ANALYTICAL STUDY OF THE CRASH OF CIVILISATION: UNDERSTANDING THE FARMERS–HERDERS CRISIS IN NIGERIA

Ezumezu, Tochukwu C.V
Peace and Conflict Management Studies Department
University of Haifa, Isreal
tcezumezu@gmail.com
+2349030414382

Abstract
The farmers–herders crisis in Nigeria has become one of the most serious challenges affecting peace, food production, and community life in the country. This study examines the causes and effects of the crisis, describing it as a "clash of civilisations" between two different ways of life farming and cattle herding. The research shows that as the environment changes and grazing lands in the North become drier, herders are forced to move south in search of water and pasture. This movement often leads to clashes with local farmers who depend on the same land for crop cultivation. The study also explains how poor government policies, weak security systems, and the breakdown of traditional conflict-resolution mechanisms have worsened the situation. The crisis is therefore not just about land or animals but also about inequality, poor leadership, and the failure to manage resources fairly. The study suggests that solving the problem requires stronger policies that encourage peaceful coexistence, fair land use, climate adaptation, and sustained dialogue between farmers and herders. Understanding this conflict shows how differences in culture, livelihood, and access to resources can create deeper social problems if not properly managed.
Keywords: Farmers–herders, Civilization, Crash, Crisis, Analytical.

Introduction
Nigeria is facing a long-standing conflict between farmers and herders that has seriously affected rural communities, food production, and human security. In the past, especially in the Middle Belt, farmers who stay in one place and herders who move with their livestock were able to live together peacefully. They had agreements about grazing routes, leftover crops, and seasonal pasture. But over the years, this balance has been disturbed by a combination of environmental changes, population growth, and weak institutions. In Central Nigeria (Benue, Plateau, Nasarawa States) limited land, water scarcity, and changing migration patterns have increased clashes between farmers and herders (Tari, 2023). People also feel that land is being taken unfairly and that livelihoods are under threat. The conflict is no longer just about grazing or crop damage; it showcases problems such as weak governance, poor policies, unregulated movement of herders, and the failure of traditional dispute resolution methods (Ioryue, 2024).

On the ground, the situation is serious. Research in Taraba State finds out that farmer–herder conflicts have a big negative impact on food security. Farmers report lower crop yields, reduced income, and more vulnerability because of disruptions caused by conflict (Dabo, Garba, Yakubu & Abdullahi, 2024). Farms are being abandoned, families are being displaced, trust between communities is breaking down, and networks of cooperation that once existed are disappearing. Some people have described this situation as a "crash of civilization," because social life in rural areas is collapsing under violence, insecurity, and competition for resources. The collapse is worsened by climate change, desertification, population growth, and commercial farming and livestock keeping. Northern grazing lands are becoming less usable due to drought and desertification, pushing herders southwards. This brings them into farmland, causing conflict with farmers whose crops are already under pressure (Tari, 2023). At the same time, farmland is expanding due to commercial agriculture and urban growth, reducing available grazing land. This double pressure increases competition for land and water. Weak enforcement of laws, outdated grazing regulations, and poor conflict resolution frameworks mean that small disputes quickly escalate into violence (Ioryue, 2024). Traditional community elders or dialogue forums that once solved local conflict are overwhelmed and in some areas, armed clashes and vigilante actions have become common.

The economic and social effects are serious. In Taraba State, factors like household income, land size, family size, and involvement in conflict were shown to affect food security for both farmers and herders (Dabo et al., 2024). The disruption of farming and livestock production in conflict areas also threatens national food supply, raises food prices,

and increases the risk of mass displacement. Families lose years of investment when farms are destroyed, herders lose their cattle, and communities experience trauma, mistrust, and fear. The conflict creates a vicious cycle of loss of crops, livestock, income, and security which makes communities even more fragile and increases the chance of further violence. This situation motivates this study. There is a need to understand the farmer–herder conflict beyond individual incidents or specific states. Many existing studies focus only on certain causes, like grazing laws or ethnic differences, without looking at how environmental changes, livelihood pressures, weak institutions, and cultural perceptions interact to create ongoing violence. Tari (2023) notes that previous studies have not fully explored farmers' and herders' perspectives, while Ioryue (2024) focuses on national security but only in one state. Dabo et al. (2024) provide food security data but only at a local level. These gaps show the need for a wider approach that considers environmental, economic, institutional, and social factors across several regions to understand what drives the conflict and how it can be addressed.

