

ASSESSING THE FACTORS INFLUENCING FARMER-HERDER CONFLICTS (PHLCS) IN SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA: A CASE STUDY IN THE OKE-OGUN, NIGERIA

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ABSTRACT

Lately, there has been an upsurge in different forms of violent conflicts in Sub-Saharan Africa. This study focuses on Farmer-herder land conflict (FHLC) in Oke-Ogun, Nigeria, identifying and examining factors influencing farmer-herder land conflicts (FHLCs). Using both primary and secondary data, the study employed descriptive statistical analysis. Findings revealed that politics was the primary factor influencing FHLC (70.66%) in the Oke-Ogun Region OOR. Findings further identified that farming was subsistence-based (70.0%) and the predominant land use, with a Rate of Influencing Index (RII) of 4.50, while herding was mainly for prestige and commercial purposes, with 6.8% participation and an RII of 3.55. The remaining 23.2% of the respondents engaged in other land-use activities. The mean farm size was 488 hectares, and the average herd size was 460 cattle. The study has shown that farmer-herder land conflict is common in the study area. The conflict has the potential to affect the livelihoods of both the farmers and the herders. Thus, the government's weakness in leaving land administration and land conflict resolution to community leaders and individual families requires urgent attention. Apart from this, the conflict should be promptly and adequately managed through a conflict resolution method or procedure acceptable to all parties to prevent favouritism and marginalisation of any party, and to allow peace between the concerned parties.

Keywords: Farmer-herders conflict, Influencing factors, land uses, Oke-Ogun, Nigeria

1.0 INTRODUCTION

The manifestation of conflicts across different dimensions and the influence of stakeholders is a significant problem confronting world peace today. The society's cultural, political, and economic development can be truncated unless it is adequately addressed and managed, given its link to several aspects of human activities (Abdulbaqi & Ariemu, 2017; Antwi, 2018; Ivorgba, 2024). Marshall & Gurr (2005) and Rustard (2024) revealed that from developed to developing countries, conflicts are common occurrences. Across Nigerian states, significant conflicts among several ethnic and religious communities have been experienced and continue to be experienced (Aliyu, 2015; Nwogu et al., 2024). These vary significantly depending on the stakeholders involved, the process, and the dimension. Several factors attributed to these conflicts in developing countries include poor governance, human rights violations, poverty, and ethnic marginalisation (Utsaha et al., 2007; Sarafa & Monday, 2024). In other parlance, Adelakun et al. (2015) and Isiak et al. (2025) attributed conflicts to divergent value systems in the country and to resource control.

According to Usoro et al. (2014) and Ogbe et al. (2024), conflict can be found in many spheres of life and is as old as the family institution. Conflicts are defined as struggles for supremacy between individuals or groups that subjugate or even remove the opponent. In other parlance, Antwi (2018) defines conflict as changes in opinions, fights, and struggles among individuals, groups, or states. Based on differing opinions about the word "conflict," Galtung (2000) and Richetta and Wegenast (2025) viewed it as the incompatibility of goals among two or more parties, resulting in tension, crises, and sometimes violence among parties, states, or communities. Conflicts can occur between individuals, groups, and different positions in society. Others can be between different interests and beliefs, whether they have material existence or come into being only through discourse. Conflict also occurs between the same resource user group, such as one farming community and another, or between different user groups, such as herders and farmers (Momale, 2003; Atolagbe, 2024). These issues are significant because, as long as there is competition over the vital socioeconomic needs of individuals or groups, or over specific scarce resources, conflict is bound to occur. Land issues are vital resources that often result in conflicts among competing users (farmers and herders). A land conflict, therefore, can be understood as the misuse, restriction, or dispute over property rights to land (Imbush, 1999; Wehrmann, 2005; Alananga et al., 2024). The existence of two groups of incompatible land users in the same environment breeds competition and conflict, including inter-group, family, inter-personal, intra-personal, and farmer-herder conflicts, thereby calling for research intervention.

Li (2018), Shehu (2018), and Ioryue (2024) state that farmer-herder conflicts are rampant regarding resource use, mainly centred on land and water access and the struggle for grazing land. Abegunde (2011) and Obikaeze et al. (2023) itemised that environmental factors such as increased population, climate change, and poverty create avenues for conflict and its spread. However, customary and statutory land management systems have also been identified as a possible reason for the persistent conflict (Chikaire et al., 2017; Lamidi, 2025). Hence, a lasting solution to the conflict requires a clearer understanding of the root causes and the stakeholders' influence on farmer-herder land conflict over the years. The trend and pattern of the conflict within the country seem to suggest that most past government measures and research were carried out without the direct involvement of urban planners, who, by training, would have appropriately guided land allocation and management. The understanding thus far is based on very little information about the pattern of incidence and the socio-environmental effects of farmer-herder conflicts in Nigeria (Bolarinwa, 2007; Adebajo et al., 2014; Kums et al., 2024).

Literature has established that Southwestern Nigerians are the highest consumers of dairy products in sub-Saharan Africa (Bénard et al., 2010). The Oke-Ogun Region's guinea savannah landscape attracts herders from other local and international cattle-rearing regions. The nature of the land makes it suitable for crop farming and grazing, forming a natural habitat for pastoralists who would prefer to be located near the source of raw materials and markets. The presence of two groups in the same environment with incompatible land uses raises competition and conflicts, thereby calling for research intervention, and the stakeholders' influence on farmer-herder conflicts must be studied. The above discussions show that an explanation of the farmer-herder land conflicts in the form of the stakeholders' influence in the Oke-Ogun Region is overdue. Of importance to this study is the influence of stakeholders on farmer-herder land conflicts in the Oke-ogun region. This will provide information to help

policymakers develop a framework for effective land use planning and mitigate the menace of farmer-herder land conflicts, hence this study.

Studies on land conflict abound locally and internationally. These include Ofuoku and Isife (2009), Abegunde (2011), Abegunde (2014), and the International Crisis Group [ICG] (2017). Studies by Bolarinwa (2007), Adebajo et al. (2014), Abegunde (2014), Chikaire et al. (2017), and Atolagbe (2024) are most relevant to this study because they address the farmer-herder land conflict in Nigeria. Few of these studies that referred to the Oke-Ogun Region, Nigeria, were either solely on pastoralism or conflict-exclusive (Adebajo et al., 2014; Abegunde, 2014; Adebayo & Olaniyi, 2008). In addition, the indigenous studies focus on Nigeria's Middle Belt and North-Western zones. They also did not explore the influence of stakeholders on farmer-herder land conflicts. This current study, with a regional planning perspective, focuses on the Oke-Ogun Region in the Southwestern part of the country to bridge these gaps.

2.0 LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Grazing Reserves Law in Nigeria

The Grazing Reserves Act of 1964 was enacted to grant pastoralists access to grazing land, encourage sedentarisation, and address conflict, and it was meant to improve productivity and social amenities as well as improve the cattle market and control diseases (Awogbade, 1978; Ibrahim, 2012; Ingawa et al., 1989; Bella & Olanrewaju, 2024). This was an improvement on the previous Land Act of 1962. Further to this, the Land Use Act of 1978 granted citizens of Nigeria the right to live in any part of the country without hindrance, not as natives but as Nigerians (Rasak, 2011). By the provisions of this law, the Federal Government could redraw the boundaries between cattle routes, rangelands, and farmlands, as the case may be, to encourage the coexistence of various groups.

