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LISTENING TO HERDERS IN WEST AFRICA AND THE SAHEL: WHAT FUTURE FOR PASTORALISM IN THE FACE OF INSECURITY AND ITS IMPACTS?

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

A2D	Association for Agriculture and Sustainable Development
A2N	Nodde Nooto Association
ACF	Action Against Hunger
AFD	French Development Agency
AFL	Acting for Life
AGED	Association for the Management of the Environment and Development
AMM	Movement for the Salvation of Azawad
APESS	Association for the Promotion of Livestock in the Sahel and Savannah
AQIM	Al Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb
AREN	Association for the revitalization of livestock farmers in Niger
AVSF	Agronomists and Veterinarians Without Borders
BBT	Benin - Burkina - Togo Cross-Border Committee
CARE	Cooperative for Assistance and Relief Everywhere
CCFV	Village Land Conciliation Commissions
CFV	Village Land Commissions
CIRAD	Centre de coopération internationale en recherche agronomique pour le développement
CISC	Collective against impunity and stigmatization of communities
CMA	Coordination of the Movements of Azawad
CMDT	Malian Company for the Development of Textiles
CMFPR	Coordination of Patriotic Resistance Movements and Fronts
COFOB	Basic and Tribal Land Commission
COFOCOM	Communal Land Commissions
COFODEP	Departmental Land Commissions
CORAF	West and Central African Council for Agricultural Research and Development
CRUS	Regional Council of Sahel Unions
CVD	Village Development Committees
DAA	Arab Movement of Azawad
DANIDA	Danish International Development Agency
DRC	Danish Refugee Council
DSF	Defence and Security Forces
ECOWAS	Economic Community of West African States
EHESS	École des Hautes Etudes en Sciences Sociales
EIGS	Islamic State in the Great Sahara
FAMA	Malian Armed Forces
FAMOC	Danish Cooperation's Drivers of Change Fund DANIDA
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization
FDI	Improvised Explosive Devices
FODEL	Livestock Development Fund
GATIA	Imghad Tuareg Self-Defence Group and allies
HACP	High Authority for the Consolidation of Peace

HD	Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue
ICD	Islamic Corporation for the Development of the Private Sector
ICRC	International Committee of the Red Cross
INDM	National Institute for Human Rights
IOM	International Organization for Migration
IRSEM	Strategic Research Institute of the École militaire
ISS	Research and Safety Institute
ISWAP	Islamic State in West Africa
IWGIA	International Work Group for Indigenous Affairs
LFA	Agricultural Land Law
MBDHB	Burkinabe Movement for Human and People's Rights
MINUSMA	United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali
MNLA	National Movement for the Liberation of Azawad
MOPOL	Nigerian Mobile Police
MUJAO	Movement for Unity and Jihad in West Africa
NCG	Nordic Consulting Group
NCPC	China National Petroleum Corporation
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
NHRC	National Human Rights Commission
OECD	Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development
OHADA	Organization for the Harmonization of Business Law in Africa
OP	Pastoral Organizations
PAM	World Food Programme
PAPSA	Agricultural Productivity and Food Security Improvement Project
PCB	Contagious bovine pleuropneumonia
PDEV II	Peace through Development Programme
PPR	Peste des petits ruminants
PREPP	Regional Programme for Education/Training of Pastoral Populations in Cross-Border Areas
PSSP	Pastoral Systems Security Project
RBM	Billital Maroobé Network
RECA	National Network of Chambers of Agriculture of Niger
RECOPA	Pastoralism Communication Network
SAF	Land development plans
SNV	Dutch Development Organisation
SOC	Civil Society Organizations
SRADDT	Regional Plans for the Development and Sustainability of the Territory
TGI	Court of First Instance
UEMOA	West African Economic and Monetary Union
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
VDP	Volunteers for the Defence of the Fatherland
WILD	Disarmament - Demobilization - Reintegration process
ZOVIC	Village areas of hunting interest

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PREFACE

The Sahel is currently experiencing a deep security crisis, the effects of which include chronic insecurity, cross-border insecurity, and the spread and exacerbation of intercommunity conflicts. These crises highlight important issues related to the lack of governance in rural territories, the increase in competition for access to natural resources, and the exclusion of pastoral youth from the socio-political system and from access to economic opportunities.

As a key player in initiatives relating to pastoralism, the Billital Maroobé Network (RBM) has taken stock of the serious risks that insecurity poses to pastoralist families' living conditions, livestock mobility systems, and the pastoral economy. The 6th edition of the high-level consultation for peaceful transhumance between the Sahel and the coastal countries, held in October 2019, recommended assessing "*the effect of insecurity on early displacements and concentrations of animals observed in the countries*". It is in response to both this recommendation and its own need to understand the changes which are taking place that the RBM decided to conduct a study on "*pastoralism and insecurity in pastoral settings*".

This pioneering initiative is of crucial importance not only for our Network, its members and partners, but also for all Sahelian and West African producers. It aims to: (i) understand the structural causes and impact of the various forms of insecurity on pastoralists' living conditions, livestock mobility, and the pastoral economy; (ii) identify possible solutions and provide institutional actors with reliable data to guide decision-making processes; and (iii) develop an argument supported by field action research, with a view to informing discussions in future high-level policy dialogue sessions on cross-border transhumance.

