



# Halting Herders-Farmers Conflicts in Nigeria through Enhanced Intergroup Relations and Community Policing

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## Abstract

The conflict between herders and farmers in some parts of Nigeria has raised concerns about the fragility of the Nigerian Federation and the process of building peace in rural grazing communities where such conflict had deepened hostility, claimed thousands of lives, destroyed farmlands, physically incapacitated victims and displaced hundreds of others from their ancestral homes. This study interrogates intergroup relations' influence on peacebuilding in herder-farmers communities in Nigeria using a cross-sectional survey of 1711 farmers and herders selected in 12 states across the six geopolitical zones. The study was anchored on Samuel Huntington's Clash of Civilisation and Symbolic Interactionism, which linked cultural conflicts to the clash of civilisations and intergroup relations. The data generated were analysed using chi-square and Ordinary Least Square. The study found that the nature of ethnic relations ( $P=0.000$ ), frequency of interethnic marriage ( $P=0.000$ ) and nature of cohabitation ( $P=0.000$ ) of herders and farmers predicted peacebuilding in herder-farmers communities. The study also found that the use of community policing ( $P=0.000$ ), neighbourhood watch ( $P=0.000$ ), and cooperative identification of dark spots by community members ( $P=0.003$ ) predicted the likelihood of de-escalating herder-farmers conflict and building peace in the rural grazing areas. While neighbourhood watch and identification of dark spots showed positive association, the application of community policing and the deployment of youths have the likelihood of igniting the peace process, implying that community policing integration into the peace operations and peacebuilding in the rural grazing areas of Nigeria must be done with a lot of caution.

## Keywords

Healing, Wounds, Herder-Farmers Conflict, Peacebuilding, Nigeria

## 1. Introduction

The conflict between Fulani nomadic herders and sedentary farmers over rustled cattle and damaged farm produce has been protracted in Nigeria in the last decade (Olutegbe & Ogungbaro, 2020; Tariff, 2022). Before now, Nigeria's major crisis was the deadly Boko Haram insurgency that has killed thousands of people in Northeastern Nigeria and displaced hundreds from their ancestral homes, Boko Haram insurgency is not only deadly in Nigeria's modern history, but it is also a prelude to more brutal, predatory and cruel herder-farmers conflicts that have claimed the lives of innocent persons in both the South and Northern parts of Nigeria (Chiluwa & Chiluwa, 2020; Hendris & Glaser, 2007; Olufemi, 2021).

Although, the conflict between the nomadic herders and the sedentary farmers in Northcentral Nigeria is not new to Nigerian history, its escalation in recent times in Nigeria has been a significant source of concern for the Nigerian government. The worry of the government stems from the fact that, despite the concerted efforts made by the government

to bring normalcy to feuding herders-farmers communities, clashes between the Fulani herders and the sedentary farmers have been repetitive in some parts of the country, such as Zamfara, Kaduna, Niger, Kastina, Nasarawa, Benue, Jos etc. Gradually, the killings and the associated bandit attacks that developed along with the conflict have spread to other parts of Nigeria, leading to routine confrontations between nomadic Fulani herders and Yoruba communities. For instance, in 2021, the protracted conflict between nomadic herders and Yoruba farmers in Igangan and Ibarapa communities of Oyo State provoked major violent confrontations between the Fulani communities in Igangan and Ibarapa areas of Oyo State, and Sunday Igboho, a self-acclaimed Yoruba activist who believed in the extradition of violent nomadic herders from Yorubaland (Olaniyi, 2021; Oyeleke, 2021). In the course of the violence, which marked a new phase in the history of the herders-farmers conflict in Nigeria, several houses were burnt, and innocent citizens were killed. These killings and the associated violence reinvented the crisis of federalism facing the Nigerian society since independence (Olaniyi, 2021).

Today, many people now groan in pain arising from the incessant conflicts between herders and the sedentary farmers whose livelihoods depend on farming but have been prevented from farming as a result of bandit attacks or as a result of the herder-farmers conflict. In Nigeria's Northwest and Northcentral, bandits have killed several people and also successfully collected huge ransoms from travellers whom they seized in the course of their cruel criminal attacks. Despite the rising tensions across the country over the herder-farmers conflict, the Nigerian government has continued to explore the possibility of restoring peace to the conflict-affected communities. The peacebuilding process ranges from de-escalating violence, disarmament programmes, community engagement, and compensation of victims of herder-farmers conflicts through humanitarian assistance to issues bordering on the banning of open grazing and establishment of ranches in line with the modern practice of cattle rearing. In recent times, there have been concerns about whether the peace processes and the legal and political frameworks that are targeted at building peace among herder-farming communities are yielding their desired results. While the deployment of the military and the police to conflict-prone communities are empirically related to the immediate dowsing of tensions, it is not yet clear if the Nigerian government's continued use of the military and the police can guarantee sustainable peace in herder-farmers communities. Similarly, there have been arguments about whether the nonviolent approach to herder-farmers' conflicts is not the best way to build peace among the nomadic Fulani herders and the sedentary farmers. This article is intended to discuss the empirical relationship between intergroup relations and peacebuilding in herder-farmers communities in Nigeria using data generated from a national survey on intergroup relations and peacebuilding in herders-farmers communities.

