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**FARMER-HERDER CONFLICTS AND SECURITY MANAGEMENT IN NIGERIA: A  
STUDY OF OYO STATE**

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**Abstract**

The paper discusses the farmer-herder conflicts in Oyo State, Nigeria, between 2011 and 2023, the causes of the conflicts, security management, and the effectiveness of the security management in curbing violence. Farmer-herder conflicts are a complex security and development problem that is mainly fuelled by the competition of the remaining natural resources such as land and water which is worsened by the degradation of the environment, population growth and the breakdown of the traditional conflict management systems. The focus of this paper is on three local government areas, Ibarapa North, Iseyin, and Afijio, which represent different socio-ecological settings and conflict dynamics. The paper uses Frustration-Aggression Theory to understand the role of blocked socio-economic goals in promoting aggression and Security Governance Theory to comprehend the changing multi-actor and multi-level security management system. The study synthesises secondary data based on various academic and policy sources using a qualitative systematic literature review methodology. Results indicate that state initiatives, such as the formation of local security outfits such as Amotekun and the Oodua People Congress, and anti-open grazing legislation have not been effective in preventing conflicts because of ineffective coordination, institutional flaws, corruption, and non-inclusivity in policymaking. Violent confrontations have also led to huge economic losses, displacement, and social fragmentation. The paper concludes that sustainable peace in Oyo State requires integrative security governance that incorporates enhanced land management, participatory governance, community-based conflict management, and socio-economic development programmes. It is a comprehensive remedy that is required in the rebuilding of confidence between farmers and herders and sustainable stability in the area.

**Keywords:** *Farmer-Herder Conflict, Security, Security Management, Oyo State, Resource Competition, Amotekun, Conflict Resolution*



## **Introduction**

Farmer-herder conflict in Nigeria is one of the most endemic security and development issues in the country, and its effects on the national cohesion, food security, and livelihoods of rural people are immense. These conflicts, mainly between the settled agricultural societies and the nomadic herders, have been growing out of proportions in the last 20 years. Since 1999, this violence has taken the lives of more than 19,000 people and displaced hundreds of thousands of people, becoming one of the deadliest communal conflicts in Nigeria since the Boko Haram insurgency (Brottem, 2021; Ogunbode et al., 2023). The wars are attributed to a number of factors including competition over resources, demographic factors, environmental changes, the failure of traditional conflict management systems, and the proliferation of small arms (Nassef et al., 2023). In addition, population growth and agricultural development in Nigeria have aggravated these conflicts by shrinking pasturelands and pushing herder southwards, where they come into direct contact with farming communities.

The South-West region, especially Oyo State, has become a major hot spot of conflict. The strategic position of Oyo has made it a major transit point of migrating herders, which has increased competition with local farmers. The Nextier SPD Violent Conflict Database shows that in the year before September 2021, 25% of farmer-herder incidents were recorded in the South-West, with Oyo recording some of the worst clashes. The violence has led to crop destruction, loss of livestock, displacement, and economic disruption (Adewuyi & Odeh, 2024). These conflicts and the policy reactions, such as the activities of the Oodua People Congress (OPC) local militia group, anti-open grazing legislation, and the Amotekun security outfit, explain the choice of Oyo State. However, the effectiveness of these interventions remains questionable.

In Oyo State, three Local Government Areas have been chosen as case studies, and they are Ibarapa North, an agrarian region with high levels of clashes; Iseyin, a region with high crop production and a crossroad of various ethnic groups; and Afijio, a region with high pressure of urbanisation and a microcosm of the overall problems of Oyo. These regions are different socio-ecological settings, which can shed light on different manifestations and causes of conflicts. Thus, the paper will assess the different security management strategies that have been adopted at the state and local levels such as legal, institutional, and community-based strategies and evaluate their effectiveness and limitations based on a thorough literature review.



### **Statement of the Problem**

Farmer-herder conflicts have emerged as one of the most urgent security issues in the various regions of Nigeria. It has intensified in the last decades with repeated violent conflicts, and cases of murders, abductions, slaughtering of cows and destruction of farmlands. The different local governments units within the three Senatorial District of Oyo North, Oyo Central and Oyo South have been entrenched in the unrelenting violence of farmer-herder warfare. The Ibarapa region in particular has remained a major security challenge. On December 11, 2020, a high-profile farmer and politician in Igangan, Ibarapa North, Dr. Fatai Aborode was allegedly attacked and killed by suspected herders on his way back to his farm (Adebayo, 2021).