To understand the security challenges and their impact on pastoralist families' resilience, the RBM with the support of a coalition of partners gathered the perceptions of 1,898 pastoralists and other key stakeholders who live in 7 countries and 23 administrative regions. This broad consultation responds to RBM's desire to involve pastoralists and other key actors in the governance of rural territories and in the search for solutions to the major challenges which pastoralism must meet in the sub-region.

This action research emphasizes that the security crisis cannot be detached from the context in which it arose and from the factors which fuel it. It must be understood as an expression of the governance crisis which affects rural territories and of which the pastoralism crisis is but one of many facets.

In RBM's view, this action research sheds new light on the conflict context in the Sahel and offers a different perspective that is based on evidence and is dispassionate. It highlights the fact that the intersecting pastoral and security crises are adversely impacting many pastoralist families caught in the massive collapse of peace, social cohesion, and the pastoral economy.

The research also shows that pastoralists are often labelled as collaborating with terrorist groups or even as being jihadists themselves. As a result, they are caught between a rock and a hard place. Indeed, the pressures exerted by the jihadists on the one hand and the "collateral effects" of military operations on the other create particularly trying economic and social realities. This has led to the withdrawal of many herders into refugee or IDP camps, the exclusion of families who have lost all their livestock from the herding system, and the exclusion and loss of opportunities for young people.

In addition to growing insecurity, the COVID-19 crisis has had a significant socio-economic impact on Sahelian and West African pastoralists since May 2020. The impact of COVID-19 was therefore also analyzed in the field research conducted between June and September 2020.

It is urgent to address these issues by considering their interdependencies because today the very survival of pastoral farming is in question. Uncertain prospects, identity-based exclusion and growing stigmatization,

and youths' rejection of pastoralism as a profession are all factors which lead many herders to question the future of pastoralism itself. In this context, Pastoral Organizations' role in decision-making processes is also highlighted as is the need for these organizations to be closer to their grassroots members' expectations.

Within the RBM, we are convinced that pastoral farming continues to be of crucial importance for local, national, and regional economies. This system is a powerful driver of integration, through the multifaceted exchanges which it fosters between regions, territories, and stakeholders.

In terms of prospects, the results of the study highlight the importance of addressing issues at various levels of intervention, particularly locally (social inclusion of vulnerable groups), nationally (implementation of public policies and legislation), and regionally (integration and economic and social cooperation). The study shows that livestock mobility is not unique to Sahelian countries and that demographic and food security challenges should not lead to opposing production systems, but rather to enhancing complementarities and mutual economic interests.

This in-depth and scientifically robust research work provided the RBM with a precise diagnosis and documented solutions to bring to the attention of both local stakeholders – including, first and foremost, the herders themselves – and policy-makers. The results of the study were discussed at a regional meeting of livestock farmers in May 2021 and in a high-level consultation with experts and policy-makers from Sahelian and West African countries in June 2021. These meetings confirmed a multi-stakeholder consensus on the study's findings and helped enrich possible solutions. They led to the adoption of the Niamey Appeal. This constitutes a major reference for all parties concerned with the issue of livestock and pastoralism and serves as a commitment by the Nigerien authorities to raise the issues highlighted by the study at the regional and international level.

The RBM hopes that this study will be the first step in a multi-stakeholder dialogue which will lead to solutions which are accepted - and therefore respected - by all. The next steps will be for RBM to strengthen the ownership of the study's content at the local and national levels, while engaging in a constructive dialogue with sub-regional institutions on how to integrate pastoralists' perceptions and concerns in the face of insecurity into public policy.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Pastoralists' voices in the Sahel and West Africa are rarely heard even though they are among the most exposed to insecurity because of their mobility. This study is based on interviews with 1,898 stakeholders, including nearly 1,700 herders from 7 countries and 23 administrative regions in the Central Sahel (Mali, Burkina Faso, Niger) and its immediate vicinity (Côte d'Ivoire, Benin, Togo, Nigeria). The study was initiated by the Billital Maroobé Network (BMN) to analyze how herders experience this insecurity. It clearly shows that the vast majority of herders are victims of insecurity, but a minority are involved in armed movements and have therefore become players. The result is a vicious cycle between the pastoralism and the security crisis. The pastoralism crisis in rural areas feeds the recruitment of armed groups, whose development exacerbates the violence and conflicts of which pastoralists are the first victims. Pastoralist victims of violence are, in turn, impoverished, their future darkened, and this risks further amplifying the security crisis. This study aims to chart a way out of this reinforcing security and pastoral crises.

The present state of insecurity is part and parcel of the context which fuels it. It is the reflection of a crisis in governance in rural Sahelian and West African areas which also constrains the mobility of pastoralists. This context provides a breeding ground for armed groups, that recruit pastoralist herders by promising to redress the many injustices they face: progressive appropriation of pastoral resources (land, water, animals) by other players (farmers, agro-businessmen, civil servants, elected officials, etc.); exposure to various types of abuse (administrative harassment, theft, rackets, etc.); and rising inequalities among pastoralists themselves with the emergence of "new pastoralists" from urban or agricultural areas. In the Sudano-Sahelian region, these injustices are structurally linked to a political land economy that is highly disadvantageous to pastoralists. These trends are not new, but they are worsening. They result in the loss of herders' livestock, but in an almost invisible manner. Since pastoralists are politically and institutionally under-represented, their voice is barely heard. This makes it impossible to fully measure the current pastoralism crisis. What is new, however, is that organized groups are using herders as tools and offering them the possibility for self-protection, justice, retaliation, or for self-enrichment through force. In the Central Sahel, the study provides many examples of how yesterday's victims or marginalized people now rule the rural territories, sometimes becoming executioners themselves.