## 2. Literature Review

Empirical research on herdsman-farmers conflict has continued to dominate the field of social research in the last decade. While some have concentrated on the historical factors that have engendered the problem of herder-farmers conflict, others have continued to interrogate the economic, social, political, environmental and legal costs that the conflict imposes on Nigeria and African societies where the crisis seems to have multiplied in the last decade. In the midst of these works is a group of other research that seeks to understand the challenge of peacebuilding in a multiethnic and multicultural society confronted by herder-farmers conflict. This new area, unlike others, has attracted more attention of the International Community and some African governments than the traditional focus etiology of herder-farmers conflict because it bothers on the deployment of the best resources to contain the herdsman-farmers conflict. This section of the article reviews some relevant literature on the herder-farmers conflict in Nigeria.

### 2.1 Herdsmen-Farmers Conflict: The Rise and Complexity of Nigeria's Security Problems

Nigeria has, since independence, been confronted by multiplicity of conflicts ranging from the Nigerian civil war of 1967-1970 to the Boko Haram insurgency, which currently threaten the unity of the Nigerian federation as the Islamist sect ruthlessly seeks for the establishment of an Islamic State within a federation recognised by the 1999 Constitution. The Boko Haram insurgency has not only killed over 20,000 people but has also highlighted the fragility of the Nigerian State and the shaky interethnic and religious contradictions upon which Nigeria has been surviving since independence. In the midst of this crisis is the challenge of the herders-farmers conflict in the Northwestern and Northcentral Nigeria that has killed more than 5,000 people since its resurgence in 2018. For more than a century that the British colonialists ruled Nigeria, the embers of ethnic discords laid and used in ruling Nigeria, which colonialism bred, have not subsided. The nation, which today is practising military federalism, is dangling in a fractured and fractionalised state. The State fractionalized, fractured and polarised such that politics, economics, and resource control are negotiated based on the North-South dichotomy. It is within this crisis of colonial legacy that the herdsman-farmers conflict is birthed (Olaniyi, 2022; Oyeleke, 2021). The birth of the conflict signalled a continuation of the crisis inherited from colonialism.

Adamolekun (2005) held that the origin and beginning of the herdsman-farmer conflict lie in Nigeria's complex and complicated federalism imposed by the colonial masters who wanted to rule the nation with force and fiat irrespective of its cultural diversity. The challenge also lies with Military rule in Nigeria, which abolished what was supposedly true federalism and imposed on the nation, military federalism (Adamolekun, 2005; Suberu, 2005). Military federalism, according to Adamolekun, is the one with a strong centre and weak regional governments that rely on the centre largely for survival. In such an unbridled, unjust and unequal political system, the potential for conflict is obviously inevitable

(Nnoli, 1985). Explaining the herdsman-farmers' conflict from an ethnic context, Nnoli (1985) held that interethnic conflict has always been part of Nigerian history, but the challenge is that in postcolonial Nigerian society, citizens are left to face the crisis of the colonial State had already bifurcated the State into ethnic nationalities favourable to colonial domination and exploitation.

Even after colonial rule, the tensions between the Fulani-dominated North and Yoruba-Igbo-dominated South have not been assuaged by several constitutional amendments and reforms to deepen national unity (Adamolekun, 2005). This position is the first point of analysis of the problem of the herdsman-farmers conflict in Nigeria. A good number of literature has, however, linked the challenge of herder-farmer's conflict to resource conflicts such as unavailability of grazing lands, shortage of water supply, blockage of traditional grazing routes and disputes over boundaries between the nomadic herders and sedentary farmers (Adebayo, 2021). A group of researchers has also attributed the problem of herders-farmers' conflict to climate change. Climate change, especially radical changes in weather conditions, is believed to have altered the herders' and farmers' lifestyles and living conditions. For the herders, changes in weather conditions manifest in dryness of the grazing lands, thereby making herders to move towards the South where there will be abundant grazing lands and sufficient water for their cattle. The farmers, too, are said to have suffered some effects of climate change as drought and harsh weather conditions continually affect crop production. Floods and associated crises have equally continued to reduce the farmers' capacity to meet their daily needs and market expectations. Naturally, the tension of not being able to produce or rear cattle adequately to meet family expectations is believed to have contributed to the challenge of herder-farmers' conflict in the country.