This study views the farmer–herder conflict as a "crash of civilization," where settled farming and mobile herding are struggling over shrinking resources under weak governance and increasing competition. The goal is to provide a comprehensive view that includes history, livelihood changes, resource management, institutional response, and community perceptions. This approach can help identify ways to improve land use, strengthen institutions, and promote peaceful coexistence between farmers and herders without favouring one group over the other. If the conflict continues unchecked, it threatens not only rural communities but also national food security, social stability, and unity. The current state is alarming as farms are destroyed, families displaced, cattle lost, vigilante justice emerges, trust is broken, and there are few ways to resolve disputes. In short, the farmer–herder conflict is more than a fight over land, it is a complex crisis involving resource management, changing livelihoods, weak institutions, and cultural clashes. This study aims to examine the causes, patterns, and impacts of the conflict in a way that is based on research but also practical. It is hoped that this work will help researchers, policymakers, development workers, and conflict-resolution actors understand the problem better and design solutions that promote peace, fair access to resources, strong institutions, and resilient rural communities in Nigeria.

Literature Review
The farmers–herders conflict in Nigeria has been the subject of growing scholarly attention, yet the scope, framing and analytic depth vary widely. One line of inquiry examines environmental and resource-scarcity factors. For example, V. A. Tari (2023) explored the contestation over land, pasture and water in Central Nigeria (Benue, Plateau, Nasarawa). He found that dwindling resources, shifting migration of herders and farmers' fears of land-grabbing increasingly fuel violent incidents. Tari also highlights that many studies stop at resource competition and neglect the deeper perceptions and worldview of both farmers and herders. Another body of work emphasizes the governance, institutional and national security dimensions of the crisis. D. A. Ioryue (2024) in his work on Benue State argues that weak institutions, outdated grazing laws and breakdown of traditional conflict-resolution mechanisms transform what were local resource disputes into national security issues. He suggests that the state's inadequate response enables escalation.

A further strand focuses on the impact on human security, food security and livelihoods. For instance, C. V. Obikaeze et al. (2023) assessed how farmer–herder conflicts degrade food production, disrupt farming cycles and contribute to displacement. Their findings underscore the urgency: households become less productive, incomes fall and national food-security risks intensify.

In addition to these thematic streams, comparative or regional-review studies add breadth. The research by K. O. Lamidi, L. B. Juta & B. A. Taleat (2024) provides an empirical review of Nigeria's incidence of farmers–herders conflict, noting that while there is considerable research on specific states, fewer works synthesize national patterns or link across multiple causal factors such as mobility, land-law, culture and livelihoods.
Finally, in a broader framing, D. Abalogu & N. P. Ojukwu (2022) discuss the farmers–herders clashes as part of Nigeria's mounting rural disorder and argue that the phenomenon might represent a wider breakdown of social order and resource-governance across regions including the Middle Belt and Southern Nigeria. They draw attention to the possibility of seeing the conflict not simply as isolated violence but as indicative of a "crash of civilization" within agrarian–pastoral relations, though they do not operationalize that metaphor empirically. From the surveyed literature, five major themes were discovered:

a. Resource competition: Most authors identify land, water, grazing corridors, pasture and climate change as key drivers of conflict (Tari, 2023; Obikaeze et al., 2023).

b. Institutional and governance failure: Weak policies, inadequate enforcement of grazing laws, and failure of dispute-resolution structures are recurrent (Ioryue, 2024; Lamidi et al., 2024).

c. Livelihood and human security impacts: The effect on farming, herding, incomes and food security is well documented (Obikaeze et al. 2023).

c. Cultural, identity and perception issues: Some works (Tari, 2023; Abalogu & Ojukwu, 2022) emphasize how farmers and herders view each other and how cultural identity, mobility vs. sedentism, and historic relationships matter.

d. Call for holistic or national frameworks: Researchers increasingly call for integrative models that capture multiple dimensions rather than narrow state-case studies (Lamidi et al., 2024; Abalogu & Ojukwu, 2022).