While some herders take up arms, the vast majority are above all victims of the pastoralism crisis and now of the security crisis. They find themselves with no good options. They need to move around for economic reasons but when they do, they risk operating in jihadist zones and being associated or assimilated with them. If they don't move, they also risk exposing themselves to racketeering, theft, and the destruction of their livestock. Nor do they have the possibility of protecting themselves because they are not allowed to join or form self-defence groups. The traditional coping strategies are therefore no longer effective and they are forced to "make do". While most of them try to occupy a neutral position, this is difficult, if not impossible, to find. They are caught between a rock and a hard place: they are under suspicion of, and sometimes repressed by, the armed forces and self-defence groups on the one hand, and jihadists on the other. The security crisis exerts a heavy price on pastoralists. It has resulted in a drop in the number of people going to markets; the closure of some markets; an overall decline in the price of livestock; a huge increase in livestock theft; and arrests/kidnappings and executions by all armed actors.

The counter-terrorism response has made things worse for pastoralists. Although only a tiny minority of pastoralists have been lured away by jihadist groups, this has been enough for people to view the crisis through an ethnic perspective. This trend has had a profound effect on the way in which the fight against terrorism has been conducted, leading to abuses perpetrated by defence and security forces and self-defence groups. These groups are suspected of settling disputes - often over land - with other communities under the guise of counter-terrorism, as happened in the Centre-North and East of Burkina Faso, for example. When self-defence groups support the defence and security forces, the information they provide is often suspected of being biased, thus increasing the likelihood of abuses. The security crisis and the way in which

it is addressed therefore undeniably amplify the pastoralism crisis to the point of breaking 'pastoral resilience'.

These dual crises raise the question of the status of mobile pastoralists in states that are built around a model of sedentary societies. This issue has a long history in the Sahel and West Africa. The abundance of legislation, mechanisms, and institutions dedicated to recognising the value of pastoral mobility shows that states have long tried to manage it. However, their response has clearly not been as effective as expected, given herders' limited attachment to official provisions and institutions. Herders express a lack of knowledge of and interest in the regulations relating to access to resources. This is compounded by the feeling that they are not heard by, and poorly defended by the institutions tasked with delivering justice through conciliation. These institutions are presumed to be biased, which undermines their legitimacy and their tools for regulating access to resources and managing conflicts.

The vast majority of pastoralists questioned their own future and that of pastoral farming more broadly. Pastoralism is becoming associated with problems, with some people talking about the death of mobile and transhumant farming. The reasons for hope come from their capacity and readiness to adapt, notably towards a more intensive, sometimes even sedentary, mode of livestock farming. However, many herders say they are firmly attached to mobility and are not considering another mode of production. Semi-transhumant livestock farming is an option for many farmers, when agro-ecological, political and security conditions allow it. Leaving livestock farming particularly appeals to young people seeking to migrate to urban areas and interested in trade or gold panning. However, this departure is often not definitive and does not necessarily result in an 'inter-generational divide'. Young people become socially and economically emancipated - sometimes even by taking up arms - creating tensions within families, but the children do not systematically break with their families or home territories.

This study is not intended to make specific policy recommendations. It rather suggests the following axes around which a crisis exit strategy could be designed, with pastoralists central to the design:

1. Think about how to do things and their possible consequences before doing them

In contexts as deteriorated as those of the study areas, the way in which things are done appears to be as important if not more so than the substance of policies and projects themselves. Through a conflict-sensitive approach, the political economy analysis of land should be central to the design of public policies as well as of development projects, to prevent them from generating more tensions or conflicts.

2. Address the structural causes of the pastoralism crisis in a sustainable manner

- ◆ **Secure pastoral land tenure.** This should be based on the acceptance of local agreements between all stakeholders on the choice of infrastructure in a particular locality. Securing pastoral land also requires a holistic approach that takes into account all of the competing uses for natural resources.
- ◆ **Rebalance the political economy of land tenure in favour of pastoralists.** This requires better political representation and greater participation of pastoralists in local and national decision-making, to guarantee their management rights over pastoral resources. This political influence is gained through the ballot box, but also through new customary representation. This rebalancing requires improved access to legal and judicial defence for pastoralists, and more inclusive official conflict resolution mechanisms.

3. Manage the impact of the security crisis on the pastoral crisis

- ◆ **Mobilise Pastoral Organisations (POs) to improve social cohesion.** POs should play a more active role in improving social cohesion, by supporting dialogue on the issue where they have legitimacy, namely on "consensual management of space and resources". Their role should be strengthened in insurgent areas where they are sometimes the only ones that can support pastoralists' livelihoods.
- ◆ **Make the Defence and Security Forces (DSF) protectors of rather than a threat to pastoralists.** This could be achieved by: allowing these stakeholders to talk to each other in order to better understand each other; by mobilising the DSF for missions to safeguard pastoral mobility or combat livestock theft;

and by encouraging the integration of pastoralists into the DSF so that they feel they are fully fledged Sahelian citizens.

- ◆ **Regulate self-defence groups** by involving them in dialogue initiatives; revising their governance so that they are not made up of a single community and by sanctioning abuses which they commit.
- ◆ **Address mis-information about livestock farming** in the media and on social networks in order to reduce stereotypes and inter-community tensions.