## **2.2 Ethnic and Religious Conflicts as a Trigger of Herder-Farmers Conflicts and a Tool of Peacebuilding in Rural Grazing Communities**

Culture and conflict in Africa have been at the centre stage of peace and conflict research since independence, when the continent was confronted by the challenge of civil wars emanating from political and cultural conflicts (Mamdani, 2004). Though culture is created to preserve a people's history, norms, values, customs and civilisation, it can be counterproductive if its inherent benefits are negatively deployed in a social relationship. For instance, since 2018, when the clash between herders and farmers conflict has assumed a new dimension, there have been new debates on whether pastoralist culture can coexist with the sedentary farming cultures of the people in Southern Nigeria.

Pastoralism is based on the culture of rearing animals, especially cattle. It is not only based on intergenerational relationships, but every member of the pastoralist culture is also socialised to value cattle and livestock with whom family income is generated. The protection of cattle from cattle rustling is an integral part of the cultures of the herders who move their cattle from one location to another for foods. With the increasing depletion of the grazing routes following the rise in the rate of urbanisation across the African continent and the challenge of climate change which has limited available lands for grazing. A geographical study of changes in agricultural and grazing land using three locations in Kano, Usman, Muhammad & Nichel (2022) found that grazing lands for cattle rearing and other livestock decreased by 150% while fallow land decreased by 130 % between 1980 and 2014. The researchers reported that these sharp changes in land availability were responsible for the herders-farmers conflict in Kano State, Nigeria.

The land is a very important commodity both for the herders and farmers. While the herders graze their cattle on available lands, the farmers use them for cultivation. Given the rising sea level, increasing changes in weather conditions and the challenge of deforestation, both the farmers and the herders have been constrained to use their available lands efficiently. Where there is a disruption in the use of this land, tension can build up and result in herder-farmers conflict (Simi, AbdulRahman & Sulaimon, 2021). Mahmood and Azuaga (2020) established that cultural biases could complicate the already tense relationships between herders and farmers. This was the outcome of their research in Taraba where they studied 210 farmers and herders from 910 households within the community using questionnaire. The study showed that cultural biases which assumed that the herders were strangers in the communities often served as a trigger of herder-farmers' conflict in the State. George, Adelaja & Olufemi (2022) found that tensions created by the persistence of Boko Haram insurgency, Fulani ethnic militia, and farmers communities have contributed to the recent upsurge in the herder-farmers' conflicts in Nigeria. Specifically, the study found that Boko Haram attacks on farmers and other innocent citizens caused the escalation of the herder-farmers' conflict by intensifying the challenges of natural disasters such as drought.

## **2.3 Intergroup Relations and Peace-Building in Herder-Farmers' Communities**

The idea of peacebuilding has come to the centre stage of discourses on conflicts and wars in Africa since the 1990s when the concept was first used. The United Nations and the African Union have set up machinery for the actualisation of peace in Africa, but despite their numerous efforts, Africa has witnessed more conflicts in post-cold War era. Although, the failure of the peace process in the Post-cold War Africa has been hinged on several factors, there is the argument that African leaders have not been able to seriously address the challenge of intergroup relations inherited from colonialism. For instance, in his work "When Victims Become Killers", Mamdani (2000) held that one of the major causes of the Rwanda Genocide was the ethnic tension between Hutsi and Tutsi in the East African region highlighted by patron-clientist politics and corruption. In Nigeria, research has equally shown that the recent upsurge in the herder-farmers' conflicts is caused partly by the age-long crises between the herding and farming communities who have maintained a hostile relationship due to ethnic biases, especially in the middle-belt where clashes between herders and farmers have been known to have reoccurred. In a study of herder-farmers' communities in Kogi State using a structured questionnaire,

Ukamaka, Danjuma & Igbokwe (2016) found that dialogues, village committees, and traditional methods of conflict resolution were positively related to peacebuilding in the communities sampled.