In addition, Agunbiade (2021) reported that three individuals, including a woman and two children, were killed in a reprisal attack on nomadic herder communities by youths in Iganga, Ibarapa North of Oyo State. Alhaji Usman Okebi, who was reportedly the deputy Sarkin Fulani of Oyo State, and Abdullahi Usman, a nomadic herder, were also killed during the wars (Aliyu (2021).

In January 2021, in Igangan, Ibarapa North, Tajudeen Omideyi, also described how his brother was beheaded after he challenged herders who were reportedly harvesting cashew seeds on his farm without authorization (Oladosu et al., 2025).

Likewise, the cases of farmer-herder conflicts are chronic in Iseyin and Afijio local government areas. The neighbouring countries have added fuel to the conflicts by the influx of migrant herders through the border areas around Iseyin where violence has been experienced by destroying crops and physically attacking people in some cases. In addition, the Afijio local government area, where the Ibarapa and Oyo zones meet, is a transit area of migrating pastoralists, especially during the dry season, which is another factor in the frequent contact between herders and indigenous farmers (Adigun, 2022). More than 70 cases of farmer-herder violence have been reported in Oyo State between 2014 and 2019, and Afijio is a conflict-prone area that is becoming a victim of land-use pressure (Adigun, 2022). The human price of the farmer-herder war is also horrific, with up to 14,300 displaced in the conflict hotspots of Oyo since 2020 and agricultural losses estimated at more than N23.7 billion per year (Luka and Piwunan, 2024).

Oodua People's Congress (OPC) and Amotekun security outfit have risen to the occasion of security management in the South West region of Nigeria in response to the increasing violence in the region as the Federal security agencies such as the Police and Army have failed to proactively



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deploy to the remote areas that are facing the time-tested challenges of farmer-herder conflict among others in Oyo State (Olagunju, 2020; Adeola, 2020). The collaboration between OPC, Amotekun security outfit and the Nigeria Police Force led to the seizure of up to 189 illegal weapons at the Oyo borders in 2021-2023 (Luka & Piwuna, 2024). The continued existence of farmer-herder conflicts in the Ibarapa, Iseyin and Afijio local government areas despite the intervention of OPC and Amotekun security outfit casts serious doubts on the effectiveness of these security outfits.

Thus, this paper discussed how the security structures, which are a combination of the state-sponsored Amotekun Security apparatus and the non-state OPC grassroots militancy, have transformed conflict management in Oyo State between 2011 and 2023. It not only examined the causes of the farmer-herder conflicts in the Ibarapa North, Iseyin and Afijio Local Government Areas of Oyo State but also examined the degree to which the OPC and Amotekun have been involved in the management of the farmer-herder conflicts in the areas. Similarly, it examines the difficulties encountered by these groups in their attempts to resolve the conflicts, and reflect on what measures can be implemented to better solve farmer-herder conflicts in the area. In essence, the paper critically analysed the operational synergies and tensions of these security models, their operations, performance, and challenges in managing the conflicts.

## **Conceptual and Theoretical Review of Literature**

### **Concept of Farmer-Herder Conflicts**

The problem of farmer-herder conflicts in Nigeria is historical, ecological, socio-economic, and political in nature that has rendered it to be a complex and multifaceted problem of the modern era. At the heart of most academic views is the acknowledgment that the main cause of these conflicts is the competition over limited natural resources, particularly arable land and water, between mostly sedentary farming communities and nomadic or semi-nomadic pastoralist herders (Okibe, 2024; UN Human Security Programme, 2024). Environmental degradation, population increase and climate change have further increased this resource competition by decreasing the availability of fertile land and water in the north, which compel herders to move further south where farming communities live. Although this ecological framing is the core of the physical causes of conflict, it runs the risk of reducing farmer-herder relations to resource-based conflicts, overlooking important socio-political and identity factors that lead to tensions.