4. Support herders' aspirations for the future of livestock and pastoralism

Given that herders' aspirations are diverse, public policies must enable a plurality of possibilities when it comes to livestock farming. This also requires making education in pastoral environments a priority by tailoring the educational opportunities to the specific characteristics of the environment.

The future of livestock farming depends heavily on open borders and regional integration. Today, this is being called into question by states who fear security spillover from the Sahel. It is essential that regional institutions respond to this challenge, which touches on the fundamentals of regional integration, by updating existing legislation and by being more effective in mitigating the impact of insecurity.

GENERAL INTRODUCTION

INSECURITY AND RURAL INSURGENCIES IN THE SAHEL

The Sahel is experiencing its worst ever security crisis. It may seem remote from the Sahelian capitals: the economic, security and political impacts have been limited. Growth rates are intact, capitals are rarely attacked and elections are held despite everything. However, since 2012, armed insurgencies in some rural areas have resulted in more than two million refugees and internally displaced people from Mali, Burkina Faso and Niger, the three countries most affected by the crisis. Rural populations are suffering the full brunt of this insecurity. With 80% of their livelihoods dependent on agriculture and livestock farming, their livelihoods are under threat. Their security needs are not met by the national defence and security forces (DSF), and they increasingly rely on the support of non-state armed groups, be they rebels, self-defence groups or jihadists. Rural populations are both actors and victims of this situation: actors because a minority of them are the driving force behind these armed groups, victims because the majority suffer the impacts.

The contrast between urban stability and the chaos that prevails in these rural areas illustrates the historical divide that exists in some Sahelian and West African states between the centre and the periphery, between the 'useful country' and the 'less useful' one. This divide is one of the reasons why some rural populations become involved in armed insurgencies. Whether they are jihadist, militia or rebel groups, they have their origins in the same soil: the failure of a structurally inegalitarian system of governance that produces injustice. The nomadic rebellions that began in the 1990s (and even 1963 in Mali) were a warning sign, unfortunately poorly understood. These rebellions were interpreted as trends specific to certain communities that refused to integrate and had to be settled, even by force. The problem of the place and integration of nomadic populations is therefore a long-standing one in the Sahel, but has always been approached from an ethnic angle. This has distorted the fundamental debate: what place for nomadism and its populations in states built around a sedentary societies? In the Sudanian zone, this problem is posed differently through the desire of herders to exercise their rights to access common resources.

The central hypothesis of this study is that the security crisis cannot be detached from the context in which it arose and the factors that fuel it. This context and these factors refer to the crises in rural areas, which often revolve around competition for resources. In this competition, one socio-professional category is particularly vulnerable: herders, and in particular mobile herders from nomadic communities. As a whole, they are less anchored in the territories and state institutions, less politically connected and less literate, and are naturally less protected in this competition. This issue is certainly not new, but it has taken on a whole new meaning since 2015: for the first time, armed groups have invested in the Sahelian and Sudano-Sahelian zones, areas where these competitions are fierce and where, paradoxically, agro-pastoralism is the most developed. These armed groups have been able to exploit local injustices and fractures, some of which are very old and even ancestral, between socio-professional groups and between lineages within these communities. They offered the possibility of protection, revenge and justice, the triptych of rural populations' involvement in these groups in the Sahel¹. The difficulty in understanding the insurgent dimension of these armed actions is that the injustices experienced on a daily basis have become systemic, and therefore largely normalised, even trivialised; except by those who experience them and to whom these armed men give the means to defend themselves, paving the way for a continuous militarisation of all communities, whether sedentary or nomadic.

Following this pattern, insurgencies have progressed continuously since 2012. From the north of Mali in 2012, this dynamic has since spread relentlessly: to the Tillabéri region and the centre of Mali as of 2015, to northern Burkina Faso in 2016, and then to the east and far west of that country in 2018. The threat is spreading downwards to threaten the northern part of the coastal countries of West Africa, in particular north-western Nigeria, but also the north of Togo, Benin, Ghana and Ivory Coast. The pattern of contagion is always the same in these areas: arms carriers offering their services and recruiting in a particularly auspicious rural environment, marked by tensions, conflicts and injustices.

¹ See Mathieu Pellerin, *Les violences armées au Sahel. Du jihadisme aux insurrections* (Armed Violence in the Sahel. Du jihadisme aux insurrections), IFRI, November 2019.

PRELIMINARY PRECAUTIONS

Understanding the security crisis in the Sahel through a pastoralist lens is not an easy task and involves a number of pitfalls that this study is keen to avoid. It must also avoid simplifying the security crisis at three levels.

Firstly, this crisis is the expression of a crisis in the governance of rural territories, of which pastoralism is only one facet. The focus on the pastoral issue in this report does not claim to explain all the determinants of the Sahelian security crisis, nor even the governance crises of its states, but only one of its components - perhaps one that is more important than the others. This focus is a result of the request by the organisation Réseau Billital Maroobé (RBM) to look at the problem of insecurity in pastoral areas.

Secondly, it is also important to understand pastoralism not only in terms of mobile (especially transhumant) herders. Livestock farming refers to a multitude of different profiles in socio-political contexts that are just as varied as the geographical coverage of our study. Transhumant herders, short-distance mobile herders, agro-pastoralists and agro-herders are all actors who have livestock in common, but they have different modes of production, belong to different communities and enjoying different political rights, all of which often have significant influence in the Sahel.