However, the level of implementation of the law was the problem, as the farmer-pastoralist conflict was not abated, and cattle production was significantly reduced. This led to the enactment of the National Agricultural Policy of 1988, which stipulated that at least 10% of the national territory, i.e., 9.8 million acres, should be allocated to grazing reserves.

However, the level of implementation was only 2.82 % (CIEL, 2006; Ibrahim, 2012; Amadi & Harrison, 2025). Then came the National Grazing Route and Reserve Commission Bill of 2011, which attempted to establish grazing routes and reserves across the 36 states and the FCT (Kumolu, 2014). Another attempt on 3 July 2012 was a bill titled "The National Grazing Route and Reserve Bill", presented to the Nigerian Senate for deliberation (Daily Trust, 2012). However, it failed to scale the third reading, as the Senators were divided over whether the Federal Government was constitutionally empowered to create grazing reserves and stock routes in any state of the Federation (World Bank, 2012). Public opinion, particularly among host communities, showed apprehension towards the legalisation of land grabbing and culture clashes between migrants and their hosts. Sedentarisation would have succeeded as another government animal-rearing method to resolve the farmer-herder conflict. RECANIGER (2009), however, shows that pastoral systems are 20% more productive. This is because sedentarisation requires considerable encouragement for pastoralists to settle in designated areas and to maintain field biomass intensively to avoid depletion.

Abegunde (2014) and Kums et al. (2024) also attempted to understand the causal factors and

the dynamics of resource conflicts in Africa. In an attempt to achieve this, a comparative analysis of the Niger Delta situation in Nigeria and the Marikana situation in South Africa was considered. The study concluded that Africa is endowed with diverse natural resources; however, it described the resources in the continent as more of a curse than a blessing as a result of the unabated violent resource conflicts leading to the loss of millions of lives, destruction of property worth billions of dollars, displacement of people and the emergence of refugee camps in the continent instead of enjoying the endowed resources. Furthermore, the study identified leadership failure, greed, grievances, the growing demand for natural resource benefits, and the increasing complexity of resource conflicts across the continent as factors that make their management and resolution more challenging. The study submitted that it is essential to adopt resource conflict resolution strategies to mitigate the menace of resource conflict.

Perhaps the most robust approach to the study of farmer-herder conflicts so far is the study by Mohammed et al. (2015) and Ioryue (2024), which assessed farmer-herder conflict in Nigeria using GIS. The study identified the challenges that have bedevilled pastoralism in Nigeria over the years, thereby reducing productivity and affecting the nation's economy. These include degraded grazing lands and the blockage of livestock pathways due to land use, urbanisation, and agricultural expansion. Population explosion and some ecological problems resulting from climate change have affected farmers and pastoralists. The eventual competition over land has led to conflict and strife. Faulty land tenure systems and delays in the justice system have also exacerbated the situation. Johnson *et al.* (2017), Atolagbe (2024), and Owolabi et al. (2025) also examined pastoralism as a new phase of terrorism in Nigeria. The study, therefore, analysed the causes, evolution, dynamics, and solutions to the conflicts arising from farmers-herders clashes in Nigeria. The study also recommended the formulation of a national livestock development policy, an effective community policing model, demarcation of livestock grazing reserves, provision of constitutional roles and recognition for traditional rulers, and the convening of stakeholders' conferences on nomadic pastoralism as strategies for ensuring peace. The importance of socio-economic attributes emphasised by these previous studies served as a point of reference and consideration in the present study.

3.0 METHODOLOGY

The study adopted a geographical case study and a mixed-methods approach to examine the prevalent factors influencing farmer-herder land conflicts.

3.1 The Study Area

The study area is the Oke Ogun Region of Oyo State, comprising the Atisbo, Oorelope, Iseyin, Itesiwaju, Kajola, Irepo, Olorunsogo, Iwajowa, Saki East, and Saki West Local Government Areas (LGAs). The study area is also known as the northern part of Oyo State. The region derived its name from its location in relation to the River Ogun. It is in the elevated and somewhat northern area of the River Ogun basin, hence its name. The people in this region are Yoruba, whose origins are linked to Ile-Ife, believed to be the ancestral home of all Yoruba peoples. The area lies between longitudes 2°31' and 4°20' E and latitudes 7°40' and 9°20' N of the Greenwich meridian (Olayiwola, Ajala & Sangodipe, 2014), with a total land area of 13,537 km² which presently represents about 60 per cent of Oyo State. The study area is bounded in the north by Kwara State, in the east by Osun State, in the south by Ogun State, and in the west by the Republic of Benin (Dahomey).

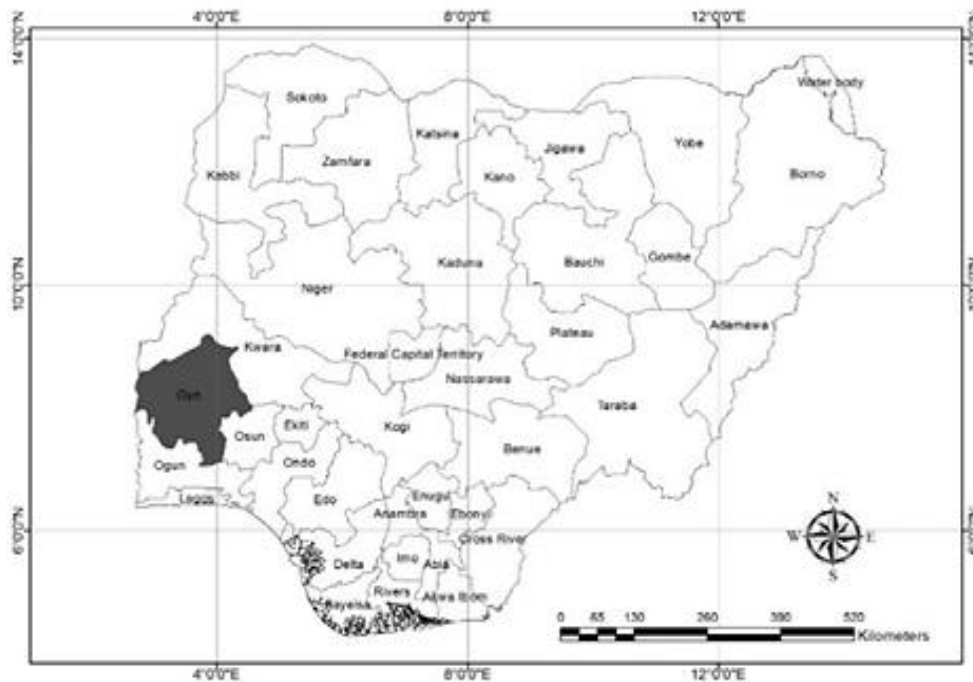


Fig. 1: Map of Oyo State in the context of Nigeria
Source: Co-operative Information Network (COPINE) (2024)