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Other scholars have criticized the frequent use of the term “farmer-herder conflict” as a simplification of a historically symbiotic relationship into a dichotomy (Crisis Group, 2023; Young, 2024). In the past, according to Kratli and Toulmin (2020), farming and herding communities were involved in mutually advantageous interactions, such as exchanging milk products with cereals, and sharing land through systems like the burti system that was created during the colonial period. It was also clarified that, the disintegration of such traditional systems, especially since the 1970s when farmers started to assert their claims over land, is a major turning point in the intensification of conflicts. The criticism here is that, by presenting the issue as a warfare narrative, these peaceful interactions and the potential to coexist are obscured, and ethnic and religious stereotypes are reinforced, since most herders are Muslim and farmers are more likely to be Christian, which only serves to further divide. In certain accounts, this ethnic-religious overlay has been directly politicised, and ethnic cleansing or genocide has been loudly denied in recent years, making purely resource-based explanations more difficult (Nlewem & Akhagba, 2024).

Research has also pointed out that, farmer-herder conflicts in Nigeria are geographically growing and escalating. The Middle Belt states remain the epicenters, yet cases have been reported in southwestern and southeastern regions, and thus challenging the earlier assumptions of the conflict being confined to northern Nigeria (Yamusa, 2022; Mohammed and Zango, 2024). Statistical evidence demonstrates that hundreds of violent conflicts take place every year and frequently lead to thousands of deaths, injuries, displacement, and human insecurity (ReliefWeb, 2021; MSF, 2020). This empirical data supports the thesis statement that the conflict is no longer episodic, but a structural problem with far-reaching social and economic implications, such as food insecurity, internal displacement, and disintegration of communal relations (Egbule & Okonta, 2024). Nevertheless, credibility and framing of incident information also have their own drawbacks, including the possibility of underreporting victims or the necessity to present one side of the conflict as aggressors, which can lead to the strengthening of prejudices and the inability to resolve conflicts (Okibe, 2024).

The literature has repeatedly cited security and governance failures as contributing factors. The failure of the Nigerian state to effectively control land use conflicts, enforce laws, or offer sufficient protection to vulnerable communities enables tensions to run out of control (Ugwueze



© *Journal of Political Science and Policy Studies Vol. 2 No 2 (Feb, 2026)* et al., 2022; Adepoju et al., 2024;). The gap in governance is being bridged by faith-based organisations (FBOs) and civil society, which offer humanitarian aid and promote peaceful coexistence (ReliefWeb, 2021). However, researchers such as Kumalo et al. (2023) and Deneelin et al. (2024) have warned that such initiatives will not be enough without institutional changes that would include land tenure, equal resource allocation, and interethnic trust-building. The issue with this is that most state reactions are based on security crackdowns or open grazing prohibitions, which can be reactive and short-term, which can only serve to increase grievances and contribute to violence cycles.

### **Concept of Security Management in Nigeria**

Security management in Nigeria is a multidimensional and dynamic concept that is representative of the historical, institutional, and socio-political realities of the country. The traditional conceptualisation places security management as the systematic, long-term endeavour to defend the citizens and the state against threats like crime, insurgency, terrorism, banditry, and communal violence by using security forces and agencies (Akinbobola, 2014; Phenson et al., 2014). The Nigerian Constitution of 1999 places the federal government with the primary role of creating, financing, and managing the military, paramilitary, and law enforcement machinery required to maintain security. However, an increasing number of researchers stress that security management nowadays is much broader than formal state actors: it now includes private security agencies, local vigilante organisations, NGOs, and civil society as important collaborators in response to the increasing threats and the ongoing gaps in state capacity (Phenson et al., 2014; Alumona, 2019). This development can be likened to the backdrop of contemporary theories such as the sectoral approach by Buzan which recognizes the presence of layered responsibilities at the individual, societal, and governmental levels.