Finally, it is important not to simplify the ethnic dimension of the security crisis, but at the same time it should not be ignored. In the current context, where community identity occupies a significant part of the public's mind, it is necessary to constantly distinguish between the objective reality and the representation of it. In other words, facts can involve individuals in a personal or family capacity, but be interpreted from an ethnic perspective. However, perceptions tend to override facts, contributing to a reality where ethnic polarisation is very strong. This polarisation unfortunately guides the actions of stakeholders: it becomes a mode of recruitment among armed groups, including self-defence groups, favours the withdrawal of certain communities, accentuates the institutional rejection of certain social groups, and encourages abuses based on community membership. Unfortunately, this is the stage the Sahel is at right now, and the study must respect the perceptions of the populations that were surveyed, who increasingly 'ethnicise' social relations.

THE DANGER OF THE ETHNIC PRISM

The security crisis has gradually forced the return of the 'nomadic problem' to national and international agendas. When insurgencies were concentrated in the Saharan zone, the problem was 'Tuareg' or 'Toubou'. Now that they are moving into the Sahelian and Sudano-Sahelian zones, the problem is 'Fulani'. This semantic shift is accompanied by the adoption of an ethnicist and culturalist lexical framework that would attribute to these populations educational and religious predispositions that would explain their representation within armed groups today. Without even questioning why so many Mossi, Gourmantché, Dogon, Bambara or Hausa have also joined these groups, the focus on the 'Fulani' completely obscures the nomadic problematic which intrinsically refers to the place of livestock rearing in present-day societies.

As early as 1993, André Marty described the contours of a continuous decapitalisation of herders that had been underway since at least 1960: the nibbling away of pastoral land by a front of agricultural cultivation driven by an already significant demographic growth, the dismantling of community rights over pastoral structures, the sedentarisation of a majority of impoverished herders to the benefit of farmers who 'hold the bulk of the national livestock in many Sahelian countries' and 'new herders' of commercial or civil servant origin who have a speculative vision of animal accumulation². The droughts of the 1970s and 1980s amplified this phenomenon of decapitalisation. The crisis in pastoralism is therefore neither new nor sudden, but it is getting worse and making herders increasingly insecure, to the point of jeopardising their resilience.

As we shall see, herders' switch to banditry or jihadism conceals pastoral insurgencies that can be explained less by any religious predisposition than by this continuous loss of livestock and multiple injustices suffered for too long. Yet the ethnic identity response of national armies is a self-fulfilling prophecy: Fulanis and Tuaregs alike are targeted militarily on the basis of their ethnicity and the prejudices associated with it,

² André Marty, « La gestion de terroirs et les éleveurs : un outil d'exclusion ou de négociation ? » (Land management and herders: a tool for exclusion or negotiation?), *Revue Tiers Monde*, 1993, n° 134, pp. 327-344.

leading them to join armed groups for protection or revenge. This ethnicist prism is a distorting mirror, giving the illusion that these communities subscribe to the agenda of these armed groups, while the majority refuse to join them and pay a heavy price for this crisis. While the religious agenda is not a determining factor in explaining the involvement of herders in these groups, there is nothing to indicate that 'religious radicalisation' occurs once they join. Hence the importance of focusing on prevention policies: solving the pastoralist crisis is a de facto prevention policy.

HERDERS CONFRONTED WITH PASTORAL AND SECURITY CRISES

Herders are both actors and victims of these crises. This can be explained by the fact that the category 'herders' refers to a number of realities.

Not all herders suffer from the crisis in pastoralism. Some benefit from it and feed off it, strengthening their monetary capital, in livestock or in land, to the detriment of others, namely social cadets and/or transhumant herders with little or no connection to the political world, from historically dominated community clans. The crisis of pastoralism is therefore not only a crisis between herders and others, but also a crisis within the pastoral world itself. Those who have benefited from the crisis in pastoralism have often been and remain targeted by armed men who accuse them of various forms of corruption: they may be wealthy traders, wealthy agro-pastoralists, traditional chiefs from noble lineages, landowners (jowro in Fulfulde) or religious leaders. These actors have been hit hard by the security crisis and are paying a heavy price.

The majority of herders have suffered from the pastoralist crisis, but have managed to adapt: some have become agro-pastoralists, abandoning (or not) mobile herding to settle down and invest in agriculture, others continue mobile herding (including transhumance) with an increasingly challenged resilience, and others have converted - with a certain socio-economic downgrading - to shepherds. These herders are victims of the security crisis, forced to maintain their activities in rural areas in the face of jihadist groups, self-defence groups and armed forces, all of whom suspect them of bias. In the context of the communitarianisation of minds and the stigmatisation of nomadic communities, these herders are the ones who suffer most from the current situation: their lives are threatened by these various arms carriers and their livelihoods are equally endangered by the proliferation of cattle rustling by these same groups.

The herders who are actors in this security crisis are those who have been victims of the pastoralist crisis. The title of a study on the drivers of violent extremism in the central Sahel sums up this idea: 'Victims become executioners'³. They may be former herders who have lost their livestock and joined the informal economy or banditry, before being recruited by jihadist groups. They may be herders whose resilience has been gradually undermined, whose experiences of injustice have accumulated over time, and who have decided to join a relative already involved with jihadist groups.