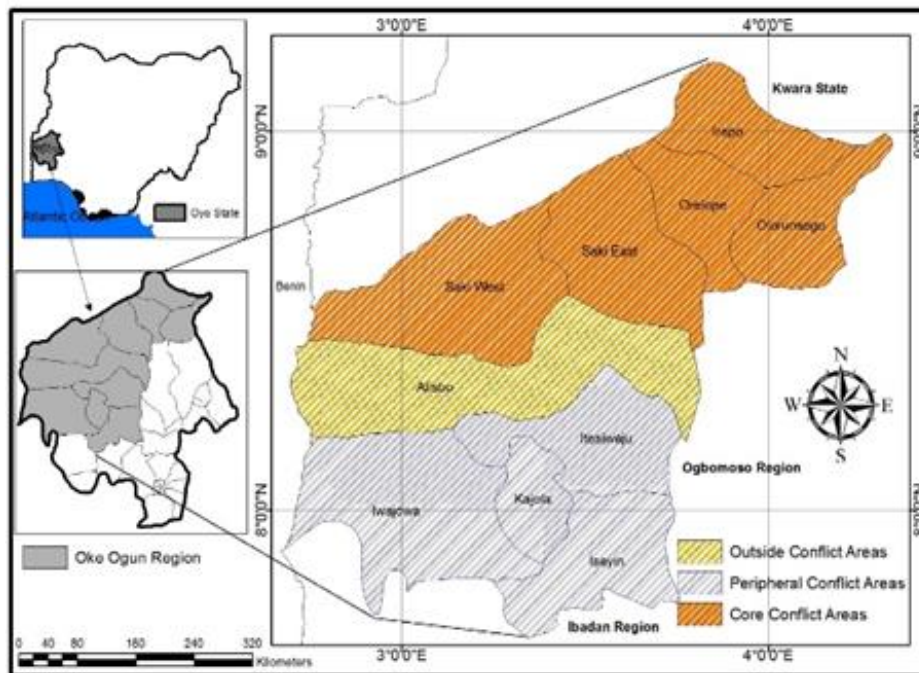


Fig. 2: Map of the Oke-Ogun Region
Source: Co-operative Information Network (COPINE) (2024)

3.2 Data Collection

Data collection was from both primary and secondary sources. Primary data were collected using a multistage sampling technique, with questionnaires administered to farmers and herders in the Oke-Ogun Region (OOR). The reconnaissance survey revealed that the incidence of farmer-herder land conflict (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-categorised by the number of buildings. They were classified as large (more than 100 buildings), medium (51-100 buildings), and small (fewer than 50 buildings). One in six communities in each category was systematically sampled. Thus, a total of 96 communities, comprising small (42), medium (32), and large (22), were selected. Physical observation 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 for questionnaire administration (277 to farmers and 258 to herders). Qualitative data were sourced through in-depth interviews (IDIs) with the overall leader of the farmers' and herders' community heads. Secondary data were sourced from the Ministry of Lands and Housing, Local Planning Authorities, Health Centres in the LGAs, Police Stations, and the Baptist Medical Centre, Saki. Data were analysed using correlation and regression analyses, and the chi-square test was employed to determine the relationships among the variables.

4.0 RESULTS

Findings are presented under the following subheadings.

4.1 Marginalisation along socio-cultural lines in the Oke-Ogun Region, Nigeria

The study revealed that the respondents in the small community types agreed with hate speeches and threat speeches from one religious or ethnic group to another, the preference for and initiation of laws that support one group over the other, an increase in the population of a religious or social group, and government or its agencies' support for one religious or ethnic group over the other with agreement RII's of 3.99, 3.86, 3.74, and 3.58 respectively, influence the occurrence of farmer-herder land conflict. The respondents also agreed that the proliferation of a single religious or ethnic group in the state and public affairs (3.43) and the restrictions placed on the activities of one group more than on the other (3.16) influenced farmer-herder land conflict (Table 1). With RII's of 4.01, 3.90, 3.79, and 3.57 respectively, the household representatives in the medium community type agree that hate speeches and threat speeches from one religious or ethnic group to another, the preference for and initiation of laws that support one group over the other, an increase in the population of a religious or social group, and government or its agencies' support for one religious or ethnic group over the other influence farmer-herder conflict in the Oke-Ogun Region. Whereas the respondents in the medium community type also agreed that the proliferation of a single religious or ethnic group in state and public affairs (3.43) and the restrictions placed on the activities of one group over the other (3.14) influenced farmer-herder land conflict.

Similarly, in the large community types in the Oke-Ogun Region, respondents agree that hate speeches and threat speeches from one religious or ethnic group to another (3.98), the preference for and initiation of laws that support one group over the other (3.91), an increase in the population of a religious or social group (3.79), and government or its agencies' support for one religious or ethnic group over the other (3.62) influence farmer-herder land conflict within the area. The household representatives in the large community types in the Oke-Ogun Region agree that the proliferation of a single religious or ethnic group in the state and public affairs (3.44) and the restrictions placed on the activities of one group over another (3.18) influence farmer-herder land conflicts within the area.

Table 1: Factors of Marginalisation along Socio-Cultural Lines in the Three Community Types of the Oke-Ogun Region, Nigeria

Marginalisation along socio-cultural lines	Community types											
	small				medium				large			
	N	Sum	RII	<i>Dmn</i>	N	Sum	RII	<i>Dmn</i>	N	Sum	RII	<i>Dmn</i>
Hate speeches and threat speeches	90	359.00	3.99	0.36	197	789.00	4.01	0.37	245	976.00	3.98	0.33
Preference and initiation of laws that support one group over the other	90	347.00	3.86	0.23	197	770.00	3.91	0.27	245	959.00	3.91	0.26
Increase in the population of a religious or social group	90	337.00	3.74	0.11	196	743.00	3.79	0.15	244	924.00	3.79	0.14
Government or its agencies support for one religious or ethnic group over the other	90	322.00	3.58	-0.05	197	703.00	3.57	-0.07	245	886.00	3.62	-0.03
Proliferation of solely a religious or ethnic group in state and public affairs	90	309.00	3.43	-0.20	197	676.00	3.43	-0.21	245	843.00	3.44	-0.21
Restrictions placed on activities of one group than the other	90	284.00	3.16	-0.47	194	610.00	3.14	-0.50	244	777.00	3.18	-0.51
Mean				3.55			3.65				3.65	

(*N*- Sample Size; *RII* – Rate of Influencing Index; *Dmn* – Deviation about the Mean)

Source: Author's Field Work (2024).

Factors Influencing Farmer-herder Land Conflict in the Oke-Ogun Region, Nigeria

This study therefore provides a broader socio-political perspective on the human factors influencing the occurrence of farmer-herder land conflicts, especially in the Oke-Ogun Region. These factors were delineated into six segments: marginalisation along socio-cultural lines, political legitimacy and elections, globalisation and perceived civilisation or westernisation, religious extremism, poverty and economic deprivation, and state failure. Each segment has several variables to which respondents responded. The representatives in each community type rated their agreement levels with the influence of the identified factors on farmer-herder land conflicts in the Oke-Ogun Region. The agreement indices were examined using a five-point Likert scale, namely: 5- strongly agree; 4- agree; 3- agree; 2- disagree; 1- strongly disagree.