### 3. Theoretical Framework

This work adopts the metatheoretical perspective by using both Samuel Huntington's Clash of Civilizations Theory and Symbolic Interactionist Theory to explain the role of culture and intergroup relations in peacebuilding among feuding herder-farmer communities in Nigeria. Symbolic interactionism argues that people hold their cultures and symbols dearly, and they make meanings out of their cultural heritage. It also states that the meanings that people make out of their cultures are as a result of the interpretation they make from people's perception of their behaviour. In other words, no individual or society can survive culturally without interacting with others. Cultures do not only help us shape our conduct; they lay a good foundation for how we achieve our desired goals in life. Just as culture aids mutual and positive relations, culture can also be a potent source of conflict. This is the area where Huntington's Clash of Civilization Theory becomes relevant.

In his work "The Clash of Civilizations", Huntington argued that the fault lines of national and international conflicts should be traced to the problem of the clash of civilisations. According to him, global conflicts will increasingly be determined not by the struggle for economic powers but by the clash of civilisations among different civilisations in the world, such as Arab, Chinese, Russian, African and Western Civilisations. Thus, peoples and nations shall be entangled in an attempt to reinvent their civilisations in global and national politics. In order to bring about peace to the post-cold World era, world leaders and governments of developed and developing nations must learn to respect the cultures of different civilisations within the global, regional, and national politics (Huntington, 1996). Huntington's work is relevant to this work because it encourages the use of increased intergroup relations to strengthen peace between the herders and farmers' communities in Nigeria.

## 4. Methods

### 4.1 Study Area

The study was carried out in the six geopolitical zones of Nigeria, namely, North-West, Northcentral, Northeast, South-West, South-South and South-Eastern regions. The use of the whole federation was to enable the research assess the national and regional distribution of the incidents of herder- farmers' conflict, their effects, and provide the basis for formulating a sustainable national policy on herder- farmers' conflicts.

#### 4.1.1 Research Design

This study is a mixed-method research. It adopted both cross-sectional surveys of herders and farmers in Nigeria covering the six geopolitical zones in Nigeria, 12 states and 24 local government areas. The study surveyed a total of 1711 respondents while a total of 120 interviews were conducted using an In-depth Interview.

#### 4.1.2 Sample Size and Sampling Technique

The National Survey sampled a total of 1711 respondents using a multistage sampling technique. The first stage of the sampling process for the survey was the selection of the states using the existing six geopolitical zones. Two states were selected from each geopolitical zone using their history of farmer- herders' conflicts. There was also the choice of population size. The selection criterion was that one State with a history of farmer- herders' conflict and a high population size would be selected along with another with a history but relatively lower population size than the first one. The reason for this was to ensure the representativeness of the targeted populations in the regions and Nigeria as a whole. The purposive sampling technique was, however, used to select the rural grazing area (community). A community would be deemed to be qualified for selection if it has had a history of herder-farmer conflict.

### 4.2 Data Analysis

The data for the study was collected through Kobo Toolbox. It was, therefore, easy to capture the longitude and latitude of the study areas as well as generate SPSS data automatically after the completion of the study in July, 2022.

The quantitative data were analysed using simple and inferential statistics. The simple statistics are frequency distribution and Chi-Square, while the inferential statistics are Logistic Regression and Linear Logistic Regression.

## 5. Results

Socio-Demographic Profiles of the Respondents by Region, State, Sex, Age, Education, Ethnicity, Religion, Occupation etc.

**Table 1** Socio-demographic Profiles of the Respondents by Region & State

S/No.	Variable	Frequency	Percentage %	
1.	Region	North-East	298	17.4
		North-West	312	18.2
		North-Central	247	20.3
		South-West	259	15.1
		South-East	305	17.8



		South-South	190	11.1
		<b>Total</b>	<b>1711</b>	<b>100.0</b>
2.	State	Adamawa	148	8.6
		Anambra	150	8.8
		Benue	150	8.8
		Borno	151	8.8
		Delta	42	2.5
		Enugu	157	9.2
		Kaduna	162	9.5
		Nasarawa	152	8.9
		Ondo	154	9.0
		Oyo	147	8.6
		Rivers	149	8.7
		Sokoto	149	8.7
		<b>Total</b>	<b>1711</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Table 1.0 presents the socio-demographic characteristics of the respondents by region and State sampled in the course of the study. The study showed that 20.3% (247) of the respondents were from the North-Central, 18.2% (312) were from the North-West, 17.8% (305) were from the South-East, 17.4% (North-East) were from the North-East while 15.1% (South-West) of the sampled population of herders and farmers for the study came from the Yoruba dominated South-Western Nigeria. The South-South was the least of all the regions, with 11.1% (190).