Analysis of available literatures has revealed that, the Nigeria security management system is plagued by systemic weakness such as lack of synergy and coordination among the many security agencies, overlapping mandates, operational inefficiency, and endemic corruption (Olofin, 2020; Phenson et al., 2014). Instead of enhancing the ability of the state to provide public safety, the proliferation of agencies tends to create competition, waste of resources, and policy conflicts. Other observers explain this fragmentation by the legacies of colonial-era security institutions that emphasised coercion and centralised control over community-based or preventive security



© *Journal of Political Science and Policy Studies Vol. 2 No 2 (Feb, 2026)* measures (Olofin, 2020; Kamarck, 2024). Although there have been many reforms, such as the professionalisation of police and civil defence forces, and the incorporation of human rights principles, these reforms have not resulted in a coherent and flexible security management regime that can manage complex and asymmetric threats. Efforts to improve agency motivation, equipment, and training are common but often poorly implemented or sabotaged by structural problems that go deep.

The re-conceptualization of security management as integrative and collective, with short-term, reactive responses and long-term, preventive actions, is one of the most striking perspectives of the modern age (Achumba et al., 2013). The so-called security strategic management approach requires all stakeholders, including state and non-state, to be involved in the diagnosis of root causes of insecurity (such as socioeconomic deprivation, land disputes, and corruption) as well as aggressive deterrence and response to criminal actors (Robert-Okah, 2014). This two-way model has been acclaimed to mediate between social justice and development and operational security as an alternative to the purely militarised or punitive models. However, the practical issue is that real stakeholder integration is complicated by mistrust, lack of civil control, and a history of exclusionary security policymaking, so that most collaborative efforts either stall or degenerate into piecemeal action.

Security management standards are provided by laws and regulations, involving governmental and non-governmental participants. With the establishment of the Nigerian Security and Civil Defence Corps and the implementation of the Private Guard Companies Act (NCDC, 2023), the accountability, ethical behaviour, and operational standards are likely to be met. Nevertheless, it is not a universal rule, and the development of the private security sector in particular is criticised due to the inconsistency of the vetting process and a broad range of professional norms (Kostara, 2021). Meanwhile, security management has been subjected to a risk management paradigm to enable the systematic analysis of threats and vulnerabilities and resource distribution and contingency planning (Titus, 2025). These practise have a potential, but in the context of Nigeria, they often fail because of the political interference, lack of resources, and insufficient data to conduct a thorough risk evaluation and evidence-based planning.



## **Nexus Between Farmer-Herder Conflicts and Security Management in Nigeria**

The farmer-herder tensions and security management in Nigeria is the best example of the convergence of resource-based conflicts, profound societal divisions, and institutional weakness of the state. Scholarship has always found that the escalation of these conflicts, particularly in the past ten years, has been both a cause and an effect of deep-seated security dilemmas confronting the Nigerian state. The fact that the process of development is nullified by the fact that the farmer-herder conflicts destroy lives, displacing people and causing food insecurity, and the trust that holds the communities together, makes them harmful to the stability of the country (Bello et al., 2022).

By extension, these wars put a great strain on the flexibility and integrity of security management policies, which are already strained to the limit by the multiplicity of internal stressors in Nigeria. A number of studies highlight that the traditional understanding and application of security management in Nigeria have failed to meet the challenge of the changing nature of farmer-herder violence (Nwozor et al., 2021; Yamusa, 2022; Nwosu et al., 2025). The war has frequently involved the military, police, and civil defence agencies, and has been distracted by other pressing demands, and has been structurally incapable of responding to multiple security threats at once (Bako et al., 2024). The excessive use of reactive deployments, including the creation of special security task forces and the occasional application of military interventions, though providing a short-term solution, rarely provides a long-term solution. Rather, they occasionally result in resentment, violence, and impunity culture within the framework of weak or absent justice systems (International Crisis Group, 2018).

Policy interventions such as anti-open grazing laws and creation of grazing reserves have also contributed to further clarification of the nexus between conflict and security management. These policies will prevent violence and control land use, yet they will also result in a backlash and distrust, particularly between communities with a history of coexistence and resource sharing (International Crisis Group, 2018). Critics note that such strategies can make pastoralist groups outsiders, even though they have long been residents, and can actually increase conflicts rather than reducing them. Furthermore, local peace efforts, community-based peace efforts, and mediation efforts have been partially successful but are usually sabotaged by deep mistrust,



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selective enforcement of the law, or non-state support (Awofisayo & Adeniyi, 2025). This is a sign of a historic disjuncture between legislative intent and reality on the ground.