However, a final and most recent category includes individuals who have not necessarily suffered the effects of the crisis in pastoralism, and who sometimes are not even herders but belong to nomadic communities. They may be individuals whose livestock has been stolen or who have lost relatives killed by national armed forces or self-defence groups, and who join jihadist groups to seek justice and revenge. These individuals join because they or their loved ones have been targeted because of their community affiliation. They are victims of ethnic prejudice and join a game of violent reprisals by joining bandit groups (in north-western Nigeria) or certain jihadist groups that authorise this kind of reprisal (Islamic State in the Greater Sahara, IS-GS).

LISTENING TO THE HERDERS' STORY

Herders - particularly transhumant ones - tend to suffer from a lack of representation in associations, politics and communities. Their voice is therefore not heard although the need to listen to them is imperative at a time when they are at the centre of concerns, questions and sometimes worries. Concerns because the Sahelian and West African states are legislating to regulate pastoralism and transhumance, with the tendency to want to settle herders. Secondly, there are questions because the pastoral world is still very poorly understood and associated with preconceived ideas. Finally, there are also worries, due to the increasing

³ International Alert, *Si les victimes deviennent bourreaux*, 2018.

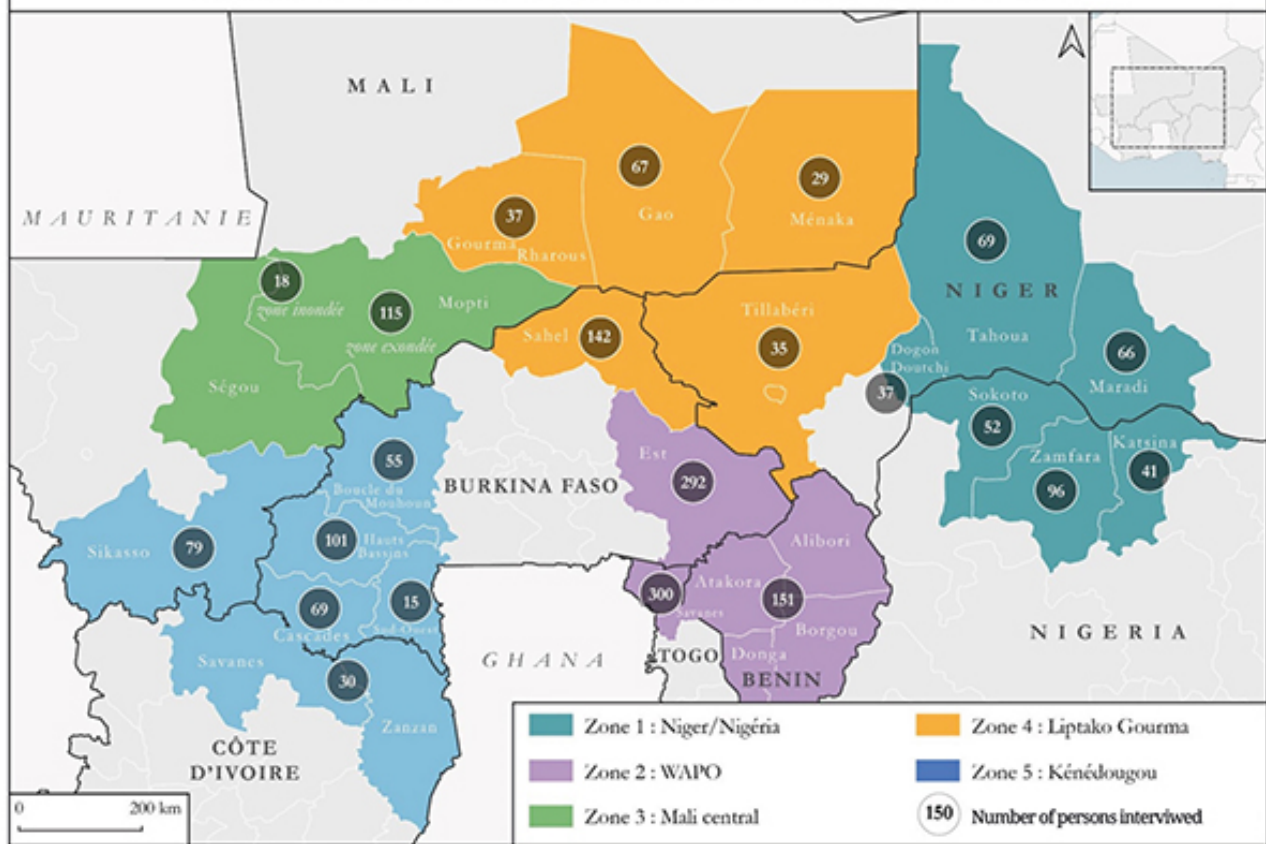
stigmatisation of pastoralists. This study aims to collect and relay their perceptions of both the pastoral and the security crisis.

However, the perspective of the herders only is not enough. This study does not claim to be universal. The sample of herders approached remains limited in view of the variety of socio-professional and community profiles that this category contains. Secondly, in the areas covered by the study, the opinions of the herders are often either biased or constrained: biased because they represent the views of only one party, often discouraged, resigned or, on the contrary, revolted; constrained because the current insecurity prevents or dissuades some from expressing themselves freely and confidently. Some statements may therefore appear extreme, while others are euphemistic. They reflect a feeling and a situation at a given moment. The point of view of herders is therefore counterbalanced by that of farmers, technical services, locally elected officials and, in some regions, members of the DSF. It is also cross-checked against the scientific literature on the different study areas. Nevertheless, the starting and ending point of this study is the way in which the herders perceive the situation they are facing.