Despite these contributions, important gaps persist. Although Abalogu & Ojukwu (2022) mention national-scale breakdowns, empirical studies remain heavily concentrated in North-Central states (Benue, Plateau, Nasarawa). Other regions such as the South-East, South-South, North-West and North-East are under-represented. While cultural/perceptual factors are highlighted by Tari (2023), there is limited comparative empirical work that systematically explores both farmers' and herders' perceptions across multiple regions. Institutional analyses often focus on one state (Ioryue, 2024) or on policy frameworks; fewer studies compare inter-state institutional response effectiveness. While many studies document effects (Obikaeze et al. 2023), fewer untangle why some conflicts escalate into large violence while others remain lower-level, especially through the lens of "civilizational collapse" of agrarian-pastoral systems.

The metaphor of "crash of civilization" suggested by Abalogu & Ojukwu (2022) has not been fully operationalized into a rigorous analytic framework, linking historic agrarian-pastoral relations, resource governance and institutional breakdown into a coherent model. Thus, this study builds on the literature by aiming to fill these gaps: by mapping the conflict across multiple Nigerian zones, comparing perceptions of farmers and herders, assessing institutional performance across states, and employing the "crash of civilization" framing to probe structural breakdowns rather than isolated events.

Theoretical Framework

This study adopts Social Conflict Theory as its guiding framework to analyse the farmers–herders crisis in Nigeria. Developed by Lewis Coser (1956) and rooted in Marxist thought, the theory posits that society comprises competing groups whose conflicting interests over scarce resources, power, and status generate tension and conflict, particularly when structural inequalities exist. Applied to the Nigerian context, farmers and herders represent distinct livelihood groups whose survival depends on access to critical resources such as arable land, water, and pasture. As land becomes increasingly scarce due to desertification, climate change, urbanization, and farmland expansion, competition between these groups intensifies, often escalating into violent clashes. Tari (2023) highlights that scarcity of land and shifting migration patterns have amplified disputes, while Ioryue (2024) observes that weak governance, poor enforcement of grazing laws, and inadequate conflict-resolution mechanisms promotes tensions, demonstrating that the conflict is structurally embedded rather than accidental. The theory further explains the persistence of the crisis, as historical systems of coexistence, such as traditional grazing agreements and community mediation, have collapsed under demographic pressures and commercialization, creating what Abalogu and Ojukwu (2022) describe as a "crash of civilization" in agrarian pastoral relations. Also, Social Conflict Theory helps interpret the human consequences of the conflict, including crop destruction, livestock losses, displacement, and food insecurity, as documented by Obikaeze et al. (2023), framing these outcomes as predictable results of structural inequalities and institutional weakness.

The relevance of this framework to the study is threefold: it explains the structural causes of the crisis, illuminates the social dynamics between competing groups, and guides policy-oriented interventions that address underlying inequalities, promote equitable resource access, and strengthen institutional frameworks. This research positions the farmers–herders crisis as a systemic phenomenon arising from competition, inequality, and governance failure, offering a comprehensive lens to understand the drivers, consequences, and potential solutions for sustainable coexistence in Nigeria's rural communities.

Crash of Civilization and Some Notable Examples of Farmers–Herders Crisis in Nigeria
The phrase "crash of civilization" captures the growing collapse of peaceful relations between farmers and herders across Nigeria. For many generations, herders and sedentary farmers coexisted through mutual arrangements such as shared grazing routes, seasonal migration patterns, and traditional conflict-settlement systems. These arrangements formed the backbone of rural social stability, especially in the Middle Belt, where diverse communities interacted harmoniously. However, this delicate balance has broken down due to a combination of environmental degradation, population growth, weak institutions, and increasing competition for land and water. The concept of a "crash of civilization" therefore describes more than just localized violence; it symbolizes the disintegration of social order, trust, and traditional mechanisms that once supported coexistence between two vital livelihood systems (Tari, 2023). In northern and central Nigeria, especially in Benue, Plateau, and Nasarawa States, the situation has grown particularly alarming. The Middle Belt, long regarded as Nigeria's food basket, has become the epicenter of farmer–herder clashes. In Benue State alone, thousands of lives have been lost since 2018 following recurrent attacks linked to disputes over grazing rights and farmland. A 2025 report by The Guardian highlighted that at least 42 people were killed in coordinated attacks across four villages, an incident described as one of the worst in recent years (The Guardian, 2025). Chikwem and Osazuwa (2023) confirm that these repeated clashes have not only led to loss of lives and destruction of property but have also destabilized food production, contributing to hunger and displacement. In northern and central Nigeria, formerly cooperative communities have become divided along ethnic and occupational lines, signifying a breakdown of both social and moral order.