With reference to the number of respondents sampled per State, 9.5% (162) were from Kaduna State, 9.2% (157) were from Enugu state, 9.0% (154) were from Ondo State, 8.9% (152) were from Nasarawa state, 8.8% (150) each were from Anambra state, Benue State and Borno State. The data shows that 8.7% (149) each were from Rivers and Sokoto States while 8.6% (148) of the respondents were sampled from Adamawa. The data indicate that Delta State had the lowest figure of herders and farmers' response rate in the study. This was attributed to the heightened hostility between herders and farmers in the State and South generally following sporadic attacks on their farmlands-a development which was strange to herder-farmers' relationships in the region, in decades.

**Table 2** Socio-Demographic Characteristics of the Respondents by Sex, Age, Marital Status, Ethnicity, Religion, Education

S/No.	Variable	Frequency	Percent %	
1.	Sex	Male	1186	69.3
		Female	525	30.7
		<b>Total</b>	<b>1711</b>	<b>100.0</b>
2.	Age	Below 18 years	9	0.5
		18 -24	116	6.8
		25- 59	1375	80.4
		60 years and above	211	12.3
		<b>Total</b>	<b>1711</b>	<b>100.0</b>
3.	Marital Status	Single	283	16.5
		Married	1231	71.9
		Separated	41	2.4
		Divorced	38	2.2
		Widowed	109	6.4
		Others	9	5
	<b>Total</b>	<b>1711</b>	<b>100.0</b>	
4.	Ethnicity	Hausa	422	24.7
		Igbo	368	21.5
		Yoruba	235	13.7
		Others	686	40.1
		<b>Total</b>	<b>1711</b>	<b>100.0</b>
5.	Religion	Christianity	922	53.9
		Islam	716	41.8
		Traditional	69	4.0
		Others	4	.2
		<b>Total</b>	<b>1711</b>	<b>100.0</b>
6.	Education	No Formal Education	449	
		Primary	237	26.2
		Secondary	594	13.9
		Tertiary	421	34.7
		Others	10	24.6
		<b>Total</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Table 2 shows the socio-demographic characteristics of the respondents sampled in 12 states of the federation across the six geopolitical zones. The result indicates that 1186 (69.3%) were males while 525 (30.7) were females. Impliedly, the majority of the participants in the study were men. This confirms previous studies that agriculture (crop production) and pastoralism are predominantly a male-dominated economic activities. On the age distribution of the respondents, the result shows that 1375 (80.4) were between the ages of 25 years and 59 years, 211 (12.3%) were above 60 years of age,

116 (6.8%) of the respondents could be categorised as adolescents between the ages of 18 and 24 years. It is only 9 (0.5%) of the 1711 who were children. The result of the study on age distribution of the respondents indicates that the majority of those who engage in farming and pastoralism are adults of working age groups. This must have been informed by the nature of the jobs, which require older persons to train younger persons about how to plant crops and rear animals, including cattle.

On the marital status of the respondents, 1231 (71.9%) were already married at the time of the study, while only 283 (16.5%) of the population were never married. The result shows that 109 (6.4%) were widows and widowers, 38 (2.2%) had divorced their married partners, while 41 (2.4%) of those people had separated from their marriages. Of the 1711, 422 (24.7%) were Hausas, 368 (21.5%) were Igbos, 235 (13.7%) were Yoruba and 235 (13.7%) constituted other ethnic nationalities that were captured in the study. With this result, it shows that the Hausas were almost one-quarter of the sampled population, while the Fulanis and the other ethnic groups constituted 686 (40.1%) of the population. In terms of the educational background of the participants, 594 (34.7%) had completed secondary education, while 237 (13.9%) had primary education. Those without formal schooling were 449 (26.2%). Interestingly, only 421 (24.6%) had acquired higher degrees at the time of the study. On religious practices of the respondents, 922 (53.9%) were Christians, while 716 (41.6%) were Muslims. Only 69 (4.0%) were traditional worshippers, and non-Christians and non-Muslims.