The proliferation of the small arms, the infiltration of the rural territories by the criminals, and the annihilation of the old systems of controlling the conflicts complicate the security management even further. In other places, communities have turned to vigilantism or ethnic militias because they feel that state security services are not effective or biased enough to address local insecurities and retaliatory cycles (Joab-Peterside, 2020; Vahyala, 2021). These developments reflect the adaptive disintegration of national security institutions and suggest the need to decentralise and community-based security models that can address localised conflict configurations.

Some of the impacts of the strain of farmer-herder conflicts on the security architecture of Nigeria include the economic losses, low agricultural production, and human suffering. The destabilising impact is deeper, as it is manifested in the crystallisation of ethnic and religious boundaries, destruction of property and infrastructure, and mass migrations, making it difficult to build the state and developmental ambitions (Ioryue, 2024). The security management responses have thus been oscillating between proactivity and reactivity, but in most instances without the benefit of multi-stakeholder holistic engagement that incorporates the multi-voices and multi-interests in the development of sustainable solutions (Joab-Peterside, 2020).

### **Farmer-Herder Conflict and Security Management in Nigeria**

Security management and farmer-herder conflict in Nigeria is a complex and expanding phenomenon that has drawn the attention of many scholars and policymakers. The cause of the conflict is the nature of the struggle of the scarce natural resources such as land and water aggravated by the climatic changes, population pressures and socio-political factors such as poor governance and ethnic tensions (Bello et al., 2025; Adejoh et al., 2025). These historical conflicts have been transformed into violent conflicts particularly in the Middle Belt and some parts of the Southwest that have resulted in massive displacement, loss of lives and low agricultural productivity which are some of the major determinants that have contributed to the increase in food insecurity in Nigeria (Alobo & Omenka, 2025).

Security management in Nigeria, which is charged with the responsibility of responding to such conflicts, has not been able to keep up with the changing nature and magnitude of violence. The government policies have been more reactive, which involves short-term military interventions,



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task forces, and policy prescriptions like establishment of grazing reserves and anti-open grazing laws (Bello et al., 2025). Regardless of these interventions, the reactions have been largely condemned as symptomatic, and not causal, absence of effective conflict resolution procedures, and in some cases, a source of grievances due to perceived bias or non-implementation (Ejim, 2019). In fact, it is stated that lack of coordination between agencies, lack of intelligence and proliferation of small arms have weakened security operations, which have weakened trust in state institutions and cycles of retaliatory violence (UNICEF, 2025). This critique notes a historical lack of connection between policy formulation and its implementation on the ground, questioning the viability of a highly militarised security policy.

Furthermore, the security management is also complicated by the fact that the farmer-herder conflict is also related to the increased national insecurities, such as banditry and criminality (Bello et al., 2025). The confusion of pastoralist-related violence with banditry or insurgency threatens to stigmatise whole communities and obscure the multiplicity of insecurity drivers. This conflation also reveals the inability of the security apparatus to disaggregate threats and respond to them in a specific way. Other scholars state that the more multidimensional security management model, which incorporates community-based conflict prevention, dialogue facilitation, and socio-economic development programmes into the traditional security practises, is more complicated (Olaniyan, 2025; Adejoh et al., 2025). This comprehensive approach values the local experience and targets to rebuild trust between herders, farmers, and state actors, which is an important and often neglected factor. The socio-economic and humanitarian consequences of the farmer-herder conflicts also indicate the need to enhance security management.

Displacement, agricultural land destruction, and livelihood loss have also been caused by food insecurity and poverty, especially in agrarian-based states such as Benue and Kogi (Alobo and Omenka, 2025; ReliefWeb, 2025). This is a direct threat to the stability and development agenda of the Nigerian government. Even though some new policies like the National Livestock Transformation Plan will definitely change the livestock production process and reduce the burden of migration, it is questionable whether they will be effective due to the unequal implementation and local resistance (Bello et al., 2025). The failure to involve the interested parties, farmers, herders, local leaders, and security agencies, in policy and conflict management formulation is a



weakness that justifies the concept of participatory governance in security management (Olaniyan, 2025).