Further south, states such as Kogi and Delta have experienced similar upheavals, showing that the crisis has expanded beyond its traditional heartland. In Kogi State, Reuters (2024) reported a violent reprisal attack in which twenty-one villagers were killed by herders after six of their own were allegedly murdered. This pattern of revenge and counter-revenge represents the vicious cycle of violence that now characterizes many parts of rural Nigeria. In the Niger Delta, particularly Agadama in Delta State, research conducted by Oghuvbu (2021) shows that the influx of herders into settled farming areas has resulted in large-scale destruction of crops, economic losses, and community displacements. The once fertile farmlands have become battlegrounds where livelihoods are destroyed, and inter-communal relations fractured. These southern cases illustrate that the crisis is no longer regional but national in scope, affecting virtually all ecological and cultural zones.

Environmental factors also play a role in this so-called crash of civilization. Climate change and desertification have forced pastoralists to migrate southwards as grazing lands in the far north shrink. According to reports from The Cable (2022) and the Centre for Collaborative Investigative Journalism (CCIJ), the drying up of the Hadejia-Nguru wetlands in north-eastern Nigeria has drastically reduced access to pasture and water, pushing herders into densely populated farming zones in the Middle Belt and southern states. This migration has intensified competition over land and increased the frequency of violent encounters. As desertification continues to spread and rainfall patterns become more erratic, both farmers and herders face existential threats to their livelihoods, yet national policies have failed to adapt quickly enough to manage these overlapping pressures.

The crisis also shows the weakening of Nigeria's institutional capacity to regulate land use, enforce grazing laws, and provide mediation between conflicting parties. The traditional dispute-resolution mechanisms that once relied on community elders or local chiefs are no longer effective, often overpowered by the scale and frequency of violence. Modern institutions, such as security agencies and local governments, are either under-resourced or politically compromised, leading to widespread impunity. As Obikaeze et al. (2023) argue, the failure of state institutions to enforce land tenure and pastoral management policies has created a power vacuum where armed groups and vigilante movements now dictate security outcomes. This erosion of authority underscores the notion of a civilization in crisis one where governance structures, social norms, and conflict-management systems have all eroded.

The human and economic costs are equally devastating. Farmers abandon their land for safety, while herders lose their cattle to rustling or retaliatory attacks. Displaced families face food shortages, trauma, and poverty, while entire local economies collapse. The Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) has warned that the continuing farmer–herder conflict in Nigeria remains one of the key drivers of rural food insecurity, especially in Benue, Taraba, and Niger States. The ripple effects extend to urban markets through rising food prices and reduced agricultural output. Ultimately, what we are witnessing is not only a humanitarian crisis but also a slow unravelling of Nigeria's agrarian civilization, the economic and social foundation upon which millions depend.

The "crash of civilization" metaphor, therefore, captures a multi-layered tragedy. It is environmental, as the land becomes degraded and less productive; economic, as livelihoods and markets collapse; political, as institutions fail to maintain justice and security; and moral, as once cohesive communities fall into cycles of hatred and vengeance. What makes this particularly troubling is that these events are happening simultaneously in multiple regions from Sokoto and Katsina in the north to Benue and Plateau in the center, and down to Ondo, Oyo, Enugu, and Delta in the south. The nationwide spread of violence indicates that the old systems of negotiation and compromise between pastoralism and agriculture have broken down, replaced by mutual suspicion, weaponization, and a deepening sense of insecurity. Nigeria's farmers–herders conflict epitomizes a collapse of rural civilization. The traditional systems that once ensured peaceful coexistence have eroded under the combined pressures of environmental degradation, weak governance, population growth, and the absence of credible conflict-resolution frameworks. The examples from Benue, Kogi, Delta, and the northern wetlands illustrate how deeply entrenched the crisis has become. If left unchecked, the farmer–herder conflict will continue to erode Nigeria's food security, social cohesion, and national stability truly marking a slow-motion crash of civilization in the country's rural heartlands.

Possible Solutions
The farmers–herders conflict in Nigeria is one of the most persistent and devastating security and development challenges facing the nation today. It has taken roots across many states, from the Middle Belt to the South and parts of the North-West, destroying livelihoods, displacing families, and threatening food security. The complexity of this crisis means that no single solution can address it; rather, a combination of social, institutional, economic, and legal measures must be employed to tackle its root causes and sustain peace. Researchers and policy analysts have proposed multiple strategies that, when effectively implemented, can significantly reduce the frequency and intensity of these conflicts across Nigeria.