Generally, in the Oke-Ogun Region, the agreement RII of hate speeches and threat speeches from one religious or ethnic group to another (3.99), and the preference for and initiation of laws that support one group over the other (3.90), revealed that the respondents agree that they influence farmer-herder land conflict (Figure 1). Also, the agreement RII of an increase in the population of a religious or social group (3.78), and government or its agencies' support for one religious or ethnic group over the other (3.59) showed that the household representatives agree that they influence farmer-herder land conflict within the area. However, the RII on the proliferation of a single religious or ethnic group in the state and public affairs (3.43) and the restrictions placed on the activities of one group over another (3.16) revealed that respondents agreed that these factors influence farmer-herder land conflict in the region.

Political Legitimacy and Elections Category

The identified factors influencing farmer-herder land conflict include situations where religious, social, or political groups do not see the current government in power as being legitimate, where the affairs of the state are not clearly separated from social, religious, and ethnic ties, where there is a general sense of political godfatherism influencing the affairs of the state and where the majority of the populace did not generally accept the results of previous elections. Others were post-election violence that was not properly contained and which degenerated over time; situations where opposing political parties sponsor conflicts to discredit the current government, and the political arming of youths for election violence.

As presented in Table 2, the study revealed that respondents in the small communities of the Oke-Ogun Region agreed that a general sense of political godfatherism influencing the affairs of the state (3.63), post-election violence that was not properly contained and which degenerated over time (3.63) the perception that some groups do not see the current government as legitimate (3.53) influence farmer-herder land conflict in the region. The respondents just agreed that factors such as opposing political parties sponsoring conflicts to discredit the current government (3.22) and the results of the previous elections not being generally accepted by the majority of the populace (3.21) influence the conflict. The other factors that respondents agreed influence the conflict were the political arming of youths for election-related violence (3.19) and the situation in which the affairs of the state are not clearly separated from social, religious, and ethnic ties (3.09).

Whereas the respondents in the medium community type agreed that a general sense of political godfatherism influencing the affairs of the state (3.64), religious, social, or political

groups not seeing the current government as legitimate (3.60) and post-election violence that was not properly contained and which degenerated over time (3.60) influenced farmer-herder conflict in the area. They however, just agreed that the farmer-herder land conflict was influenced by the political arming of youths for election violence (3.31), opposing political parties sponsoring conflicts to discredit the current government (3.25), the results of the previous elections not being generally accepted by the majority of the populace (3.24) and the affairs of the state not being clearly separated from social, religious, and ethnic ties (3.10).

On the other hand, respondents in the large community type in the Oke-Ogun Region agreed that the general sense of political godfatherism influencing the affairs of the state (3.68), religious, social, or political groups not seeing the current government as legitimate (3.65), and post-election violence that was not properly contained and which degenerated over time (3.64) influence farmer-herder land conflicts in the area. Other identified factors under the political legitimacy and elections category which the respondents just agreed influence farmer-herder land conflicts were the political arming of youths for election violence (3.43), the results of the previous elections not being generally accepted by the majority of the populace (3.24), opposing political parties sponsoring conflicts to discredit the current government (3.23) and the affairs of the state not being clearly separated from social, religious, and ethnic ties (3.06).

Overall in Oke-Ogun Region, the factor under the political legitimacy and elections which respondents most agreed influences farmer-herder land conflict, was the general sense of godfatherism influencing the affairs of the state (3.66). Others were post-election violence that was not adequately contained and which degenerated over time (3.62), and religious, social, or political groups not seeing the current government as legitimate (3.61). The factors which respondents just agreed influence the conflict were the political arming of youths for election violence (3.31), opposing political parties sponsoring conflicts to discredit the current government (3.24), the results of the previous elections not being generally accepted by the majority of the populace (3.24), and the affairs of the state not being clearly separated from social, religious, and ethnic ties (3.08)

Table 2: Factors of Political Legitimacy and Elections Influencing Farmer-herder Land Conflicts in the Oke-Ogun Region, Nigeria
(N- Sample Size; RII – Rate of Influencing Index; Dmn – Deviation about the Mean)

Factors of Political Legitimacy and Elections	Community Type													Oke-Ogun Region				
	Small				Medium				Large				N	Sum	RII	Dmn	Rank	
	N	Sum	RII	Dmn	N	Sum	RII	Dmn	N	Sum	RII	Dmn						
General sense of political godfatherism influencing affairs of state	90	327	3.63	0.28	197	717	3.64	0.25	245	901	3.67	0.26	532	1945	3.66	0.27	1	
Post-election violence that was not properly quenched and degenerated over time	90	327	3.63	0.28	196	705	3.60	0.21	245	895	3.65	0.24	530	1921	3.62	0.23	2	
Do not see the current government as legitimate	90	318	3.53	0.17	197	710	3.60	0.21	244	889	3.64	0.23	532	1923	3.61	0.22	3	
The conflict was influenced by the political arming of youths for election violence	90	287	3.19	-0.16	196	649	3.31	-0.08	244	816	3.34	-0.07	530	1752	3.31	-0.08	4	
Opposing political parties are sponsoring conflicts to discredit the current government	90	290	3.22	-0.13	197	641	3.25	-0.14	245	791	3.22	-0.19	532	1722	3.24	-0.15	5	
The result of the previous election was not generally accepted by the majority of the populace	90	289	3.21	-0.14	197	638	3.24	-0.15	245	794	3.24	-0.17	532	1721	3.23	-0.16	6	
Affairs of state are not clearly separated from social, religious, and ethnic ties	90	278	3.09	-0.27	197	611	3.10	-0.30	245	750	3.06	-0.31	532	1639	3.08	-0.33	7	
Mean			3.35				3.39				3.41				3.39			

Globalisation and Perceived Civilisation or Westernisation.

Under this category, as shown in Figure 3, household representatives in the small community type of the Oke-Ogun Region mostly agreed that westernisation and the idea of formal education mainly fueled the conflict (3.79). They just agreed on other factors, such as the Western way being harmful and negatively influencing local culture (3.30), religious values being eroded by Western practices (3.24), and state laws promoting more Western practices as more popular than local and religious laws (3.22). Others were that the global sharing of information and culture fueled the conflict (3.13) and that religious and social groups could no longer tolerate the state's adoption of Western laws (2.96).

The respondents in the medium community type of the Oke-Ogun Region agreed that westernisation and the idea of formal education especially fueled the conflict (3.81). They just agreed that factors such as the Western way being harmful and negatively influencing local culture (3.40), State laws promoting more Western practices over popular local and religious laws (3.35), and Westernisation threatening the values and norms of society (3.03) are problematic. Likewise, they agreed that the global sharing of information and culture fueled the conflict (3.18), that religious values were eroded by Western practices (3.15), and that religious and social groups could no longer tolerate Western laws adopted by the state (3.05).

Similarly, respondents in the large community type in the Oke-Ogun Region agreed that westernisation and the idea of formal education (3.84) influenced the farmer-herder conflict in the area. The respondents, however, agreed that the Western way is harmful and has a negative influence on local culture (3.46), that state laws promote more Western practices over popular local and religious laws (3.46). That westernisation threatens the values and norms of society (3.37). Furthermore, they agreed that the global sharing of information and culture fueled the conflict (3.19), that religious values were eroded by Western practices (3.15), and that religious and social groups could no longer tolerate Western laws adopted by the state (3.02).

