and 37.7% of representatives reported using avoidance method, 8.0% reported the use of arbitration, while 7.8% stated that stakeholders resorted to open confrontation. Mediation was the least used method of conflict settlement in the Oke-Ogun region, as indicated by 2.3%. Findings regarding compensation during the conflicts showed that the representatives in the Oke-Ogun region were very dissatisfied, and 28.4% were dissatisfied. Only 8.2% of representatives reported being partially satisfied, and 2.3% stated that they were very satisfied. The study has demonstrated that farmer-herder land conflicts in OOR embraced peaceful settlement. The stakeholders' response is crucial for the effective resolution of land conflicts between farmers and herders. Thus, the creation of a grazing reserve was suggested by 40.1% of the representatives, and 36.2% suggested that there should be improved methods of farming in order to stop farmer-herder land conflicts. Stakeholders should improve their responses to land conflict resolution and ensure

¹ Doctor, Department of Urban and Regional Planning, Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife Nigeria, aaowolabi@oauife.edu.ng.

² Professor, Department of Urban and Regional Planning, Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife, Nigeria, abebert@oauife.edu.ng.

³ Department of Urban and Regional Planning, Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife, Nigeria, hafolabi@oauife.edu.ng.

⁴ Department of Urban and Regional Planning, Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife Nigeria, tadeyemi@oauife.edu.ng

⁵ Doctor, Department of Urban and Regional Planning, Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife, Nigeria, adetayojuwon@oauife.edu.ng.

adequate compensation is provided for affected parties to prevent further escalation of land conflicts and promote harmony between the parties involved.

Keywords: Stakeholders' responses, Farmer-herders. conflict, Land conflict, Oke-Ogun, Nigeria

1. Introduction

Disagreements generally arise among people over issues ranging from political, religious, environmental to economic (Tonah, 2006; Vanderlin, 2005; Ekanola, 2004; Deutsh, 1991). Such disagreements sometimes result in conflicts (Abegunde, 2011). Conflict, as conceived here, is a struggle or contest between groups or individuals that have opposing needs, ideas, beliefs, values, or goals. Conflicts in general can be violent or non-violent and are often multi-dimensional. Conflict is bound to occur as long as there exists an opposing interest among individuals or groups, and its causal effects, target and places of incidence need to be studied. There are several known causes of conflicts, especially in developing nations. Among the causes of conflicts is competition for scarce resources that are essential for the socio-economic needs of individuals or groups (Ofuoku and Isife, 2009). Land is an example of such resources.

Land is the delineable area of earth's terrestrial surface encompassing all attributes of the biosphere and activities or features on it, hosting virtually all necessities for human livelihood (Thomas, 1994). Land is a natural resource, limited in supply but highly essential for the support of all forms of human activities (Magsi, 2013). The compatibility or otherwise of existing land-use activities in any particular area is therefore an important determinant of the peaceful co-existence or otherwise of the land users. Land conflict involves at least two parties using physical force to resolve competing claims or interests on land.

The manifestation of conflicts in various dimensions is a major problem confronting world peace today. According to Marshall and Gurr (2005), conflicts are common occurrences from Europe to America, Africa to Asia. Several states in Nigeria have experienced and are still experiencing conflicts of significant proportions among several ethnic and religious communities (Aliyu, 2015). The dimension varies significantly in terms of process and the groups involved. Attributed to some of these conflicts are resource control and divergent value systems in the country (Adelakun et al., 2015). Conflicts can occur between the same resource group, such as

one forester and farmer, farming community and another, or between different user groups, such as herders and farmers (Momale, 2003).

According to Shehu (2018) and Li (2018), a prevalent resource-use conflict, generally centered on access to and competition for grazing land and water, constitutes farmer-herder land conflict (FHLC). Ajibo *et al.* (2018) revealed that FHLC has surged in recent years, threatening the country's stability, economy, peace, security, and safety, among others. Incidents of farmer-herder land conflict are currently common in the North-western zone, the Middle belt area, the Oke-Ogun Region in Oyo State, and other areas in both South-eastern and South-western Nigeria.

Farmer-herder land conflict has thus become a great concern for the Government. Therefore, the governments at both the state and federal levels have made several efforts to ensure peaceful co-existence between farmers and herders. In this regard, Blench (2003), the Punch Newspaper (2018) and Nigerian News Magazine (2010) reported that the government has designated and reserved 415 hectares of grazing land areas throughout the country, while farmer-herder reconciliatory committees have been established in most conflict-prone states. Similarly, various non-governmental organisations (NGOs) are also addressing this issue through donations of food and relief materials as well as peace meetings. The weakness in these efforts is highlighted in studies that have observed a persistent spread of farmer-herder land conflict in recent times despite the efforts of the government and its agencies (Tonah, 2006; Djire, 2014; ICG, 2017). The conflict has been found to have serious consequences for achieving the goals of rural development policies contained in the Sustainable Development Goals (Bolarinwa, 2007). Of importance to this study are stakeholders' responses to farmer-herder land conflict in the Oke-Ogun region.

Therefore, the farmer-herder land conflict requires urgent and adequate attention in both research and efforts to mitigate the menace. In this regard, this study aims to answer the question of what the stakeholders' responses are to farmer-herder land conflict in the OOR and assess these responses in the study area. This is with a view to developing a framework that could enhance peacebuilding, land-use planning and development.

2. Chronicle of events and interventions on Farmer-Herder Conflict

As the farmers-herders land conflict escalated, its impact was felt in several spheres, both in economic and physical terms. Hence, there have been various attempts to mitigate the conflict and its effects. These responses include government intervention, security agencies and judicial system, federal legislation, state government's responses, civil society and community responses.