One of the most widely discussed approaches is the modernization of livestock management through ranching and grazing reserves. For centuries, herders in Nigeria practiced open grazing, moving cattle over long distances in search of pasture and water. However, with the rapid increase in population, urbanization, and land cultivation, this system has become unsustainable. Open grazing now often leads to the destruction of farmlands, contamination of water sources, and violent clashes between farmers and migrating pastoralists. Adaja, Olugbeko, and Olajide (2024) argue that open grazing should be phased out and replaced with modern ranching systems that provide designated areas for cattle rearing, proper veterinary care, and access to water and feed. According to them, such modernization not only reduces conflicts but also promotes agricultural productivity and economic diversification. Their study suggests that ranching, if supported with government funding, extension services, and private investment, can transform livestock production from a conflict-prone subsistence activity into a profitable and peaceful economic venture (Adaja, Olugbeko & Olajide, 2024).

In addition to reforming grazing systems, the promotion of peace-building and dialogue between communities is essential. Historically, many Nigerian communities relied on traditional systems of negotiation and consensus to resolve land and resource disputes. These indigenous approaches, though weakened, still hold great promise if revitalized and supported by formal institutions. Udemadu, Chilokwu, and Nwafor (2024) observe that lasting peace cannot be imposed from above but must emerge from within the affected communities. They advocate for the creation of local peace committees that include both farmers and herders, traditional rulers, women, youth, and religious leaders. Through dialogue and trust-building exercises, these committees can foster mutual understanding, address stereotypes, and develop locally acceptable grazing and farming arrangements. According to their findings, communities that engage in sustained dialogue tend to experience fewer violent outbreaks and show higher levels of cooperation (Udemadu, Chilokwu & Nwafor, 2024).

Another critical area of intervention lies in improving conflict mediation and third-party intervention mechanisms. Studies reveal that many of the conflicts escalate because there are no effective early warning systems or accessible mediation structures. In many rural areas, when disputes occur, they are often left unresolved until they turn violent. Idowu, Akinsola, and Tomori (2025) note that state-led security interventions, such as deploying police or military personnel, have often been reactive, poorly coordinated, and sometimes biased. Their study in Kwara State found that community-based mediation efforts facilitated by neutral third parties such as local NGOs, traditional rulers, or respected elders proved more effective in reducing tension. They recommend strengthening local capacity for conflict

prevention by training mediators, establishing early warning systems, and improving the coordination between community leaders and government agencies (Idowu, Akinsola & Tomori, 2025).

Furthermore, legal and institutional reforms must be pursued to create a fair and enforceable framework for managing land use, resource sharing, and security responsibilities. The absence of clear land tenure policies and the inconsistency in state and federal regulations often create confusion and resentment. Mumuni and Abdulyakeen (2024) emphasise that many existing policies are either outdated or not properly implemented. They call for a review of grazing laws, land allocation systems, and agricultural policies to ensure inclusivity and equity. For instance, the National Livestock Transformation Plan (NLTP), though promising, suffers from weak implementation due to political resistance and funding constraints. Strengthening such initiatives and ensuring that they reflect the interests of both farmers and herders will enhance legitimacy and compliance. Moreover, laws should promote compensation mechanisms for victims of farm or livestock destruction, thereby reducing the temptation for violent retaliation (Mumuni & Abdulyakeen, 2024).

The challenge of insecurity in rural areas also calls for innovative security governance, especially through partnerships between state forces and community-based security networks. Bella and Olanrewaju (2024) highlight the emergence of "supra-vigilante" groups in response to state security failures. While these groups sometimes fill security gaps, they also risk escalating violence if left unregulated. The authors suggest formalizing community policing models that incorporate local vigilance groups but keep them accountable to state authorities. By empowering communities to provide intelligence, monitor movement, and de-escalate tensions, Nigeria can develop a more preventive and people-oriented security structure. This approach requires integrating technology such as drones and digital mapping to monitor grazing routes and detect encroachments early (Bella & Olanrewaju, 2024).

Lastly, socio-economic empowerment plays a vital role in addressing the root causes of the crisis. Many herders resort to encroaching on farmland because of poverty, limited education, and declining access to grazing resources. Similarly, farmers often respond violently because they see their livelihoods threatened and lack alternative means of income. By investing in education, vocational training, and sustainable livelihood programmes for both groups, the government can reduce dependence on land and livestock as the sole means of survival. Integrating climate adaptation measures such as irrigation, fodder cultivation, and reforestation projects can also alleviate pressure on natural resources.