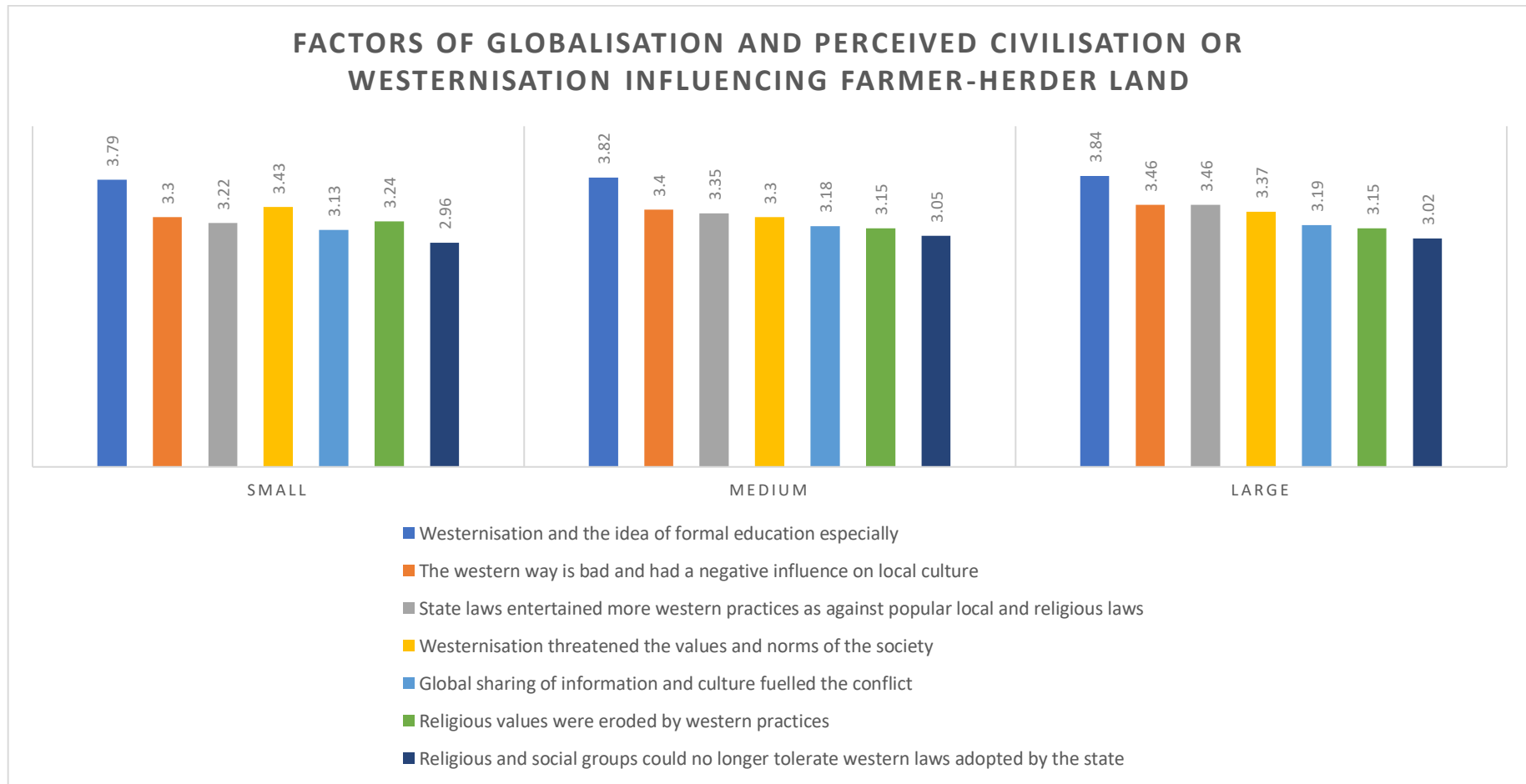


Fig. 3: Factors of Globalisation and Perceived Civilisation or Westernisation Influencing Farmer-herder Land in the Oke-Ogun Region, Nigeria
 Source: Author's Field Work (2024)

Thus, generally in the Oke-Ogun Region, westernisation and the idea of formal education, with an RII of 3.82, were agreed by respondents to influence the farmer-herder land conflict in the region (Figure 2). RII, while they just agreed that the Western way is harmful and has a negative influence on local culture (3.41), State laws promoting more Western practices over popular local and religious laws (3.38), and Westernisation threatening the values and norms of the society (3.36) are among the factors influencing farmer-herder land conflict in the Oke-Ogun Region. Others were the Global sharing of information and culture fueling the conflict (3.17), religious values were eroded by Western practices (3.16), and religious and social groups no longer tolerated Western laws adopted by the state (3.02). These findings indicate that the prevailing social cum existential conditions in the region tend to exacerbate and further strain the farmer-herder relationship. Nchi (2013: 229) states that "the social, economic, and political context fosters the violence." Nchi goes on to note that the rising rate of youth unemployment, political, economic, and cultural isolation, poverty, corruption, the breakdown of the family and its values, poor upbringing of children with no sense of restraint, and weak governmental institutions that have purposefully failed to prosecute perpetrators of prior violence, encouraging impunity, all contribute to the perpetuation of a cycle of violence.

Religious Extremism in the Oke-Ogun Region, Nigeria

The study revealed that respondents in the small community types agreed that religious extremists were growing in popularity, as indicated by the Relative Importance Index (RII) of 3.53, which influenced farmer-herder conflict in their area (Figure 4). However, they just agreed that the proliferation of religious schools (3.49), the increased campaigns against Western education (3.78), foreign religious groups sponsoring more local youths to learn extreme religious practices (3.3), and parents sending their children to more religious schools than Western education schools (3.23) influenced farmer-herder land conflicts.

The household representatives in the medium community types of the Oke-Ogun Region agreed that farmer-herder land conflicts were influenced by extreme teachings growing popular (3.58) and the proliferation of religious schools (3.53). They, however, just agreed that farmer-herder land conflicts were influenced by increased campaigns against Western education (3.35), foreign religious groups sponsoring more local youths to learn extreme religious practices (3.34), and parents sending their children to more religious schools than to Western education schools (3.17). Respondents in the large community types of the Oke-Ogun Region, as revealed in the study, agreed that land conflicts between farmers and herders were influenced by extreme teachings growing popular (3.62) and the proliferation of religious schools (3.53).

According to the study, the respondents in the large communities of the Oke-Ogun Region agreed that the farmer-herder land conflicts were influenced by the increased campaigns against Western education (3.41), foreign religious groups sponsoring more local youths to learn extreme religious practices (3.33), and parents sending their children to more religious schools than Western education schools (3.20). Thus, overall, as revealed in the study, extreme teachings growing in popularity (3.62) and the proliferation of religious schools (3.53) were factors under religious extremism that household representatives in the Oke-Ogun Region agreed influenced the farmer-herder land conflict. Whereas they just agreed that increased campaigns against Western education (3.41), Foreign religious groups sponsoring more local youths to learn extreme religious practices (3.33), and parents sending their children to more religious schools than Western education schools (3.20) influenced the farmer-herder land conflicts.