**Table 3** Socio-Demographic Characteristics of the Respondents

S/No	Variable	Frequency	Percent %	
1.	Are you currently employed?	Yes	562	32.8
		No	1149	67.2
		<b>Total</b>	<b>1711</b>	<b>100.0</b>
2.	Are you a farmer?	Yes	1242	72.6
		No	469	27.4
		<b>Total</b>	<b>1711</b>	<b>100.0</b>
3.	Are you a pastoralist?	Yes	356	20.8
		No	1355	79.2
		<b>Total</b>	<b>1711</b>	<b>100.0</b>
4.	Do you own a farm of your own?	Yes	156	12.6
		No	1086	87.4
		<b>Total</b>	<b>1242</b>	<b>100.0</b>
5.	How many years have spent on farming?	Less than 5 years	192	15.5
		5 -9 years	421	33.9
		10 years and above	629	50.6
		<b>Total</b>	<b>1242</b>	<b>100.0</b>
6.	Are cattle rearing a family business?	Yes	323	90.7
		No	33	9.3
		<b>Total</b>	<b>356</b>	<b>100.0</b>
7.	Do you own cattle of your own?	Yes	299	83.9
		No	57	16.1
		<b>Total</b>	<b>356</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Table 3 shows the profiles of the farmers and herders sampled in 12 states across the 6 geopolitical zones. The result shows that 1242 (72.6%) were farmers while 469 (27.4%) were in other occupations. When asked if they were into pastoralism, 356 (20.8%) stated that they were into cattle rearing. This implied that only about 20% of the sampled populations were pastoralists.

## 5.1 Bivariate Analysis

**Table 4** Chi-Square Test of the relationship between Intergroup-Relations and Peace-Building in Rural Grazing Areas in Nigeria

Variables	NATURE OF PEACE IN HERDER-FARMERS CONFLICT COMMUNITIES		TOTAL	X <sup>2</sup> (P)
	Peaceful	Not Peaceful		
<b>Nature of Ethnic Relations</b>				
Extremely Peaceful	63 (88.7%)	8 (11.3%)	71 (100.0%)	X <sup>2</sup> = 191.782 (P = 0.000)
Very Peaceful	450 (88.8%)	57 (11.2%)	507 (100.0%)	
Fairly Peaceful	853 (89.3%)	102 (10.7%)	955 (100.0%)	
Never Peaceful	89 (50.0%)	89 (50.0%)	178 (100.0%)	
Total	1455 (85.0%)	256 (15.0%)	1711 (100.0%)	
<b>Ever been involved in Inter-ethnic Marriage</b>				
Yes	519 (88%)	71 (12.0)	590 (100.0%)	X <sup>2</sup> = 6.068 (P = 0.014)
No	≤936 (83.5%)	185 (16.5%)	1121 (100.0%)	
Total	1455 (85.0%)	256 (15.0%)	1711 (100.0%)	
<b>Frequency of Interethnic Marriage</b>				
Very Frequently	31 (91.2%)	3 (8.8%)	34 (100.0%)	X <sup>2</sup> = 172.697 (P = 0.000)
Frequently	266 (93.7%)	18 (6.3%)	284 (100.0%)	

Rarely	447 (93.5%)	31 (6.5%)	478 (100.0%)	
Not Frequently	466 (87.1%)	69 (12.9%)	535 (100.0%)	
Never	245 (64.5%)	135 (35.0%)	380 (100.0%)	
Total	1455 (85.0%)	256 (15.0%)	1711 (100.0%)	
<b>Does herders live separately from farmers?</b>				
Yes	960 (82.4%)	205 (17.6%)	1165 (100.0%)	$X^2 = 19.916$ ( $P=0.000$ )
No	495 (90.7%)	51 (9.3%)	546 (100.0%)	
Total	1455 (85.0%)	256 (15.0%)	1711 (100.0%)	
<b>Ethnic Tension</b>				
Yes	356 (80.6%)	86 (19.4%)	444 (100.0%)	$X^2 = 9.154$ ( $P=0.002$ )
No	1097 (86.6%)	170 (13.4%)	1267 (100.0%)	
Total	1455 (85.0%)	256 (15.0%)	1711 (100.0%)	
<b>Are people of other ethnic groups free to practice their religion in this community?</b>				
Yes	1443 (85.1%)	252 (14.9%)	1695 (100.0%)	$X^2 = 1.279$ $P=0.258$
No	12 (75.0%)	4 (25.0%)	16 (100.0%)	
Total	1455 (85.0%)	256 (15.0%)	1711 (15.0%)	

A bivariate test was conducted on the relationships between intergroup relations and peacebuilding in rural grazing areas of Nigeria using Chi-Square test. The nature of ethnic relations, ever been involved in interethnic marriage, frequency of ethnic marriage, nature of cohabitation of herders and farmers in the rural grazing areas, and the nature of religious freedom experienced by individuals living in the areas were used as independent variables. The question used to test peacebuilding was based on whether the communities were peaceful at the time of the study. The result of the test indicates that the nature of ethnic relations ( $P=0.000$ ), involvement in interethnic marriage ( $P=0.014$ ), frequency of interethnic marriage ( $P=0.000$ ), nature of cohabitation of herders and farmers communities ( $P=0.000$ ), ethnic tension ( $P=0.000$ ) and experience of religious freedom ( $P=0.002$ ) are very significant to the process of building peace in farmers and herders' communities. While ethnic marriage, involvement in interethnic marriage and frequency of interethnic marriage show strong positive relationships, nature of cohabitation and ethnic tension was negatively related to the process of achieving peace in the rural grazing areas of Nigeria. Specifically, the study showed that the more herders and farmers lived separately, the more peace is endangered. The study further indicated that in communities where herders and farmers lived in mutual hostility, the chances of experiencing peace between the nomadic herders and farmers in Nigeria's rural grazing communities would be leaned.