Conclusion and Recommendations
The farmers–herders crisis in Nigeria, as explored in this analytical study, represents far more than a struggle over land. The crisis symbolises the erosion of long-standing systems of peaceful coexistence between pastoralists and sedentary farmers, driven by climate change, weak governance, population growth, and the breakdown of traditional conflict-resolution mechanisms. Across regions—from the parched northern grazing lands to the fertile plains of the Middle Belt and the expanding farmlands of the South—the same pattern emerges: scarcity of resources, absence of justice, and the failure of state institutions to mediate fairly. The cumulative effects have been devastating: loss of lives and property, massive displacement, economic decline, and a growing sense of mistrust and insecurity that threatens Nigeria's unity and food stability.

The study reveals that the foundations of this conflict lie in crises of governance, environmental mismanagement, and socio-economic inequality. Weak enforcement of land laws, the absence of regulated grazing systems, and outdated conflict-management structures have created a vacuum frequently filled by violence and reprisal attacks. Traditional authorities who once mediated disputes have lost influence, while government responses have often been reactive, politicised, and inconsistent across states. These failures have allowed local disputes to escalate into national emergencies, eroding rural livelihoods and social cohesion. The findings highlight the urgent need for a comprehensive response that combines policy reform, institutional strengthening, and grassroots peacebuilding. To address these challenges, the study recommends several strategies:
a.Institutional reform and modernisation of livestock management.
There is a need for well-planned ranching and regulated grazing reserves. Open grazing has become unsustainable in a modern, densely populated society. Transitioning to ranching supported by state investment, public–private partnerships, veterinary services, and water infrastructure will reduce movement-induced clashes while improving livestock productivity. This transition must be gradual and inclusive, ensuring that herders are empowered through education, training, and access to credit rather than marginalised.

b. Promotion of structured dialogue and community peacebuilding.
Rebuilding trust between farmers and herders requires participatory forums where grievances can be expressed and locally accepted agreements reached. Peace committees should include traditional rulers, women, youth, and religious leaders. Successful community peace models should be institutionalised and replicated nationwide. Grassroots dialogue can help restore the social and moral bridges that have collapsed, revitalising the values of negotiation and coexistence that once underpinned rural life in Nigeria.

c. Strengthening legal frameworks and policy enforcement.
Clear, equitable, and transparent land-tenure laws are essential to prevent disputes over ownership and use. Policies such as the National Livestock Transformation Plan (NLTP) must be depoliticised, adequately funded, and implemented across all states. Legal frameworks should include mechanisms for compensation for victims of farm destruction or livestock loss to break cycles of vengeance. Additionally, federal and state governments must harmonise agricultural and pastoral policies to ensure coherence and fairness.

d. Reforming security and law enforcement.
Effective conflict management requires community-based early warning systems, supported by technologies such as drones and digital mapping, to monitor grazing routes and detect potential clashes. Collaboration between security agencies and community leaders should be strengthened to ensure rapid and impartial intervention. Meanwhile, unregulated vigilante groups must be brought under legal oversight to prevent abuse of power. A coordinated community-policing system, free from ethnic and political bias, can significantly reduce insecurity.

e. Addressing environmental and economic drivers.
Long-term peace depends on addressing the ecological and economic forces behind the crisis. Climate adaptation programmes such as reforestation, irrigation, and fodder cultivation should be implemented to restore degraded ecosystems and reduce pressure on scarce resources. Socio-economic empowerment programmes must be expanded, offering education, vocational training, and microfinance to both farmers and herders. With improved economic opportunities, dependence on land and livestock as sole means of survival declines, reducing the likelihood of violent competition.

f. Rebuilding Nigeria's moral and institutional foundation.
The farmers–herders crisis reflects not only policy failures but also a breakdown of values such as empathy, fairness, and accountability. Religious and community leaders have a crucial role in promoting tolerance, peace, and justice, countering narratives of hatred and division. National orientation programmes that promote unity and collective responsibility should be revived to repair the psychological and moral damage caused by years of conflict.

References
Abalogu, D. M. & Ojukwu, N. P. (2022). *Clashes between herders and farmers: Nigeria's farmer and herder conflicts. Ohazurume: Unizik Journal of Culture and Civilization*, Vol. 1, No. 1, pp. 141-147.