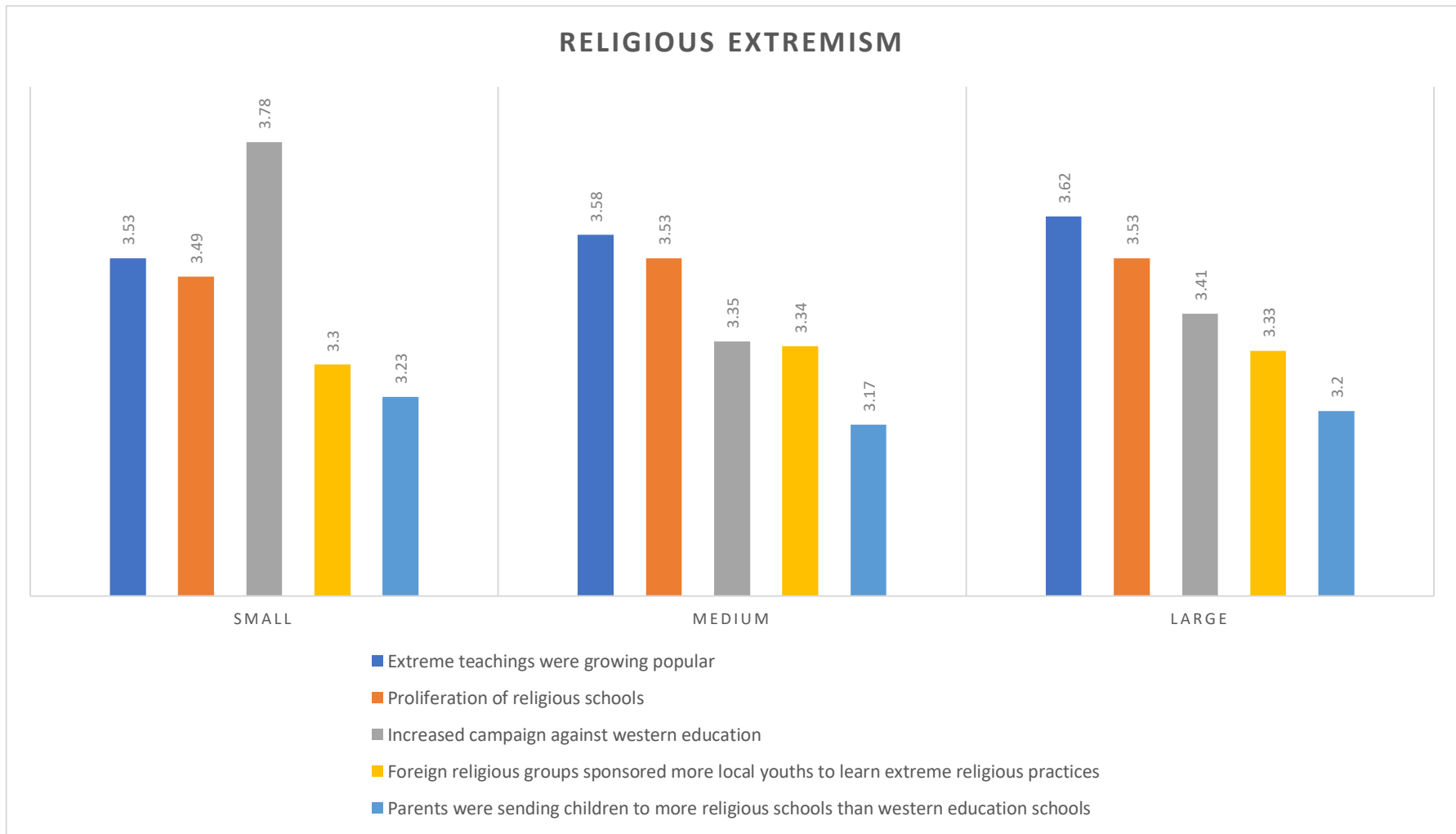


Fig. 4: Factors of Religious Extremism Influencing Farmer-herder Land Conflicts in Different Community Types in the Oke-Ogun Region
 Source: Author's Field Work (2024)

Poverty and Economic Deprivation in the Oke-Ogun Region, Nigeria

The study revealed that respondents in the small community type in the Oke-Ogun Region agreed that an increase in the population of the community without an equivalent increase in sources of livelihood, and a general perception of the unequal distribution of wealth, influenced the conflicts as depicted by the agreement RIIIs of 3.74 and 3.60, respectively (Table 3). Other factors that respondents agreed influenced farmer-herder conflicts were the proliferation of youth unemployment and idleness (3.48), a lower standard of living (3.46), and the state's failure to meet the economic needs of the people (3.34). Other factors included the loss of a general sense of hope (3.26), bandit groups promising better living conditions and greater rewards (3.25), and an increase in the number of street and out-of-school children (3.14).

Similarly, in the medium community type, the respondents agreed that an increase in the community's population without an equivalent increase in sources of livelihood (3.69) and a lower standard of living (3.55) encouraged conflicts. The respondents also agreed to the proliferation of youth unemployment and idleness (3.53) and a general perception of the unequal distribution of wealth (3.53). However, the state not meeting the economic needs of the people (3.44), the loss of a general sense of hope (3.30), bandit groups promising better living and more rewards (3.22) and an increase in the number of street and out-of-school children (3.08) were factors that household representatives just agreed influenced farmer-herder land conflicts in the medium community type in the Oke-Ogun Region.

Likewise, in the large community type, the respondents agreed that an increase in the population of the community without an equivalent increase in sources of livelihood (3.72), a general perception of the unequal distribution of wealth (3.52), the proliferation of youth unemployment and idleness (3.51), and a lower standard of living (3.50) stimulated conflicts. However, factors such as the state not meeting the people's economic needs and bandit groups promising better living and more rewards, with respondents' agreement RIIIs of 3.41 and 3.33, respectively, were just agreed upon by the representatives. Other factors were the loss of a general sense of hope (3.32) and an increase in the number of street and out-of-school children (3.14).

Generally, in the Oke-Ogun Region, as revealed in the study, an increase in the community population without an equivalent increase in sources of livelihood (3.72) was the factor most agreed upon by the sampled household representatives to influence farmer-herder land conflicts. They also agreed that a general perception of the unequal distribution of wealth, the proliferation of youth unemployment and idleness, and a lower standard of living encouraged conflicts, as reflected in RIIIs of 3.54, 3.51, and 3.51, respectively. The representatives, however, just agreed with factors such as the state not meeting the economic needs of the people (3.41), the loss of a general sense of hope (3.30), bandit groups promising better living and more rewards (3.28), and an increase in the number of street and out-of-school children under the poverty and economic category of factors influencing farmer-herder land conflicts.