THE SELECTION OF THE SAMPLED AREAS

The study is built around the collection of the perceptions of more than 1,700 herders representing the variety of profiles that the category 'herder' encompasses. They were met in 23 administrative regions of 7 countries in the Central Sahel (Mali, Burkina Faso, Niger) and its immediate neighbourhood (Ivory Coast, Benin, Togo, Nigeria). To counterbalance this perspective, herders, farmers, locally elected officials, technical services, members of self-defence groups or sometimes forest guards or military personnel were also contacted. In total, 1898 individuals were interviewed. These areas reflect the reality of livestock farming today. Some of them are in an extremely difficult situation, such as the regions in the Liptako Gourma, for example, the eastern region of Burkina Faso, central Mali or northwestern Nigeria. The threats there are extremely high, against the herders themselves, their families, and their livestock. Other regions, such as the north of Togo and Benin, Southwest Niger, Kénédougou in Burkina Faso and Mali, and the north of Ivory Coast, are less insecure and herders continue their activities, although they all recognise that the threats are growing and weighing on their daily lives.

Hearing the voice of pastoralists faced with insecurity in the central Sahel



Zone 1: border area of Southwest Niger and Northwest Nigeria, covering the regions of Tahoua, Maradi, Dosso in Niger, and the states of Katsina, Zamfara and Sokoto in Nigeria:

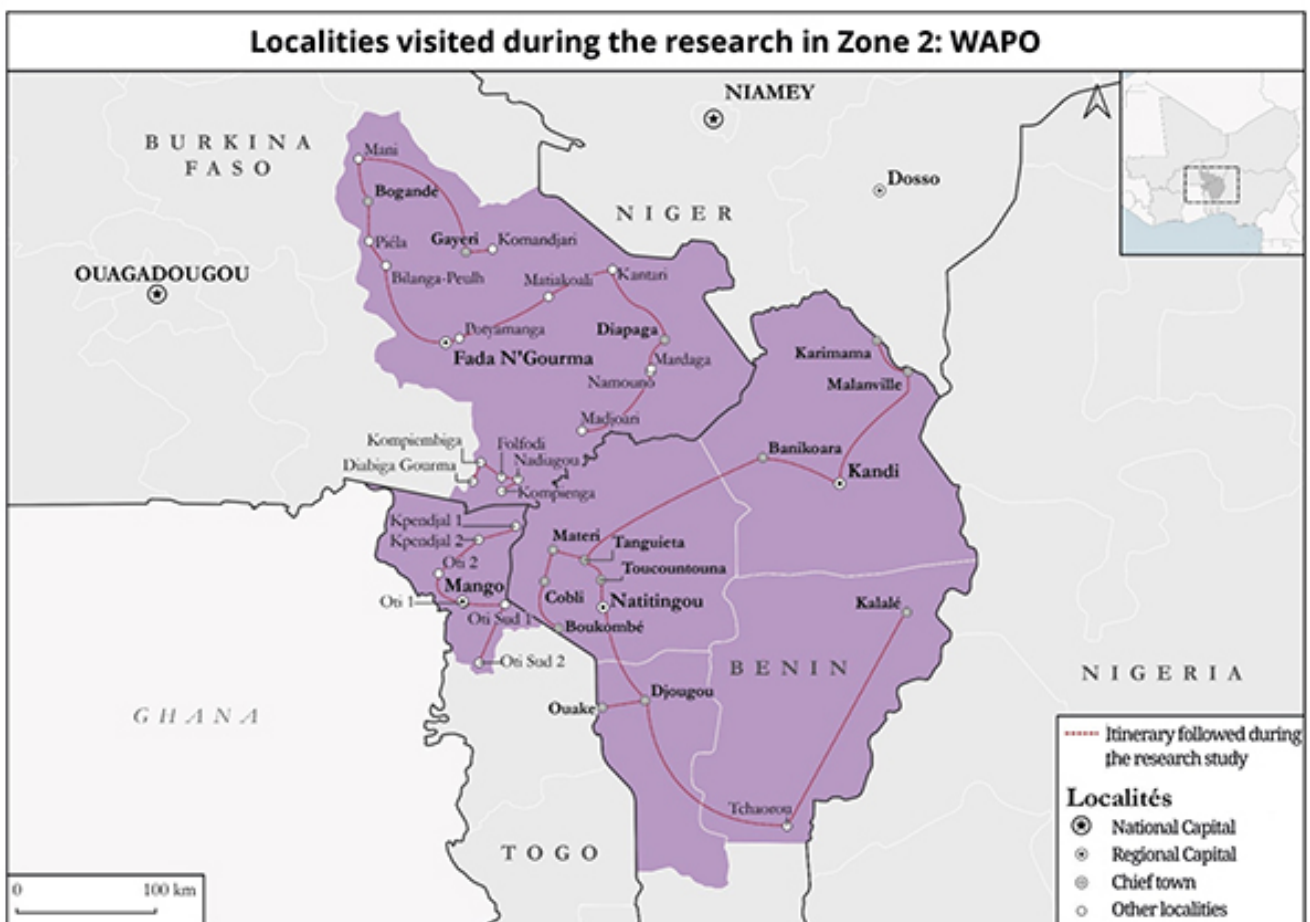
- ◆ In **Southwest Niger**, 172 people were interviewed in the regions of:
 - ◆ Maradi: departments of Bermo (32 people), Madarounfa (14 people), Guidan Roundji (20 people)
 - ◆ Tahoua: departments of Konni (22 people), Bagaroua (14 people), Madaoua (23 people), Malbaza (2 people) and Dakoro (8 people).
 - ◆ Dosso: Douthi department (37 people)