Adaja, O. V., Olugbeko, O. S., & Olajide, O. E. (2024). Farmers–Herders Conflicts and Government's Economic Diversification Initiatives in Nigeria. *African Journal for the Psychological Studies of Social Issues*, 27(2). Retrieved from https://ajpssi.org/ajpssi/article/view/629

Bella, F. T., & Olanrewaju, I. P. (2024). Farmer–Herders Conflict and the Emergence of Supra-Vigilante Security Measures in Nigeria. *PERSPEKTIF*, 13(1), 155–163. https://doi.org/10.31289/perspektif.v13i1.10655

Chikwem, F., & Osazuwa, A. O. (2023). *The Resurgence of Fulani Herders and Local Farmers Conflict in the Middle-Belt Nigeria*. University of Nigeria Journal of Political Economy. Retrieved from https://unjpe.com/index.php/UNJPE/article/view/37

Idowu, S. A., Akinsola, G. O., & Tomori, R. (2025). Assessing the Role of Third-Party Intervention in Farmer–Herders Conflict in Kwara State, Nigeria. *Nigerian Journal of Agriculture and Agricultural Technology.* Retrieved from https://www.njaat.com.ng/index.php/njaat/article/view/1010

Ioryue, D. A. (2024). Farmer-Herder Conflict and National Security in Nigeria: The Benue State in Perspective. *Kashere Journal of Politics and International Relations*, 2(2), 245-259. Retrieved from https://journals.fukashere.edu.ng/index.php/kjpir/article/view/361

Lamidi, K. O., Juta, L. B., & Taleat, B. A. (2024). Farmers-Herders' Crisis in Nigeria: An Empirical Review. *International Journal of Religion*, 14(1). https://doi.org/10.61707/km58vd75

Mumuni, N. A., & Abdulyakeen, A. (2024). Managing Herders and Farmers Conflict in Nigeria: Policies, Legislations and Conventions. *UZU Journal of History and International Studies*, 9(2). Retrieved from https://www.nigerianjournalsonline.com/index.php/UJHIS/article/view/5083

Obikaeze, C. V., Oduntan, J. O., Fajobi, T. A., Kayode, G., & Eteng, E. E. (2023). *Herders-Farmers Conflicts over Farmlands: Implications for Human and Food Security in Nigeria*. ABUAD Journal of Social and Management Sciences, 4(2), 338-351. https://doi.org/10.53982/ajsms.2023.0402.10-j

Obikaeze, C. V., Oduntan, J. O., Fajobi, T. A., Kayode, G., & Eteng, E. E. (2023). Herders-Farmers Conflicts over Farmlands: Implications for Human and Food Security in Nigeria. *ABUAD Journal of Social and Management Sciences*, 4(2), 338-351. https://doi.org/10.53982/ajsms.2023.0402.10-j

Oghuvbu, E. A. (2021). *A Study of the Causes and Effects of Herders-Farmers Crisis in Agadama, Delta State, Nigeria*. EBSU Journal of Social Sciences and Humanities, 11(1). Retrieved from https://www.ebsu-jssh.com/index.php/EBSUJSSH/article/view/30

Reuters. (2024, April 5). *At least 21 killed in Kogi reprisal attack by herders*. Retrieved from https://www.reuters.com/world/africa/least-21-killed-nigeria-after-herdsmen-attack-villagers-2024-04-05

Tari, V. A. (2023). *Issues and Perceptions of Farmers/Herders Conflicts in Central Nigeria*. Journal of History and Social Sciences, 12(1), 18-27. https://doi.org/10.46422/jhss.v12i1.118

The Cable. (2022). *An encroaching desert intensifies Nigeria's farmer-herder crisis*. Retrieved from https://www.thecable.ng/an-encroaching-desert-intensifies-nigerias-farmer-herder-crisis

The Guardian. (2025, May 27). *At least 42 people killed in Benue State in renewed farmer–herder attacks*. Retrieved from https://www.theguardian.com/world/2025/may/27/nigeria-attacks-benue

Udemadu, F. C., Chilokwu, C. G., & Nwafor, G. O. (2024). Promoting Peace and Reducing Conflicts Between Farmers and Herders in Nigeria: Challenges, Options and Recommendations. *Journal of the Management Sciences*, 60(5), 257–271. Retrieved from https://journals.unizik.edu.ng/jfms/article/view/3715