Table 3: Poverty and Economic Deprivation Factors Influencing Farmer-herder Conflicts in the Community Types of the Oke-Ogun Region, Nigeria

	Community Types											
	Small				Medium				Large			
	N	Sum	RII	<i>Dmn</i>	N	Sum	RII	<i>Dmn</i>	N	Sum	RII	<i>Dmn</i>
The population of the community increased without an equivalent increase in sources of livelihood	90	337	3.74	0.33	198	730	3.69	0.27	245	911	3.72	0.29
A general perception of unequal distribution of wealth	89	320	3.60	0.19	198	703	3.55	0.13	245	863	3.52	0.09
Proliferation of youth unemployment and idleness	90	313	3.48	0.07	198	699	3.53	0.11	245	861	3.51	0.08
Lower standard of living encouraged conflicts	91	315	3.46	0.05	196	691	3.53	0.11	246	860	3.50	0.07
The state was not meeting the economic needs of the people	90	301	3.34	-0.07	196	675	3.44	0.02	246	840	3.41	-0.02
Loss of a general sense of hope	90	293	3.26	-0.15	198	654	3.30	-0.12	246	820	3.33	-0.10
Bandit groups promised better living and more reward	91	296	3.25	-0.16	198	638	3.22	-0.20	245	813	3.32	-0.11
The number of street and out-of-school children increased	91	286	3.14	-0.27	198	609	3.08	-0.34	246	772	3.14	-0.29
Mean			3.41				3.42				3.43	

State Failure

The study revealed that respondents in the small community type of the Oke-Ogun Region agreed that the perceived advantage given to one conflict party over another by state mediators and security officials contributed to farmer-herder land conflicts, as indicated by an RII of 4.09. Also, the variables further considered under this category include the lack of social amenities and government intervention (3.86), and the arrest and perceived unlawful detention of a religious group leader (3.77). Other factors were the improper handling and management, and the failure to resolve erupted inter-ethnic or inter-religious crises (3.65) and the proliferation of IDPs and the lack of care for them (3.65). However, respondents in the small community type in the region agreed that the flow of and support from global terrorist groups (3.48), corrupt practices by government officials (3.44), and the killing or perceived genocide carried out against a social or religious group (3.43) had influenced land conflicts in the area. Also, they just agreed with Porous borders and unchecked inflow and outflow of immigrants and emigrants (3.41), the unchecked proliferation and inflow of arms (3.16), and the uncontrolled crackdown on civilians by security operatives (3.00).

The household representatives in the medium community type mostly agreed with the perceived advantage given to one conflict party over another by state mediators and security officials (3.93). They also agreed that the arrest and perceived unlawful detention of a religious group leader (3.79), the Lack of social amenities and government intervention (3.74), the improper handling and management, and the failure to resolve erupted inter-ethnic or inter-religious crises (3.56). The flow of and support from global terrorist groups (3.55) contributed to the farmer-herder land conflict in the medium community type of the Oke-Ogun Region. Porous borders and unchecked inflow and outflow of immigrants and emigrants (3.43), corrupt practices by government officials (3.42), and the proliferation of IDPs and the lack of care for them (3.41) were just agreed upon by the respondents as contributing to farmer-herder conflicts in their area. Others included the Killing or perceived genocide carried out against a social or religious group (3.37), the unchecked proliferation and inflow of arms (3.16), and the uncontrolled crackdown on civilians by security operatives (3.03).

Likewise, respondents in the large community types agreed that the perceived advantages given to one conflict party over another by state mediators and security officials (3.90) and the lack of social amenities and government intervention (3.78) influenced farmer-herder land conflicts in the area. They also agreed that the arrest and perceived unlawful detention of a religious group leader (3.72), the flow of and support from global terrorist groups (3.55), the improper handling and management, and the failure to resolve erupted inter-ethnic or inter-religious crises (3.54) contributed to land conflicts in large communities in the Oke-Ogun Region. They, however, just agreed that corrupt practices by government officials (3.42), the proliferation of IDPs and the lack of care for them (3.40), and porous borders and unchecked inflow and outflow of immigrants and emigrants (3.38) influenced land conflicts. Other factors were the killing or perceived genocide carried out against a social or religious group (3.37), the unchecked proliferation and inflow of arms (3.13), and the uncontrolled crackdown on civilians by security operatives (3.00).

Overall, in the Oke-Ogun Region, the perceived advantage given to one conflict party over another by state mediators and security officials (3.94), the lack of social amenities and

government intervention (3.78), and the arrest and perceived unlawful detention of a religious group leader (3.76) were ranked highest on the respondents' agreement index under the state failure category of factors influencing farmer-herder land conflicts. The respondents agreed that the improper handling, management, and resolution of erupted inter-ethnic or inter-religious crises (3.57) and the flow and provision of support from global terrorist groups (3.54) are state-failure factors contributing to farmer-herder land conflicts. The respondents in the region, however, just agreed with corrupt practices by government officials (3.42), the proliferation of IDPs and the lack of care for them (3.41) and Porous borders and unchecked inflow and outflow of immigrants and emigrants (3.40) as state failure factors influencing farmer-herder land conflicts in the region. Other state failure factors contributing to farmer-herder land conflicts in the region were the killing or perceived genocide carried out against a social or religious group (3.35), the unchecked proliferation and inflow of arms (3.15), and the uncontrolled crackdown on civilians by security operatives (3.01).

The perceived advantage given to a conflict party over the other by state mediators and security officials contributes to the farmer-herder land conflicts as depicted by an agreement RII of 4.09 (Figure 5). Also, the variables further considered under this category include: the lack of social amenities and government intervention (3.86) and the arrest and perceived unlawful detention of a religious group leader (3.77). Other factors were the improper handling and management, and the failure to resolve erupted inter-ethnic or inter-religious crises (3.65) and the proliferation of IDPs and the lack of care for them (3.65). However, respondents in the small community type in the region just agreed that the flow of and support from global terrorist groups (3.48), corrupt practices by government officials (3.44), and the killing or perceived genocide carried out against a social or religious group (3.43) influenced land conflicts in the area. Also, they just agreed with Porous borders and unchecked inflow and outflow of immigrants and emigrants (3.41), the unchecked proliferation and inflow of arms (3.16), and the uncontrolled crackdown on civilians by security operatives (3.00).

The household representatives in the medium community type mostly agreed with the perceived advantage given to one conflict party over another by state mediators and security officials (3.93). They also agreed that the arrest and perceived unlawful detention of a religious group leader (3.79), the lack of social amenities and government intervention (3.74), the improper handling, management and the failure to resolve erupted inter-ethnic or inter-religious crises (3.56). The flow of and support from a global terrorist group (3.55) contributed to the farmer-herder land conflict in the medium community type of the Oke-Ogun Region. Porous borders and unchecked inflow and outflow of immigrants and emigrants (3.43), corrupt practices by government officials (3.42), and the proliferation of IDPs and the lack of care for them (3.41) were just agreed upon by the respondents as contributing to the farmer-herder conflicts in their area. Others included the Killing or perceived genocide carried out against a social or religious group (3.37), the unchecked proliferation and inflow of arms (3.16), and the uncontrolled crackdown on civilians by security operatives (3.03)

Likewise, respondents in the large community types agreed that the perceived advantage given to one conflict party over another by state mediators and security officials (3.90) and the lack of social amenities and government intervention (3.78) influenced farmer-herder

land conflicts in the area. They also agreed that the arrest and perceived unlawful detention of a religious group leader (3.72), the flow of and support from global terrorist groups (3.55), the improper handling and management, and the failure to resolve erupted inter-ethnic or inter-religious crises (3.54) contributed to land conflicts in large communities in the Oke-Ogun Region. They, however, just agreed that corrupt practices by government officials (3.42), the proliferation of IDPs and the lack of care for them (3.40), and porous borders and unchecked inflow and outflow of immigrants and emigrants (3.38) influenced land conflicts. Other factors were the killing or perceived genocide carried out against a social or religious group (3.37), the unchecked proliferation and inflow of arms (3.13), and the uncontrolled crackdown on civilians by security operatives (3.00).