Government interventions

Over the years, the federal government has explored various responses. In April 2014, then-President Goodluck Jonathan's government inaugurated an inter-ministerial technical committee on grazing reserves, tasked with proposing strategies for ending the conflicts. Concurrently, the government set up a political Committee on Grazing Reserves, chaired by then Benue state Governor Gabriel Suswam. The report issued by Suswam's committee called for the recovery and improvement of all grazing routes encroached upon by farmers and recommended that the Central Bank of Nigeria releases a total of N100 billion (\$317 million) to the country's 36 state governments for ranch construction (Viewpoint Nigeria, 2014). The National Executive Council (NEC) approved these recommendations, but Jonathan's defeat in the March 2015 elections interrupted their implementation. Although the central bank released N100 billion to state governments, they failed to construct any ranches. The federal legislators investigated N100 billion on 19 January, 2017, findings remain unpublished to this day (Crisis Group Africa Report, 2017).

Soon after assuming office in 2015, President Buhari directed the Federal Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development (FMARD) to formulate a comprehensive livestock development plan, including measures to curb farmers-herders clashes. In August 2015, an FMARD committee recommended short-term, medium-term, and long-term strategies, including the development of grazing reserves and stock routes. On 25 January 2016, the government announced it was presenting a plan to the Nigerian Governors Forum to map grazing areas in all states as a temporary solution for cattle owners until they could be persuaded to embrace ranching. Most central and southern states, however, opposed the plan, which they viewed as favouring Fulani herders. On 3 March 2016, seeking to mollify this opposition, Agriculture Minister Audu Ogbeh announced that the government would send a bill to the National

Assembly to prohibit cattle from roaming in cities and villages. He added that the government had ordered fast-growing grass from Brazil to produce “massive hectares of grasses”, which would be ready for consumption “within the next three months”. More than a year later, there has been no further word about the cattle banning bill and the promised grass (Buhari, 2015; FMARD, 2015; Nigerian Governors Forum, 2016; Ogbah, 2016).

Security agencies and the judicial system

The federally-controlled Nigeria Police Force (NPF) and the Nigerian Security and Civil Defence Corps (NSCDC) are thinly deployed in rural areas and often lack early warning mechanisms. Even when community and civil society groups get involved, both herders and farmers state that the response to distress calls is often delayed. Herders claim that they sometimes have to seek revenge because security forces take no action against attackers who kill them and steal their cattle. Farmers allege that the agencies’ failure to respond promptly to distress calls and to punish aggressors emboldens the herders (Human Rights Watch, 2017). The more typical response has been to deploy the police, and sometimes the army, after clashes take place. In a few cases, police have arrested and prosecuted both herders and vigilantes bearing firearms. The country’s dysfunctional law enforcement and criminal justice system often fails to arrest or prosecute any perpetrators. Moreover, authorities have generally treated these crimes as political rather than criminal acts, arguing that sanctioning suspects could spark further violence (Human Rights Watch, 2017). Even if commissions of inquiry are established, they are typically used to temper tensions rather than pursue justice. These responses, however well-meaning, create a climate of impunity. Under the Buhari administration, the security response has been particularly

questionable (Amnesty International, 2018). In February 2016, following public outcry over attacks by herders that resulted in the deaths of scores of people in ten farming villages in the Agatu area of north-central Benue State, Buhari ordered an investigation (Al Jazeera, 2016). Nothing has been heard about it since. On 24 April 2016, Information and Culture Minister Lai Mohammed stated that the government was working “silently” towards ending the violence, promising that “*in a few weeks from now, we will begin to see the result of that*” (The Guardian Nigeria, 2016). Again, there was no follow-up. In April 2016, after widespread condemnation of

an attack on Ukpabi Nimbo in Enugu state, the president ordered the police and military to “*take all necessary action to stop the carnage*”, pledging that stopping herder attacks had become a priority (Premium Times, 2016). Since then, hundreds have died in further clashes. On 15 July 2016, the chief of defence staff, General Gabriel Olonisakin, announced “Operation Accord” to stop the violence. Nothing more was heard of that campaign. Following clashes in southern Kaduna in late 2016, which killed between 200 and 800 people, the army deployed troops to the area. Still, attacks have continued.

Federal legislations

The federal parliament has also failed to respond effectively. In 2011, Niger State Senator Zainab Kure sponsored a bill to create a National Grazing Reserves Commission and establish national grazing reserves and livestock routes, but it was not passed and eventually expired when the Seventh Senate lapsed (Premium Times, May, 2015). From 2015 to 2016, three new bills were introduced to create grazing reserves, livestock routes and ranches across the country. After much wrangling, all three were dropped in November 2016 on the grounds that land use was exclusively a state government prerogative (The Cable, 2016). Unable to enact new laws, the federal legislature has limited itself to holding public hearings and passing resolutions. On 9 March 2016, the Senate passed a resolution declaring that Boko Haram insurgents were behind attacks on farming communities across Benue, Taraba, Plateau and several other states (Vanguard News, 2016). Unsupported by any public evidence, that resolution was widely seen as a diversion, particularly as spokespeople for the herders’ association had admitted committing some of the attacks in reprisal for previous wrongs. On 10 May 2016, the Senate Committees on Agriculture, Intelligence and National Security held a public hearing on herder-farmer violence. The hearing was not followed by any policy recommendations or action toward ending the violence.

State government’s responses

In the absence of clear federal guidance, state government responses vary. Several have established state and local peace commissions or committees to promote dialogue between herder-farmers and resolve conflicts (National Grazing Reserves Commission Bill, 2011;

Premium Times, 11 May and 9 March 2016). Others, such as Ekiti State in the southwest and the Federal Capital Territory (FCT) of Abuja in the centre, have enacted laws regulating grazing activities. In Benue and Taraba states, governments have introduced laws banning all open grazing. In Edo State, the government announced plans to create fenced grazing areas with watering facilities, requiring herdsman to feed their cattle there and pay for the service. Herders, who consider these regulations restrictive, often fail to comply. In the Federal Capital Territory, herders continue to roam cattle widely; in Taraba State, the cattle breeders' association has rejected the grazing ban law, vowing a legal challenge. Some local reactions have been more forceful. In Borno, Niger and Plateau States, authorities have occasionally expelled herder groups from specific areas, following local protests. In May 2016, the governor of Abia State, Okezie Ikpeazu, revived a local vigilante outfit popularly known as the Bakassi Boys. He directed all community chiefs to nominate ten youths for a two-week intensive training with "reformed" Bakassi vigilantes before deployment to rural communities. Two months later, the Cross-River State government announced plans to establish a 3,000-member "Homeland Security Service". Local officials stated that the members would not carry firearms, but would undertake activities such as providing intelligence on herders' movements and activities. These measures may have reduced clashes in some areas, but in others, they have exacerbated the situation. The expulsion of herder groups has only deepened their resentment. If community-based vigilante groups attack herders in the south, herders may retaliate against southerners residing in the north, thereby further widening the conflict.