### **Farmer-Herder Conflicts and Security Management in Oyo State**

Farmer-herder conflicts in Oyo State, southwestern Nigeria, is a security issue of the modern era that is long-standing and is closely connected with local socio-economic and environmental processes. Other researchers like Akinyemi (2018), Ogungbenro (2024) and Akinbile et al. (2024) concentrated on the Oke-Ogun region, which is one of the hotspots of farmer-herder conflicts in the state. They disclosed that, these conflicts are mainly caused by the blockage and encroachment of grazing routes by farmers, as well as retaliatory attacks by both sides, which have led to casualties and destruction of property, mostly among farmers. It is a cyclical violence, not just a contest of land and water resources, but also a breakdown of traditional systems of sharing resources. These conflicts have not been prevented by the interventions, which proves that there is a structural issue associated with the high level of land-use changes, population growth, and the lack of effective conflict management systems in rural communities (Akinbile et al., 2024; Oladosu et al., 2024). However, a critical examination shows that much of the discourse attributes blame in an imprecise manner to both the herders and farmers, and does not pay much attention to the institutional weaknesses and political economy processes that still contribute to insecurity in the region.

The Oyo State government has tried to address these tensions by establishing the Amotekun Security Network, a local security outfit, and prohibiting open grazing to minimize the movement of herders and minimize friction. Nevertheless, they have been rather ineffective due to institutional failures, corruption, and agency coordination and political interference (Adeyemi & Akinola, 2024). The security apparatus of the state have been accused of being incapable and unwilling to implement policies and deliver justice to victims, which has undermined the trust of the population and can contribute to the further escalation of tensions. The inability to implement community-based strategies and to draw on the experience of more controlled pastoral-farmer relations in such countries as Chad and Ethiopia further highlights the absence of the existing security management models in Oyo State (Adeyemi and Akinola, 2024). These results confirm the hypothesis that security management in Oyo needs more than militarised responses; it needs participatory governance structures, sustainable land reforms, and inclusive peace building.



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The economic effects of farmer-herder conflicts in Oyo have been widely reported and that showed a major negative effect on the income, agricultural production and livelihoods of farmers. Quantitative studies in the Oke-Ogun zone show that conflicts, such as the invasion of farms by herdsmen, lead to reduced yields of staple crops such as cassava, maize, and vegetables and consequent high losses in the earnings of farmers (Oladosu et al., 2024). This economic harm is not only a source of poverty but food insecurity and rural instability. It is stated that most of the affected farmers use passive measures such as tolerance or active measures such as reporting to security agencies, but the latter is not effective in most cases due to the passivity of law enforcement (Akinbile et al., 2024). These empirical results highlight the feedback mechanism in which poor security management increases socio-economic vulnerability, which subsequently increases conflict susceptibility.

Social costs are not limited to economics, and farmer-herder conflict in Oyo State undermines community cohesion, encourages criminal behaviour, and jeopardises the stability of the region. The war is linked to increased vigilantism, banditry, and even infiltration of extremist groups, which further worsen insecurity and destabilize governance (Olatunji and Adewuyi, 2023). The loss of trust between farmers and pastoralists puts a strain on the traditional norms of coexistence that were once defined by mutual arrangements. According to scholars, this change is largely due to the failure of the interventions of the failed states and the lack of effective dialogue or mediation platforms that could help overcome ethnic and cultural differences that are common in the region (Olatunji & Adewuyi, 2023; Akinbile et al., 2024). This social dimension is a serious sign of the insufficiency of security-based solutions and that of integrative conflict management that takes into account human security and political inclusion.

### **Frustration-Aggression Theory**

The Frustration-Aggression Theory is one of the most fundamental theories of aggression and has had a profound impact on the study of individual and collective violence. It can be traced back to the early twentieth century, when psychologists and social theorists started to investigate the causes of aggressive behaviour in a systematic way. The theory was formally articulated as the result of the joint efforts of John Dollard, Leonard Doob, Neal Miller, Orval Mowrer, and Robert Sears at Yale University, although earlier theorists such as William McDougall and Sigmund Freud had speculated on the role of blocked goals and instinctual drives in the production of aggression. In



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1939, their seminal monograph, *Frustration and Aggression*, changed the scientific perception of aggression by suggesting a direct and causal relationship between the experience of frustration and the expression of aggressive behaviour (Dollard et al. (1939).