Overall, in the Oke-Ogun Region, the perceived advantage given to one conflict party over another by state mediators and security officials (3.94), the lack of social amenities and government intervention (3.78) and the arrest and perceived unlawful detention of a religious group leader (3.76) were ranked highest on the respondents' agreement index under the state failure category of factors influencing farmer-herder land conflicts. The respondents agreed that the improper handling and management, the failure to resolve erupted inter-ethnic or inter-religious crises (3.57), and the flow of and support from global terrorist groups (3.54) constituted state failure factors contributing to the farmer-herder land conflicts. The respondents in the region, however, just agreed with corrupt practices by government officials (3.42), the proliferation of IDPs and the lack of care for them (3.41) and Porous borders and unchecked inflow and outflow of immigrants and emigrants (3.40) as state failure factors influencing farmer-herder land conflicts in the region. Other state failure factors contributing to farmer-herder land conflicts in the region were the killing or perceived genocide carried out against a social or religious group (3.35), the unchecked proliferation and inflow of arms (3.15), and the uncontrolled crackdown on civilians by security operatives (3.01).

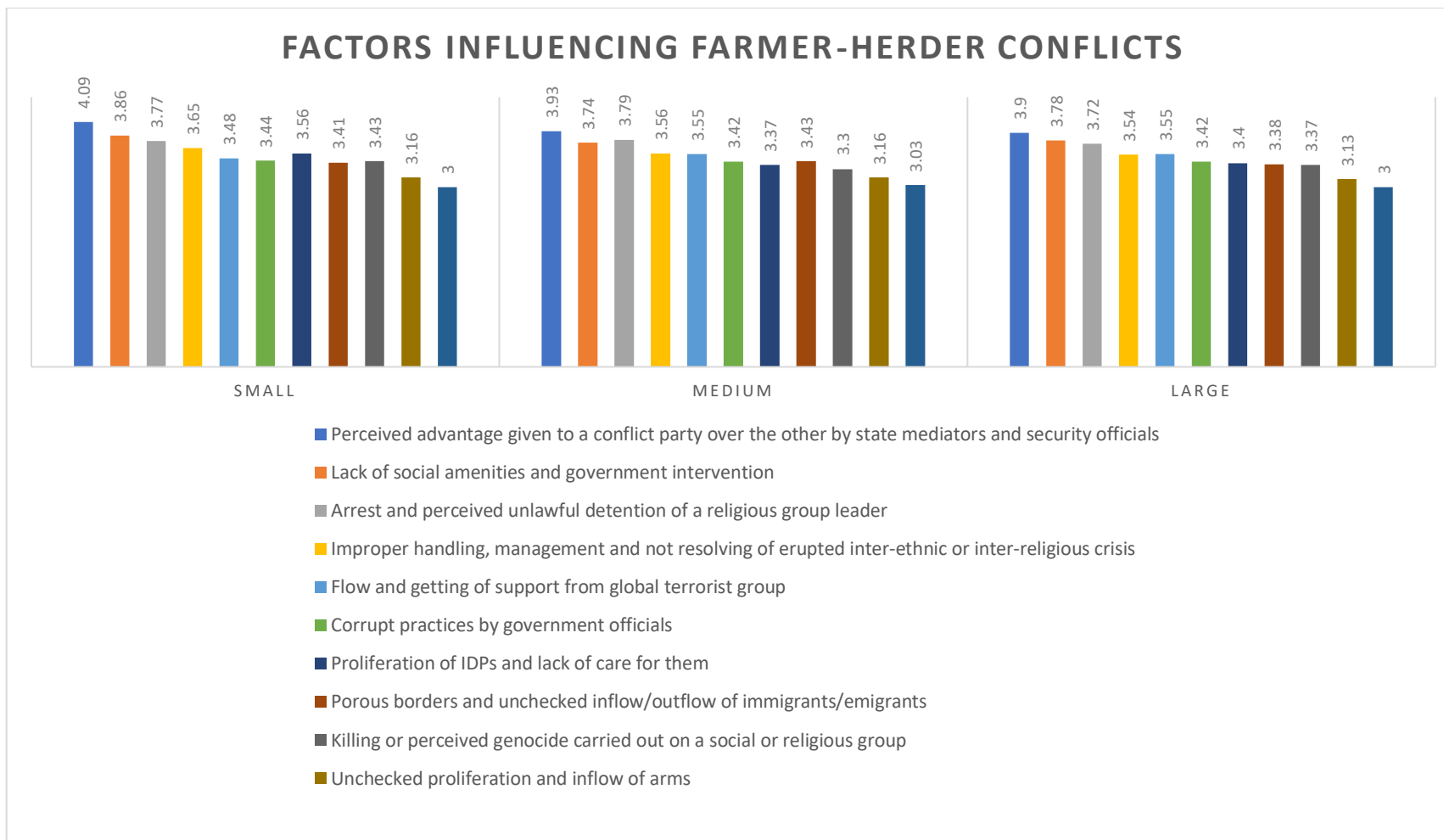


Fig. 5: State Failure Factors Influencing Farmer-herder Conflicts in the Community Types of the Oke-Ogun Region, Nigeria

6.0 CONCLUSION

The findings of this study revealed that the causes of farmer-herder land conflicts in the region are rooted in land administration and conflict resolution. These include political factors, socio-cultural and environmental factors, religious extremism factors, socio-economic related factors, and stakeholder factors. It also reveals the underlying issues of land resource sharing and the effects these issues may have on the eruption of conflict. The weaknesses of the government are evidently, though indirectly, revealed in cases where conflicts have been reported, particularly the government's and its agencies' inability to promptly and adequately manage conflicts through conflict resolution methods or procedures acceptable to all parties. In relation to a conflict, favouritism towards one party and marginalisation of the other were often observed.

Recommendations

Based on the conclusion of this study, it was generally established that factors influencing farmer-herder land conflicts include political, socio-cultural, environmental, religious extremism, socio-economic, and stakeholder factors, among others. In the Oke-Ogun Region, the situation arises from competition for land resources and the existence of two incompatible land uses (crop farming and open grazing), which often result in conflicts among the parties involved. To prevent or reduce the recurrence of farmer-herder conflict in the Oke-Ogun Region and beyond, this study recommends the review and harmonisation of land-use law and administration. With this, all land laws in the region and the country at large would be harmonised, and all stakeholders should agree upon a single administrator, whose role should be enshrined in law to guide land use and administration.

Furthermore, there should be sustainable conflict resolution strategies and a reduction in marginalisation. This will encourage all stakeholders – government, NGOs, traditional institutions, among others - to intensify efforts to build cooperation and peaceful coexistence between farmers and herders through public enlightenment, education, and campaigns in the region. Sensitisation of stakeholders, including farmers and herders, to the need for mutual coexistence and peace is essential. This would help to forestall needless provocations and opportunistic violence.

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