Civil society and community responses

Civil society responses have varied. Ethnic and community-based groups defending farmers' interests typically have typically organised press conferences and protests, seeking to draw national – and even international – attention to their plight. Some have instituted legal actions; for instance, in May 2016, the Benue-based Movement Against Fulani Occupation (MAFO) filed a suit at the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) Court based in Abuja, demanding that the federal government pay N500 billion (about \$1.6 billion) as compensation for failing to protect its citizens. Others, such as the pan-Yoruba socio-cultural organisation Afenifere, have established arrangements to monitor both herders and cattle thieves (Daily Trust,

24 July 2017; Premium Times, 19 May 2016; The Punch, 29 March 2017; Vanguard, 7 May 2016). In turn, livestock producers' groups and pastoralists' organisations strenuously defend herders' interests and insist that media reports of incidents are often politically motivated. Fulani umbrella groups, such as Miyetti Allah Kautal Hore, also tend to downplay herders' involvement in the violence (Crisis Group Africa Report, 2017). The back-and-forth between highly partisan positions further complicates the search for common ground. Non-governmental organisations have generally been more conciliatory and constructive in response to the violence. They have focused on post-conflict reconciliation and peacebuilding, improving early warning and strengthening relations between communities and security agencies. International partners are encouraging farmers-herders dialogues through various local initiatives.

For instance, in June 2016, the British Council-sponsored Nigeria Reconciliation and Stability Project (NRSP) supported the Bayelsa State Peace and Conflict Management Alliance in organising a dialogue between farmers and herders. Similarly, on 27 April 2017, the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) (2017) sponsored and hosted a conference on farmers-herders dialogue, involving the All Farmers Association of Nigeria (AFAN), MACBAN, the Interfaith Mediation Centre (IMC) and others. There have been some encouraging results, as representatives of herding and farming communities pledged to continue working for peace. A mediation forum held in November 2016, in Shendam, Plateau State, was organised by the Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue (CHD) with support from the German embassy. Moreover, in April 2017, a herder-farmer dialogue in the Udege and Agwada Development Areas of Nasarawa state, facilitated by local politicians and community leaders, resulted in a peace agreement.

3. Materials and methods

3.1. Study area

An overview of the study area

The study area is the Oke Ogun region of Oyo State, which consists of Atisbo, Oorelope, Iseyin, Itesiwaju, Kajola, Irepo, Olorunsogo, Iwajowa, Saki East and Saki West Local Government Area (LGAs). The study area is also known as the northern part of Oyo State. Its name derives from its location in relation to the river Ogun, situated in the elevated and

somewhat northern section of the river. The inhabitants of this region are Yorubas, having their origins linked to Ile-Ife, which is believed to be the ancestral home of the entire Yoruba race. The area lies between latitude $7^{\circ}40'$ and $9^{\circ}20'N$ and longitude $2^{\circ}31'$ and $4^{\circ}20'$ E of the Greenwich meridian (Olayiwola, Ajala & Sangodipe, 2014) covering a total land area of $13,537\text{km}^2$ which currently represents about 60 percent of the Oyo State. The study area is bounded to the north by Kwara State, to the east by Osun State, to the south by Ogun, and to the west by the Republic of Benin (Dahomey) (see Figure 1 and Figure 2).

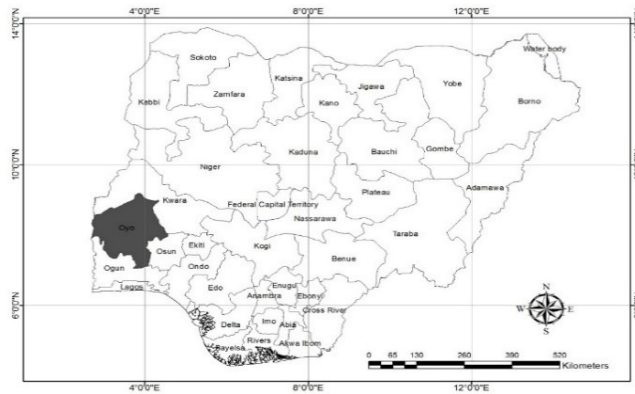


Figure 1: Map of Oyo State in the context of Nigeria

Source: Cooperative Information Network (COPINE) (2024)

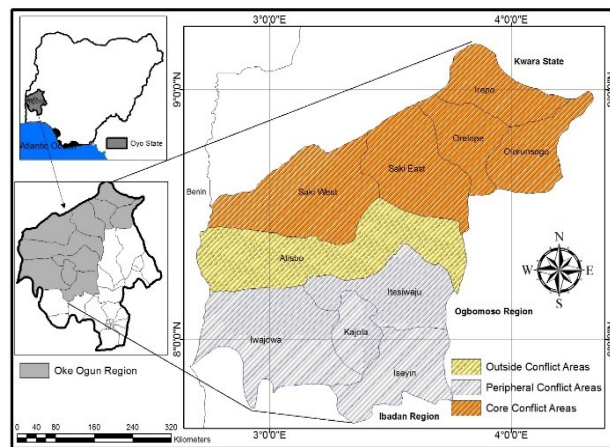


Figure 2: Map of the Oke-Ogun Region

Source: Cooperative Information Network (COPINE) (2024)

3.2. Research method

Data collection was from both primary and secondary sources. Primary data were collected using a multistage sampling technique to select a sample size for the study. Equally, questionnaires were administered to both farmers and herders in the OOR. A Reconnaissance survey revealed that the incidence of FHLC was predominant in 598 communities located in Saki West (183), Saki East (154), Irepo (74), Oorelope (139), and Olorunsogo (48) Local Government Areas. These communities were re-categorized based on their number of buildings. They were large (more than 100 buildings), medium (51-100 buildings), and small-sized communities (less than 50 buildings). One out of every six communities in each category was systematically sampled. Thus, a total of 96 communities comprising small (42), medium (32) and large (22) communities were selected. Reconnaissance survey revealed that there were 5,350 buildings in the selected communities, comprising small (910), medium (1,980) and large (2,460) buildings respectively. Ten per cent of these, totalling 535, were randomly selected across the board for questionnaire administration (277 for farmers and 258 for herders).