## 5.2 Multivariate Analysis of the Relationship between Ethnic and Religious Relations and Peacebuilding in Herder-Farmers' Communities

### 5.2.1 OLS on the effects of Intergroup Relations on Peace-building in Herder-Farmers Communities

**Table 5** Ordinary Least Square Model on the effects of intergroup relations on peacebuilding in herder-farmers communities

Model	Unstandardised Coefficients		Standardised Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	.549	.092		5.999	.000 <sup>1</sup>
Ethnic Relations	.400	.026	.343	15.487	.000
Frequency of Interethnic marriage	.147	.016	.205	9.225	.000
1 Does herders' community live separately from the farming community in this area?	-.085	.017	-.110	-4.954	.000
Are people of other ethnic groups free to practice their religions in this community?	.044	.082	.012	.543	.587

a. *Dependent Variable: Peacate*

ANOVA <sup>a</sup>					
Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1 Regression	37.472	4	9.368	88.678	.000 <sup>b</sup>
Residual	180.225	1706	.106		
Total	217.697	1710			

a. *Dependent Variable: Peacate*

b. *Predictors: (Constant), Are people of other ethnic groups free to practice their religions in this community? EthnicmfC, EthnicCate, \_48\_Does herders' community live separately from the farming community in this area?*

1.  $X^2 < 0.001$

An Ordinary Logistic Regression (OLS) was performed to test if the nature of ethnic relations, frequency of interethnic marriage, living separately by herders from farmers and freedom to practice one's religion in herder-farmers' communities predicted peacebuilding in rural grazing areas in Nigeria. In this model, four independent variables namely: 'nature of ethnic relations', frequency of interethnic marriage', 'separate cohabitation' and 'religious freedom' were used to predict the dependent variable 'peace building'. The model shows that the independent variables predicted the dependent variable at  $F=88.678$ , meaning that the relationship between the dependent variable and the predictor variables is very strong. The model shows that the nature of ethnic relations ( $P=0.000$ ) and frequency of interethnic marriage ( $P=0.000$ ) are positively related to the process of building peace in conflict-ridden herder-farmers communities. It, however, indicates a negative relationship with separate cohabitation between herder and farmers communities. The model shows that where herders lived separately from farmers, peace was more likely to be endangered at ( $\beta=-.085$ ,  $P=0.000$ ), implying that separate cohabitation between the two groups builds suspicion and hatred, which are potential ingredients of conflict escalation.

### 5.2.2 Ordinary Least Square Model on the effects of community-based efforts on peacebuilding in rural grazing areas of Nigeria

**Table 6** Ordinary Least Square Model on the effects community-based efforts on de-escalating herder-farmers conflict and peacebuilding in rural grazing areas of Nigeria

Model	Unstandardised Coefficients		Standardised Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	2.859	.027		105.159	.000
Community policing	-.106	.039	-.075	-2.710	.007
Neighbourhood watch	.137	.037	.104	3.713	.000
Deliberate identification of dark spots	.198	.068	.082	2.934	.003
Making of monthly contributions/levies used in community policing	-.071	.087	-.023	-.820	.413
Organisation of youths to secure the community	-.159	.049	-.091	-3.260	.001

a. *Dependent Variable: How peaceful is the relationship between herders and farmers conflict in this area?*

ANOVA <sup>a</sup>					
Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1 Regression	16.489	5	3.298	7.851	.000 <sup>b</sup>
1 Residual	545.649	1299	.420		
Total	562.138	1304			

a. *Dependent Variable: How peaceful is the relationship between herders and farmers conflict in this area?*

b. *Predictors: (Constant), are community policing, neighbourhood watch, deliberate identification of dark spots, embarking on community monthly contribution, and youths involvement in the policing of the community.*

An Ordinary Logistic regression model was performed to test if community-based efforts (community policing, neighbourhood watch, deliberate identification of dark spots, making of monthly contributions and involvement of youths in the de-escalation of conflict helped to build peace in herder-farmers communities in Nigeria. The predictor variables were the community efforts mentioned above, while the dependent variable was peacebuilding. The model shows that there is a positive relationship between the use of neighbourhood watch, deliberate identification of dark spots by community members and the process of building peace in conflict-affected herder-farmers communities. The model, however shows that there is a negative relationship between the use of community policing (community-police partnership) ( $\beta=-.106$ ,  $P=0.007$ ), involvement of youths ( $\beta=-.159$ ,  $P=0.001$ ) and building of peace in herders and farmers communities in Nigeria implying that the use of community policing and the youth might further endanger the peace or even escalate violence in the conflict-affected communities if care was not taken.