The essence of the Frustration-Aggression Theory merely states that frustration, which is the inhibition or prevention of goal-oriented behaviour, can always result in some form of aggression, and all aggression can be traced to a previous experience of frustration. This deterministic perspective was based on empirical observation as well as psychoanalytic theory. The theory goes on to explain that, when the pursuit of a desired goal by an individual is hindered, a state of tension or arousal is created internally, which consequently creates a desire to act aggressively. When the cause of frustration is available and not too dangerous, then aggression will be directed towards it. But when direct retaliation is not possible or is too risky, because of fear of punishment, social norms, or power imbalances, the aggression can be transferred to a more vulnerable or socially acceptable target.

The key assumptions of the Frustration-Aggression Theory, as summarised by Breuer and Elson (2017), are as follows: humans are driven by goal achievement, and any obstacle to this achievement causes frustration; frustration leads to an internal state of tension or arousal, which causes a desire to act aggressively to relieve this tension; aggression is not the only possible, but not the only possible, response to frustration; the probability of aggression is determined by personal traits, situational factors and cultural norms.

### **Security Governance Theory**

Security Governance Theory is an important development in the conceptualisation, organisation and management of security in the modern world. Security Governance Theory has its theoretical foundation laid down in the late 1990s and early 2000s, particularly through the work of such scholars as Elke Krahmman, Mark Webber, and others. The article by Krahmman, 2003, *Conceptualising Security Governance*, published in *Cooperation and Conflict*, and the follow-up book, *Security Governance in Post-Conflict Peacebuilding* (2005), offered a systematic description of the difference between security governance and traditional government. The concept was further developed by Mark Webber and others in 2004, who identified the following characteristics of security governance: the participation of both public and private actors, the existence of formal



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and informal institutions, the organisation of relationships through norms and shared understandings and regulations, and the collective purpose (Jones et al., 2018).

The pluralistic and dynamic concept of security is reflected in some of the assumptions of the Security Governance Theory. These are, security is no longer the prerogative of the state but is created through the interplay of a broad spectrum of actors such as international organisations, regional security outfits, and local communities; security governance is multilevel and operates at local, national, social, and environmental levels, and often at the same time and with overlapping jurisdictions; security is multifaceted and includes not only military threats but also political, economic, social, and environmental risks.

### **Gaps in Literature Review**

The reviewed literature provides substantial empirical evidence on the causes and socio-economic consequences of farmer–herder conflicts in Oyo State, particularly competition over land and water, reprisal violence, and crop destruction. However, much of the scholarship—such as studies focusing on Oke-Ogun and Ibarapa—prioritizes quantifying economic losses while offering limited analysis of how conflict drivers interact with security management systems. Legal and structural critiques, including discussions of the Land Use Act (1978), highlight policy weaknesses but pay insufficient attention to enforcement gaps and practical implementation within the security architecture. Similarly, examinations of government responses, including anti-open grazing laws and new security initiatives, identify institutional failures such as corruption and weak coordination, yet lack rigorous, systematic evaluation of their actual effectiveness in reducing violence or building community trust.

Further gaps exist in the limited empirical assessment of emerging security institutions, including their operational capacity, legitimacy, and inter-agency collaboration. Analyses of local vigilante groups and community-based peace efforts remain largely descriptive or anecdotal. Additionally, gender-sensitive perspectives and the experiences of marginalized groups—particularly women and youth—are underexplored, as are localized environmental dynamics influencing pastoral migration and conflict escalation. While climate change and ecological stress are acknowledged, they are rarely supported with measurable, context-specific data. Overall, the literature remains fragmented across economic, legal, environmental, and security dimensions, with minimal evaluative research on policy outcomes. This underscores the need for an integrated, in-depth study



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that critically examines how complex conflict drivers interact with security management processes and their long-term impacts on affected communities in Oyo State.