4. Results and discussion

4.1. Stakeholders' responses to Farmer-Herder Land Conflict in the study area

4.1.1 Conflict management strategies

In the Oke-Ogun region, as identified in the study, the local governments, community leaders, traditional councils, and law enforcement agents are stakeholders who use conflict management strategies such as avoidance, arbitration, mediation, open confrontation and peaceful settlement. As revealed in the study and presented in Figure 3, 34 (38.6%) of the respondents indicated that stakeholders in the small communities of the region used avoidance, and 6 (6.8%), utilized arbitration. Mediation was the least employed strategy for conflict management, identified by 2 (2.3%) of the household representatives. Although 6 (6.8%) of the respondents reported that stakeholders engaged in open confrontation, the majority, represented by 40 (45.5%), expressed that peaceful settlement was the prevalent approach. Similarly, in the medium-sized communities of the Oke-Ogun region, 86 (44.3%) respondents indicated that stakeholders make use of peaceful settlement. About 67 (34.5%) of the respondents reported that the stakeholders utilized avoidance, while 19 (9.8%) and 18 (9.3%) of the respondents reported that arbitration and open confrontation were respectively used by the stakeholders. Additionally,

the smallest proportion of the respondents (2%) acknowledged the use of mediation in conflict management.

The majority (43.1%) of the respondents in the large communities of the Oke-Ogun region identified peaceful settlement as a method for conflict management. Avoidance was also identified as a method for conflict management, as reported by 97 (39.9%) of the household representatives. Arbitration and open confrontation were employed as well, also as indicated by 17 (6.9%) respondents, while 6 (2.4%) stated that stakeholders used mediation. Generally, in the Oke-Ogun region, peaceful settlement was the most commonly used, as indicated by 232 (43.4%) respondents, and 198 (37.7%) reported that stakeholders used the avoidance method. In the region, 42 participants (8.0%) reported the use of arbitration by stakeholders, while 41 (7.8%) indicated that stakeholders utilized open confrontation. Mediation was the least used method of conflict settlement, as indicated by 12 (2.3%) participants.

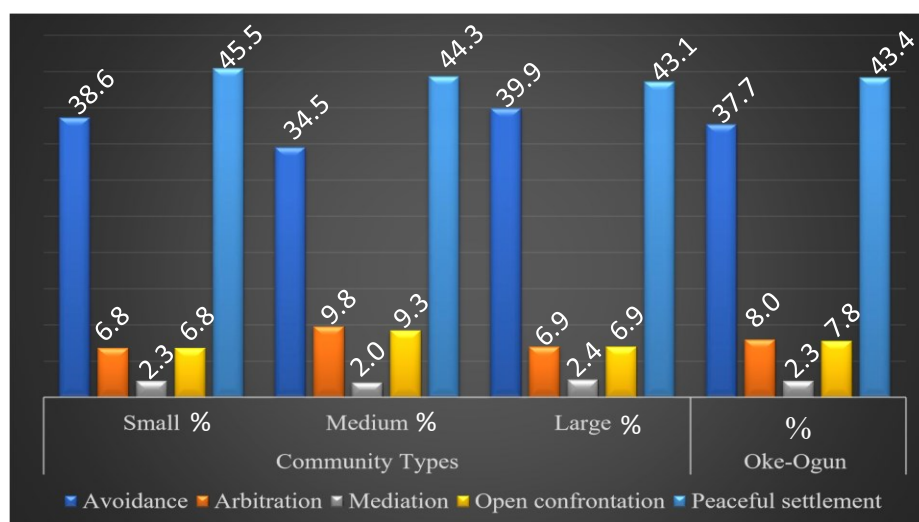


Figure 3: Conflict management strategies used in the Oke-Ogun Region, Nigeria

Source: Author's Field Work (2024)

4.1.2 Reporting of conflicts

Reports of incidents of conflicts were often promptly made to the constituted authorities and law enforcement agencies for swift intervention. This study revealed that such incidents were usually reported at police stations, district assemblies, at a traditional ruler's forum, or a community leader's forum. As revealed in the study, the majority, 61 (67.0%) of the respondents in the small

communities of the region reported the occurrence of conflicts to their community leaders, while 19 (20.9%) and 11 (12.1%) reported the occurrence to police stations and traditional rulers, respectively. In the medium-sized communities, 2 (1.0%) of the respondents indicated that they had reported to district assemblies, but the majority, 166 (67.2%) reported to community leaders.

The proportion of respondents in the medium-sized communities who reported to police stations and traditional rulers was 41 (20.7%) and 22 (11.1%), respectively. Similarly, in the large communities of the region, 4 (1.6%) reported to district assemblies, 21 (8.5%) reported to traditional rulers, while 55 (22.4%) reported to police stations. The majority 360 (67.5%) of the respondents in the large communities of the Oke-Ogun region reported the occurrence of conflicts to community leaders. Generally, in the Oke-Ogun region, 115 (21.5%) of the reported cases were made to police stations, and 6 (1.1%) were reported to district assemblies. The number of respondents who reported to traditional rulers and community leaders was 54 (10.1%) and 360 (67.3%), respectively (Table 1). This is due to the fact that residents have easier and quicker access to community leaders than to other authorities to whom they could report.