## 6. Discussion

The conflict between herders and farming communities in Nigeria has since 2018 escalated in some parts of Nigeria, killing more than 5,000 people and sending hundreds of people out of their ancestral homes. The protracted conflict which has been linked to the age long hostility between the Fulani nomadic herders and sedentary farming communities, has resulted in long-term armed conflict, killing and kidnapping for ransom in some parts of Nigeria such as Kaduna, Nasarawa, Kogi, Abuja, Adamawa, Kastina, Oyo, Osun, Ogun and Ondo States claiming where property worth billions of naira have equally been lost to the conflicts (Adebayo, 2019; Adebayo, 2021; Agbedo & Agbelija, 2021; International Crisis Group, 2020). This article was set out to examine the influence of intergroup relations on the process of building peace in herder-farmers communities in Nigeria. The study adopted a cross-sectional survey of herders and farmers living



in rural grazing communities in 12 states selected from the six geopolitical zones of Nigeria using multistage sampling technique.

Results from the study showed that herders- farmers' conflict was a major security threat in Nigeria, disrupting not only agrarian agriculture but also the livelihoods of the grazing communities. The study found that there was a significant positive relationship between the nature of ethnic relations, involvement in interethnic marriage, frequency of interethnic marriage, and peacebuilding in the rural grazing areas sampled for the study. The study shockingly found that where herders and farmers lived separately, there was no assurance that they would live in peace. This finding corresponds with several other studies on herder-farmers conflicts in Nigeria, which linked the violent clashes to the age-long hostility between the nomadic herders and farming communities who believed that the herders were on the path of expanding their territories across Nigeria by grazing other people's lands (George, Adelaja & Olufemi & Awosika, 2022; Mahmood & Azugua, 2020; Ukamaka, Danjuma & Igbokwe, 2016).

The results of the Chi Square test, which this study conducted were also confirmed by those of the OLS-Ordinary Least Test which showed that the nature of ethnic relation, involvement in interethnic marriage and nature of cohabitation significantly predicted the process of peacebuilding in herder-farmers communities at  $P = 0.05$  level of significance. In order to test the influence of community policing, deliberate identification of dark spots, making of monthly contributions and involvement of youths in peacebuilding, the study performed an Ordinary Least Square Test model using the above variables as predictor variables. The result showed that in communities where community policing was allowed, peacebuilding in such community would be endangered, implying that community policing was not a guarantee of peace. However, the model showed that the use of neighbourhood watch and identification of dark spots by community members were found to predict peacebuilding in the rural grazing areas of Nigeria at  $P = 0.05$  level of significance, implying that the use of community policing and youths in de-escalating violence in herder-farmers communities was still characterised by mutual distrust. This result is also confirmed by the International Crisis Group (2020) that using community policing and vigilantes was not a guarantee of peacebuilding. For instance, in Benue and Plateau states, clashes between herders and farming communities have partly been caused by the involvement of militia groups, who, in the long run, complicated the peace process by also engaging in criminal activities such as cattle rustling and theft of livestock of the Fulani communities.

## 7. Conclusion

This study attempted to empirically establish the influence of intergroup relations on peacebuilding in herder-farmers communities in Nigeria. The study was sponsored by the Tertiary Education Trust Fund (TETFUND) in view of the protracted herder-farmers conflicts in Nigeria and their consequences on lives, property, the economy, the agricultural sector and national unity. While several studies have been conducted on the causes of herder-farmers conflict in Africa, including Nigeria, few research exist on peacebuilding in rural grazing areas. Using quantitative data generated from this study on National Survey on Intergroup Relations and Peace-building in Rural Grazing Areas, this found that ethnic relations and interethnic marriage have the potential to reduce the tensions between the Fulani herders and the sedentary farmers in the North and Southern Nigeria. The study established that the peacebuilding process must emanate from the people rather than police-community relations, which raised the suspicion that one of the conflicting groups would be favoured.

## Data Availability

Data will be made available on request.

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## Declaration of Conflict

The authors declare that they have no known competing financial interests or personal relationships that could have appeared to influence the work reported in this paper.

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