### **Methodology**

The research philosophy of this paper is based on a qualitative research approach, which is representative of the interpretivist paradigm that appreciates in-depth knowledge of complex social phenomena by examining available scholarly and policy literature. The study design was a systematic literature review and the data source was purely secondary. The data collection process will be based on a systematic search and retrieval of the relevant literature through academic databases, including JSTOR, Scopus, Google Scholar, the Social Conflict Analysis Database (SCAD), the International Journal of Conflict and Violence (IJCV), the Dutch Research Council (NWO), Social Science Research Network (SSRN) and institutional repositories. In order to ensure that the topic is addressed, the search strategy will be designed on the basis of the combination of keywords and Boolean operators (e.g., farmer-herder conflict AND Oyo State and security management and Nigeria). The study uses qualitative content analysis to analyse the data. In this approach, the extracted data are systematically coded and categorised to determine recurring themes, patterns, contradictions, and gaps. It is a descriptive analysis and the principles of academic integrity, transparency and respect to intellectual property were followed.

### **Findings from Literature Review**

Reviewed studies indicate that the causes of farmer-herder conflicts and security management in Nigeria are not caused by any single factor, but by a complex web of interacting factors. This complexity is reflected in the way these conflicts have developed into more regular and violent conflicts throughout the country, which started as seasonal and localised conflicts. The interaction of environmental pressures, socio-political processes, economic interests, and institutional weaknesses is a multidimensional problem that cannot be easily addressed. The weakening of traditional institutions of dispute-resolution and the disintegration of rural authority have left vacuums that are increasingly being occupied by non-state actors, vigilante groups, and informal power brokers.

Admittedly, the former focus on environmental scarcity, e.g. climate change or resource depletion, as the main source of conflict is simplified. The literature is explicit in its critique of the mono-causal climate change narrative that prevailed in early accounts of these conflicts. Environmental



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factors are a contributing factor, but rather contextual amplifiers than causes. The physical changes of agricultural expansion, urbanisation, and shifting land-use patterns have narrowed the traditional grazing corridors, yet it is the interaction between these physical changes and governance structures and power relations that give them their conflict potential.

Research found that, security management in Nigeria has changed to be more holistic and inclusive, and it has ceased to be a state-centric approach, but rather a community-based approach, institutional reform, and incorporation of both formal and informal actors. This conceptual development is indicative of an increasing awareness that security issues such as farmer-herder tensions cannot be resolved by traditional policing or military means but by integrating community-based efforts, traditional authority systems, and civil society organisations as key stakeholders in peacekeeping.

It was disclosed that, different policy programmes aimed at solving farmer-herder conflicts have failed to achieve their goals since they were formulated without proper consultation with the communities concerned. Programmes such as the RUGA Settlement Scheme or other state-based anti-open grazing policies are usually based on the assumptions of urban policymakers, not the realities of rural life, and do not consider the multi-layered social, economic, and ecological contexts that define agricultural and pastoral livelihoods

## **Conclusion**

The paper examines the long-standing and dynamic nature of farmer-herder conflicts in Oyo State, Nigeria, especially in the local government areas of Ibarapa North, Iseyin, and Afijio. A systematic review was undertaken simultaneously on an extensive review of the available literatures and synthesise the available literature to understand the causes of these conflicts, the effectiveness of security management strategies, and context-specific challenges and opportunities to sustainable peace in the region. The review indicate that the farmer-herder conflict in Oyo State is a complex interaction of factors, such as competition over land and water resources, environmental pressures caused by climate change, high population growth, and the disintegration of traditional land management and conflict resolution systems. The research concluded that interventions by the state, including anti-open grazing laws and the creation of security outfits like Amotekun, have not been very effective because of inconsistency in implementation, underfunding, and overlapping jurisdictions. Traditional mediation and early warning systems are community-based mechanisms



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that are still essential but are being compromised by modernisation, migration, and the loss of authority of traditional leaders.

The review shows the importance of the integration of state and community-based strategies, land management improvement, and the promotion of inclusive communication among all stakeholders. The paper will be relevant to the general discussion on rural security and will be of use to policymakers, development practitioners and community leaders who might wish to come up with more effective and sustainable interventions by providing the necessary understanding of the local dynamics and management gaps.

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