Table 1: Institutions where conflicts were reported

Community Types	Small		Medium		Large		Oke- Ogun Region	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Police station	19	20.9	41	20.7	55	22.4	115	21.5
District assembly	---	---	2	1.0	4	1.6	6	1.1
The traditional ruler	11	12.1	22	11.1	21	8.5	54	10.1
The community leader	61	67.0	133	67.2	166	67.5	360	67.3
Total	91	100.0	198	100.0	246	100.0	535	100.0

The traditional leaders forum is a gathering of Obas, Baales and Mogajis' responses to farmer-herder conflicts

Source: Author's Field Work (2024)

4.1.3 Institutions involved in conflict resolution

Four institutions were identified in this study as being involved in conflict resolution in the Oke-Ogun region. These include local governments, community leaders, traditional councils and law enforcement agents. The study revealed that local governments and community leaders

were mostly involved in conflict resolution in the small communities of the Oke-Ogun region, as indicated by 45 (49.5%) and 39 (43.3%) respondents, respectively. Additionally, traditional councils and law enforcement agencies were also involved, with each accounting for 3 (3%). Most 98 (49.5%) respondents in the medium-sized communities of the Oke-Ogun region indicated that community leaders were involved in conflict resolution. Also, 83 (41.9%) of the respondents in these areas stated that the local government councils were involved, while 13 (6.6%) indicated that traditional councils participated as well. Only 4 (2.0%) of the respondents reported the involvement of law enforcement agencies. In the large communities of the Oke-Ogun region, 124 (50.6%) respondents reported community leaders' engagement in conflict resolution. Furthermore, 101 (41.2%) respondents indicated that local government councils were involved in conflict resolution, while 13 (6.6%) reported the engagement of local governments. Overall, community leaders were identified as the most involved in conflict resolution, as indicated by 261 (48.8%) of the respondents in the region. Moreover, 229 (42.8%) of the respondents indicated that local government councils participated in conflict resolution, while 30 (5.6%) noted that traditional councils were involved in resolving farmer-herder conflicts. Lastly, 13 (2.4%) respondents indicated that law enforcement agencies participated in such resolutions. This is summarized in Table 2.

Table 2: Institutions involved in conflict resolution in the Oke-Ogun region

Community Types	Small		Medium		Large		Oke-Ogun Region	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Community leaders	39	43.3	98	49.5	124	50.6	261	49.0
Traditional council	3	3.3	13	6.6	14	5.7	30	5.6
Local government	45	50.0	83	41.9	101	41.2	229	43.0
Law enforcement agency	3	3.3	4	2.0	6	2.4	13	2.4
Total	90	100.0	198	100.0	245	100.0	533	100.0

Source: Author's Field Work (2024)

4.1.4 Farmer-herder land conflicts compensation

Damages and losses are major characteristics of conflicts and usually affect lives and properties. This is due to the fact that the two conflicting parties aim to suppress, intimidate and inflict bodily and emotional harm on each other to weaken their opponent and reduce their resistance or dominance. When these situations arise, both parties will individually assess their losses and seek assistance from either the government or well-meaning citizens willing to help. This study revealed the same trend in the Oke-Ogun region, where 59 (78.7%) of the respondents in small communities received compensation, while only 16 (21.3%) did not (Figure 4). In the medium-sized communities, 129 (75.9%) received compensation for their losses or damages, while 41 (24.1%) did not. Likewise, the majority (76.9%) of the respondents who suffered losses or damages received compensation, whereas 49 (23.1%) did not. Overall, 351 (76.8%) of the respondents in the Oke-Ogun region received compensation for products that were lost or damaged, while the remaining 106 (23.2%) did not receive compensation for their damages.

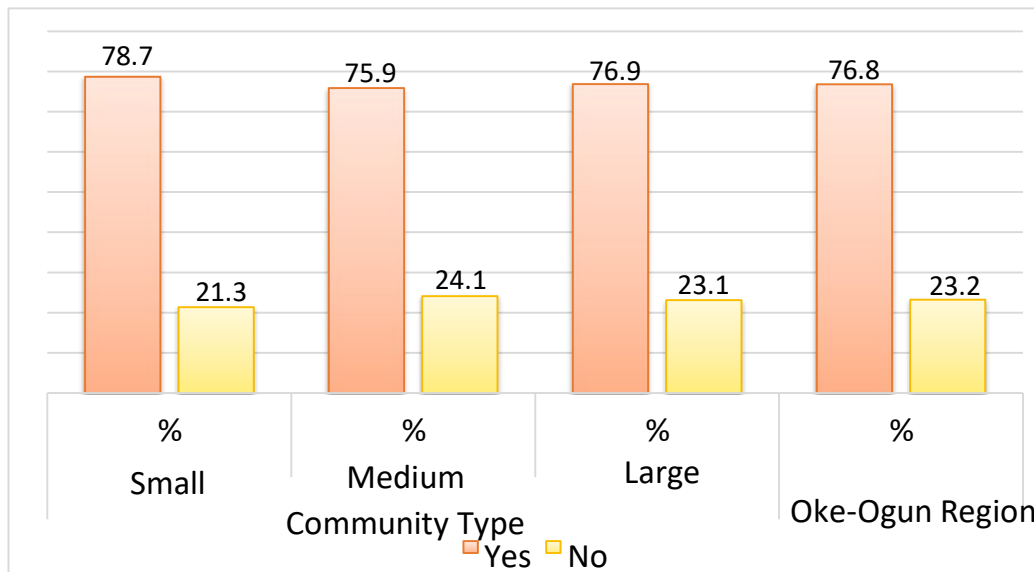


Figure 4: Respondents who received compensation

Source: Author's Field Work (2024)

For the recipients of compensation, the study revealed that compensation took two forms: financial compensation and cattle. More specifically, it was shown, as presented in Table 3, that 60 (71.4%) of the total respondents in small communities received financial compensation, while 24 (28.6%) received cattle as compensation. In medium-sized communities, 131 (70.8%) received financial compensation for damages, while 54 (29.2%) received cattle. Similarly, 165 (70.2%) of compensation recipients in the large communities of the Oke-Ogun region received financial compensation, while 70 (29.8%) received their compensation in cattle. Thus, generally in the Oke-Ogun region, the majority 356 (70.6%) of the recipients received cash compensation, while 148 (29.4%) received cattle.

