Environmental Peacebuilding: Mitigating the Pastoralist-Farmer Conflict in Nigeria
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Abstract
This paper analyzes the farmer-pastoralist conflict in Nigeria, utilizing theories of eco-survivalism and eco-violence. We provide federal, state and community level recommendations, using the theory of environmental peacebuilding, as an opportunity of cooperation between conflicting parties. This was accomplished through an extensive literature review and stakeholder interviews from both the United States and Nigeria. Our research revealed that desertification of northern Nigeria has forced pastoralists to migrate southward to the central belt, competing with farmers for already-scarce land resources. We found that the conflict was driven not only by climate change, but also by competing legal and political systems and an absence of trust in the government by Nigerian citizens. Our research also revealed a number of gaps in peacebuilding, including the communication challenge of climate change, exacerbation of the conflict spiral, ineffective conflict mitigation strategies, non-recognition of climate change refugees by United Nations and ineffective natural resource management and development policies. Our recommendations are divided into federal, state and local levels, as peace between pastoralists and farmers requires a multi-level approach. Finally, because there is limited research on this topic, we have provided recommendations for further research so that future recommendations can take an even more holistic approach by addressing current gaps. This paper provides a unique contribution and perspective on the conflict, by making connections and offering synergistic and multi-level policy recommendations.

1 There are several other constraints, such as population explosion, corruption and issues surrounding oil and water in the Niger Delta; however, we chose to limit our paper to the aforementioned drivers because of the scope of the paper.