Table 3: Farmer-Herder Land Conflict compensations

Community Types	Small		Medium		Large		Oke- Ogun Region	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Financial	60	71.4	131	70.8	165	70.2	356	70.6
Cattle	24	28.6	54	29.2	70	29.8	148	29.4
Total	84	100.0	185	100.0	235	100.0	504	100.0

Source: Author's Field Work (2024)

4.1.5 Satisfaction with the resolution process

The resolution process among conflicting parties exhibits different levels of satisfaction. The study revealed that 50 (57.5%) respondents were very dissatisfied and 28 (32.2%) were dissatisfied with the resolution process in the small communities of the Oke-Ogun region (Table 4). While 7 (8.0%) were partially satisfied, only 2 (2.3%) in the small communities of the Oke-Ogun region were very satisfied with the process. Likewise, in the medium-sized communities, 54 (27.8%) and 118 (60.8%) of the respondents were dissatisfied and very dissatisfied, respectively. The proportion of respondents in medium-sized communities that were partially satisfied was 18 (9.3%), while 4 (2.1%) were very satisfied. In the large communities of the region, 6 (2.5%) were very satisfied with the farmer-herder land conflict resolution process. Additionally, 18 (7.4%) respondents in large communities reported being partially satisfied.

However, 67 (27.5%) and 153 (62.7%) of the participants were dissatisfied and very dissatisfied, respectively. As presented, the majority of the sample, 321 (61.1%), were very dissatisfied and 149 (28.4%) were dissatisfied. The proportion of respondents who were partially satisfied was 43 (8.2%), and 12 (2.3%) were very satisfied.

Table 4: Respondents' satisfaction with the resolution process

Community Types	Small		Medium		Large		Oke-Ogun Region	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Very dissatisfied	50	57.5	118	60.8	153	62.7	321	61.1
Dissatisfied	28	32.2	54	27.8	67	27.5	149	28.4
Partially satisfied	7	8.0	18	9.3	18	7.4	43	8.2
Very satisfied	2	2.3	4	2.1	6	2.5	12	2.3
Total	87	100.0	194	100.0	244	100.0	525	100.0

Source: Author's Field Work (2024)

4.1. 6 Respondents' suggested methods to stop Farmer-Herder Land Conflict

The study revealed five suggested methods to prevent farmer-herder land conflicts in the region. These included the provision of security, improved farming techniques, the removal of all herdsmen, and the establishment of grazing reserves. In the small communities of the region, 35 (39.8%) of the respondents suggested that grazing reserves should be created (Table 5). Additionally, improved methods of farming were suggested by 31 (35.2%) of the respondents in these small communities. Licensing and certification of herders, as well as the provision of security and driving away herdsmen were indicated by 9 (10.2%), 7 (8.0%), and 6 (6.8%) of the respondents, respectively.

In the medium-sized communities of the region, the creation of grazing reserves and improved farming methods for farming were suggested by 78 (40.2%) and 69 (35.6%) of the respondents, respectively. Meanwhile, the licensing and certification of herdsmen, the provision of security, and the removal of herdsmen were suggested by 20 (10.3%), 14 (7.2%) and 13 (6.7%) of the respondents, respectively. Similarly, the creation of grazing reserves and improved

farming methods were proposed by 95 (40.1%) and 88 (37.1%) of the respondents in the large communities. Furthermore, licensing and certification of herders were recommended by 25 (10.5%), while provision of security was proposed by 17 (7.2%) of the respondents in the large communities. About 12 (5.1%) of the respondents in the large communities suggested that the herdsmen be driven away.

Generally, in the region, the creation of grazing reserves was suggested by 208 (40.1%) of the respondents, while 188 (36.2%) recommended that improved farming methods should be implemented. The licensing and certification of herders were advocated by 54 (10.4%) of the respondents in the region. Finally, 38 (7.3%) respondents suggested the provision of security, while 31 (6.0%) called for the removal of herdsmen.

Table 5: Respondents' suggested methods to Stop Farmer-Herder Land Conflicts

Community Types	Small		Medium		Large		Oke-Ogun Region	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Provision of security	7	8.0	14	7.2	17	7.2	38	7.3
Improved methods	31	35.2	69	35.6	88	37.1	188	36.2
Drive away herdsmen	6	6.8	13	6.7	12	5.1	31	6.0
Licensing and certification	9	10.2	20	10.3	25	10.5	54	10.4
Creation of grazing reserve	35	39.8	78	40.2	95	40.1	208	40.1
Total	88	100.0	194	100.0	237	100.0	519	100.0

Source: Author's Field Work (2024)

4.1.7 Stakeholders' preparation for the impact of Farmer-Herder Land Conflict

In preparation for farmer-herder conflict, certain actions were identified in the study and examined regarding how recently these actions were taken. The majority, 35 (39.8%) of stakeholders in the Oke-Ogun region obtained educational materials from the government and other NGOs about how conflict and attacks occur and their effects, as recently as less than six months prior to the study. However, 82(15.4%), 48(9.0), and 184(34.6%) acquired the materials

one, two to three and more than three years before the study, respectively, while 6 (1.1%) had never done so. The proportion of stakeholders who attended a meeting or a heard discussion on how conflict would affect the community less than six months prior was 151 (28.5%), while those who did so one year and two to three years prior were 161 (30.4%) and 202 (41.1%), respectively. About 366 (55.8%) of the respondents indicated that stakeholders prepared for farmer-herder conflict within approximately one year or less by obtaining information from newspapers, radio, television, or the internet or other communication media on how conflict affects the community. Furthermore, while 30 (5.8%) of the respondents reported that community leaders never disseminated information to members about how conflict would affect the area, the majority (38.4%) indicated that community leaders had done so within the last six months.

The majority (30.6%) of the respondents in the Oke-Ogun region indicated that stakeholders sought information on how the buildings they inhabit or work in could be affected approximately a year prior.

5. Discussion of findings

During farmer-herder land conflicts in the Oke-Ogun region, peaceful settlement was the most commonly used method, as indicated by 232 (43.4%). Additionally, 198 (37.7%) representatives reported that stakeholders employed avoidance tactics. In this region, 42 (8.0%) reported the use of arbitration by stakeholders, while 41 (7.8%) indicated that stakeholders resorted to open confrontation. Mediation was the least used method of conflict settlement in the Oke-Ogun region, as indicated by 12 (2.3%) of the sample. Overall, in the Oke-Ogun region, 115 (21.5%) of the reported cases of conflicts were taken to the police station, and 6 (1.1%) of the representatives reported them to the district assemblies. Furthermore, 54 (10.1%) and 360 (67.3%) of the sample reported to the traditional rules and community leaders, respectively. Regarding compensation during conflicts, 351 (76.8%) of representatives in the Oke-Ogun region received compensation for products lost or damaged, while the remaining 106 (23.2%) did not receive any compensation. The majority, 356 (70.6%) of recipients received cash compensation, whereas 148 (29.4%) received cattle. Most representatives, 321 (61.1%) in the Oke-Ogun region, were very dissatisfied, and 149 (28.4%) were dissatisfied with the

compensation received. The proportion of partially satisfied representatives was 43 (8.2%), and 12 (2.3%) were very satisfied. The creation of grazing reserves was suggested by 208 (40.1%) of the representatives, and 188 (36.2%) suggested that improved farming methods should be implemented to prevent farmer-herder land conflicts.

6. Conclusion and recommendations

Findings of the study revealed that the weakness of the government is evidently yet indirectly leaving land administration and land conflict resolution in the hands of community leaders and individual families, and traditional councils, among others, which are some of the strife issues in the region. Additionally, where issues of conflicts have been reported, the inability of the government and its agencies to promptly and adequately manage the conflict through a conflict resolution method or procedure acceptable to all parties involved was evident. This failure was often exploited to favor one party and marginalize the other.

From the foregoing, it is posited that if these identified problems persist in the region, it would be very difficult to stem the tide of the conflict. Consequently, sustainable goals of reducing poverty, building strong institutions, achieving zero hunger and bridging the inequality gap will not be realized. Therefore, rather than relying on intuition and guesswork, the study recommends the following strategies for policy and decision makers, as well as urban planners, in peacebuilding and sustainable communities.

All stakeholders, including the government, NGOs, and traditional institutions, should intensify efforts to foster cooperation and peaceful coexistence between farmers and herders through public enlightenment, education and campaigns in the region. Raising awareness among stakeholders, including both farmers and herders, about the necessity for mutual co-existence and peace is crucial. This would help to prevent unnecessary provocations and opportunistic violence.

Conflict resolution strategies such as conciliation and mediation, which embrace an in-depth understanding of the grief of the parties involved in a conflict, should be promoted over litigation. Furthermore, mediation and conciliation as conflict resolution strategies involve the leaders of the stakeholders in a conflict and require less time compared to litigation. In other words, the intervention of local chiefs and religious leaders, who often mediate using dialogue,

produces better results than those achieved by law enforcement agents who sometimes resort to arrest and incarceration to quell the crisis. This implies that in conflict resolution, dialogue is more effective than coercion.

Governments, traditional rulers, religious leaders, and other local institutions should be more responsive to the plight of conflict victims and utilize appropriate mechanisms at their disposal for effective resolution and crisis management. The government, civil society, leaders, and traditional leaders should lead in enforcing social institutions that could encourage cultural exchanges between different ethnic groups. Political office holders should be encouraged to refrain from fostering divisions among people and to promote unity regardless of socio-cultural differences.

A multistage conflict resolution framework, as proposed in this study, is required to mitigate the risks posed by farmer-herder land conflicts. The proposed framework should be established as a statutory committee at the community, local, state, and federal government levels.

References

- Abegunde, A. A. (2011). Land as the main cause of inter-communal conflicts in Africa: key natural resources against community development of third world nations. *Journal of Economics and Sustainable Development* 2.4, 285-288.
- Abegunde, O. (2014). The changing context and dynamics of herder-farmer conflict across West Africa. *Geography Research Forum* (24)1, 83-97.
- Adelakun, O.E., Adurogbangba, B. and Akinbile, L.A. (2015). Socioeconomic Effects of Farmer-Pastoralist Conflict on Agricultural Extension Service Delivery in Oyo State, Nigeria. *Journal of Agricultural Extension*, 19 (2), 59-70.
- Ajibo, H. T., Onuoha, E. C., Okafor, A. E., Oluwole, I. O. and Obi-Keguna, C. N. (2018). Dynamics of Farmers and Herdsmen Conflict in Nigeria: The Implication to Social Work Policy Intervention. *International Journal of Humanities and Social Science*, 8 (7), 157-163.
- Aliyu, A.S. (2015). Causes and Resolution of Conflict Between Cattle Herders and Crop Farmers in Katsina State. *A Published M.Sc. Dissertation by the School of Postgraduate Studies, Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria*, 1-74.

- Al Jazeera. (2016, March 9). *Nigeria: Dozens killed in herder-farmer violence in Agatu*. <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2016/3/9/dozens-killed-in-violence-in-nigerias-benue-state>.
- Amnesty International (AI) (2018). *Nigeria: The Challenge of Military Reform*, Africa Report N°237, 6 June 2016.
- Amnesty International (2018). *Harvest of death: Three years of bloody clashes between farmers and herders in Nigeria*. <https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/afr44/9503/2018/en/>
- Assessment Capacity Project [ACP], (2017). A Critical Examination of Honor, Cultures and Herding Societies in Africa. *African Studies Review*, 51(2), 99-117.
- Blench, R. (2003). The Transformation of Conflict between Pastoralists and Cultivators in Nigeria. (Ed.) Moritz, M. *Special issue of the Journal Africa*. In <http://www.jstor.org/stable/424938>.
- Bolarinwa, A. (2007). Political ecology and moral dimensions of resource conflicts: The case of farmer-herder conflict in the Sahel. *Political Geography*, 23, 863-889.
- British Council. (2016). Nigeria Reconciliation and Stability Project (NRSP): Dialogue facilitation and peacebuilding efforts in Bayelsa State.
- Buhari, M. (2015). *Directive on livestock development planning*. Federal Government of Nigeria.
- Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue (CHD) (2016, November). Mediation forum on farmer-herder conflict in Shendam, Plateau State. With support from the German Embassy.
- Chikaire, N. (2017). Pastoralism in a Stateless Environment: The case of southern Somalia Borderlands. *Geography Research Forum*, 25, 127-147.
- Crisis Group African Report (2017). Herders against farmers: Nigeria's expanding deadly conflict (Africa Report No. 252). International Crisis Group. <https://www.crisisgroup.org/africa/west-africa/nigeria/252-herders-against-farmers-nigerias-expanding-deadly-conflict> 10-14.
- Deutsch, M. (1991). Subjective features of conflict resolution: Psychological, social and cultural influences. In Raimo V. (Ed.), *New Dimensions in conflict theory*. London: Sage Publications, 29-30.
- Ekanola, B. A. (2004). Beyond isolation: Towards co-operative relations & resolution of ethnic conflicts in contemporary African society. CODESRIA Bull. pp. 3-4, pp 35-37.

- Federal Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development (FMARD). (2015). *Report of the committee on livestock development strategies*. Government of Nigeria.
- Human Rights Watch (2017). *Nigeria: Officials ignore killings in Kaduna*. <https://www.hrw.org/news/2017/12/19/nigeria-officials-ignore-killings-kaduna>
- Johnson, A.I. and Okunola, B.T. (2017). Pastoralism as a New Phase of Terrorism in Nigeria. *Global Journal of Human-Social Science*, 17(4), 49-54.
- International Crisis Group (2017). Herders against Farmers: Nigeria's Expanding Deadly Conflict. *International Crisis Group Africa Report* (No. 252), 10. [net/252-nigerias-spreading-herder-farmerconflict.pdf](https://www.crisisgroup.org/en/publications-and-reports/252-nigerias-spreading-herder-farmer-conflict)
- Li, N. (2018). Nigeria's Fulani Herdsmen-Farmers Conflict and Peace Building. *Global Journal of Agricultural Research*, 6 (5), 1-15.
- Magsi, S. (2013). Political ecology and moral dimensions of resource conflicts: The case of farmer-herder conflict in the Sahel. *Political Geography* 23, 863-889.
- Marshall, M. G., & Gurr, T. R. (2005). *Peace and conflict 2005*. Center for International Development and Conflict Management, University of Maryland.
- Nigerian Governors Forum. (2016, January 25). *Presentation of grazing reserve plan to governors*. Government Briefing.
- National Grazing Reserves Commission (Establishment and Development) Bill 2011", No. C2603.
- Nigerian Police Force [NPF], Crime Digest, (2017), p. 22
- Ofuoku, A. U. and Isife, B. I. (2009). Causes, effects and resolution of farmers-nomadic cattle herders conflict in Delta state, Nigeria. *International Journal of Sociology and Anthropology*, 1(2), 47-54.
- Ogbeh, A. (2016, March 3). *Statement on proposed cattle-grazing legislation and imported grass*. Federal Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development.
- Olayiwola, O. Ajala, J. and Sangodipe, A. (2014). Cattle management of pastoralist and conflict resolution strategies in the tropical humid rain forest zone of southern Nigeria. *Journal of International Scientific Publications: Agriculture and Food*, 2, 16-19.
- Premium Times (2016, April 25). *Enugu massacre: Buhari orders crackdown on herdsmen*.

Premium Times (2016, May 10). *Senate holds public hearing on herdsmen attacks*
<https://www.premiumtimesng.com/news/headlines/203378-senate-holds-public-hearing-herdsmen-attacks.html>

Sahara Reporters. (2011, March 3). *National Grazing Reserve Bill sparks controversy*.
<https://saharareporters.com/2011/03/03/national-grazing-reserve-bill-sparks-controversy>

Shehu, H. (2018). The Causes and Consequences of Fulani Pastoralist-Farmers Conflict in Nigeria. *International Journal of Innovation and Research in Educational Sciences* Vol. 5(3), 357-361.

The Cable (2016, November 16). *Senate drops grazing reserves bill*.
<https://www.thecable.ng/senate-drops-grazing-reserves-bill>

The Guardian Nigeria. (2016, April 25). *Lai Mohammed: FG working silently to stop herdsmen killings*.
<https://guardian.ng/news/fg-working-silently-to-stop-herdsmen-killings-says-lai-mohammed/>

The Punch Newspaper (2018). 20 feared killed as Fulani herdsmen, Soja Patali clash in Benue. Retrieved from <http://punchonline.ng/news/20-feared-killed-as-fulani-herdsmensoja-patali-clash-in-benue> (accessed on September 3, 2018)

This day Newspaper. The existence of grazing routes in Nigeria: fact or fiction (Part 1). Accessed March 10, 2022.

Thomas, F. Homer-Dixon, T. F. (1994). Environmental Scarcities and Violent Conflict: Evidence from Cases' *International Security*, 19(1), 5-40.

Tonah, S. (2006). Managing Farmer-Herder Conflicts in Ghana's Volta Basin. *Ibadan Journal of Social Sciences* 4(1), 33-45.

USAID (2017, April 27). Farmers-Herders Dialogue Conference Report. United States Agency for International Development.

Utsaha, J. Ugbah Y. and Evuleocha, O. (2007). Defining religious terrorism: a causal and anthological profile". *Studies in Conflict and terrorism*. 26: 105-134.

Vanderlin, J. (2005). *Conflicts and cooperation over the commons. A conceptual and methodological framework for assessing the role of local institutions*.
www.ilri.cgiar.org. Accessed on 30th October, 2017.

Vanguard News (2016, March 10). *Senate blames Boko Haram for herdsmen attacks*.
<https://www.vanguardngr.com/2016/03/senate-blames-boko-haram-herdsmen-attacks/>

Viewpoint Nigeria (2014). Jonathan inaugurates inter-ministerial technical committee on grazing reserves. Viewpoint Nigeria. <https://www.viewpointnigeria.org>

Von der Dunk, A., Gret-Regamey, A., Dalang, T. and Hersperger, A. M., (2011). *Defining a typology of peri-urban land-use conflicts - A case study from Switzerland*. Landscape and Urban Planning, 101, 2, 149-156.