- ◆ In **North West Nigeria**, 189 people were interviewed in the states of:
 - ◆ Zamfara (96 people,) including 85 herders
 - ◆ Sokoto (52 people, 35 of whom were herders)
 - ◆ Katsina (41 people including 27 herders)



Zone 2: The border zone between Burkina Faso, Benin and Togo (743 people), basically called the WAPO zone for its parks ("W", Arly, Pendjari and Otti Mendouri), covering

- ◆ In Burkina Faso, the East region of Burkina Faso (Gourma, Tapoa, Gnagna, Komondjari and Kompienga provinces) with 292 people.
- ◆ In Togo, the regions of Savane (prefectures of Kpendjal and Oti) and Kara (prefecture of Basar) with 300 people.
- ◆ In Benin, the departments of Atacora, Donga, Alibori and Borgou with 151 people.



Zone 3: Central Mali (133 people), separated into:

- ◆ the floodplains (Inner Niger Delta) covering the cercles of Niono (Ségou), Tenenkou, Youwarou (Mopti) with 18 herders
- ◆ the exposed floodplains area covering the circles of Bankass, Mopti, Djenne, Koro, Douentza (Mopti) with 115 people including 100 herders.



Zone 4: The Liptako Gourma, straddling Mali, Burkina Faso and Niger, where 310 people were interviewed:

- ◆ In Mali, the regions of Gao, Ménaka and Timbuktu (Gourma-Rharous) with 133 people.
- ◆ In Burkina Faso, the Sahel region, including the provinces of Soum, Oudalan, Seno and Yagha, with 142 people.
- ◆ In Niger, in the Tillabéri region, including the departments of Torodi, Bankilaré, Ayorou, Abala, Banibangou and Tera, with 35 people.



Zone 5: The border area between Burkina Faso, Mali and Ivory Coast, which partly covers the historical Kénédougou:

- ◆ **For Burkina Faso**, the Grand Ouest (240 people) comprising the regions of:
 - ◆ Boucle du Mouhoun, in the provinces of Mouhoun, Kossi, Banwa (55 people including 27 herders)
 - ◆ Hauts Bassins, in the provinces of Houet and Kénédougou (101 people including 70 herders)
 - ◆ Cascades, in the province of Comoé (69 people)
 - ◆ South West, in the provinces of Poni and Nounbiel (15 people)
- ◆ **For Mali**, the Sikasso region (79 people), including the Cercles of Koutiala (19 people), Yorosso (37 people), Sikasso (12 people) and Kadiolo (11 people).
- ◆ **For Ivory Coast** (30 people), the regions of :
 - ◆ Savanes with 30 herders in Bouna, Ferkessédougou and Ouangolo



14 local researchers were recruited to cover the study areas. Depending on the area, they focused on urban communes or visited rural communes. In some insurgency zones, where rural communes are largely deserted, most of the herder population has moved to the provincial or departmental capitals. In other regions, for reasons of security or logistical ease, rural populations were invited to go to a neighbouring commune to conduct the interviews. Sometimes, as in the Gourma region of Mali, interviews were conducted during the livestock fair, since people coming from areas under jihadist control would otherwise have refused to travel out of fear. The 14 interviewers came from different backgrounds, chosen for their past experience, their familiarity with the study areas or their proximity to the lead researcher. Three of them are social science or legal researchers, two are livestock specialists, two are journalists, two are civil society actors, four belong to pastoral organisations and one is a veterinarian. This study would not have been possible without their courage, patience and selflessness.

The conduct of the investigations in the different study areas reflected the variety of these contexts. Even in the regions where interviews were conducted, some of the consultants were struck by the plight of herders in rural areas where no one goes any more. In some communes or villages, there were still one or two herders, the others having moved to safer communes. At the time the surveys were conducted, one consultant lost acquaintances who had been executed, another had to pay zakat to armed groups, a third was travelling through an area where several dozen herders had been executed, and a fourth was subject to threats. This context makes the conduct of such a perception study particularly challenging, with inevitable biases. In the climate of mistrust that currently characterises the most insecure areas, some respondents were afraid to express themselves, and some of their responses, particularly during the organisation of the Focus Group, may reflect the dominant position of the participants. This bias was circumvented as best as possible by conducting numerous individual interviews in conditions that allowed the respondents to feel minimally safe.

This study is structured around five main questions. 1) What are the causes and manifestations of this pastoral crisis and how does it affect herders? 2) How has this crisis fostered the development of insurgencies that have been widely exploited by jihadist groups? 3) How is the security crisis aggravating the crisis in pastoralism and affecting herders, and beyond that, the entire rural population, both in terms of security and economics? 4) For the majority of herders who have been affected by the crisis, how have they adapted to remain alive and attempt to preserve their livelihoods? 5) In the face of a crisis that is likely to undermine their resilience and encourage them to leave pastoralism, how do they see the future of herding and their own future? In the sixth part, the study identifies strategic axes around which an inclusive consultation involving herders could be organised in order to identify ways and means of resolving the two crises - security and pastoral - which are feeding on each other and getting worse (Figure 1)

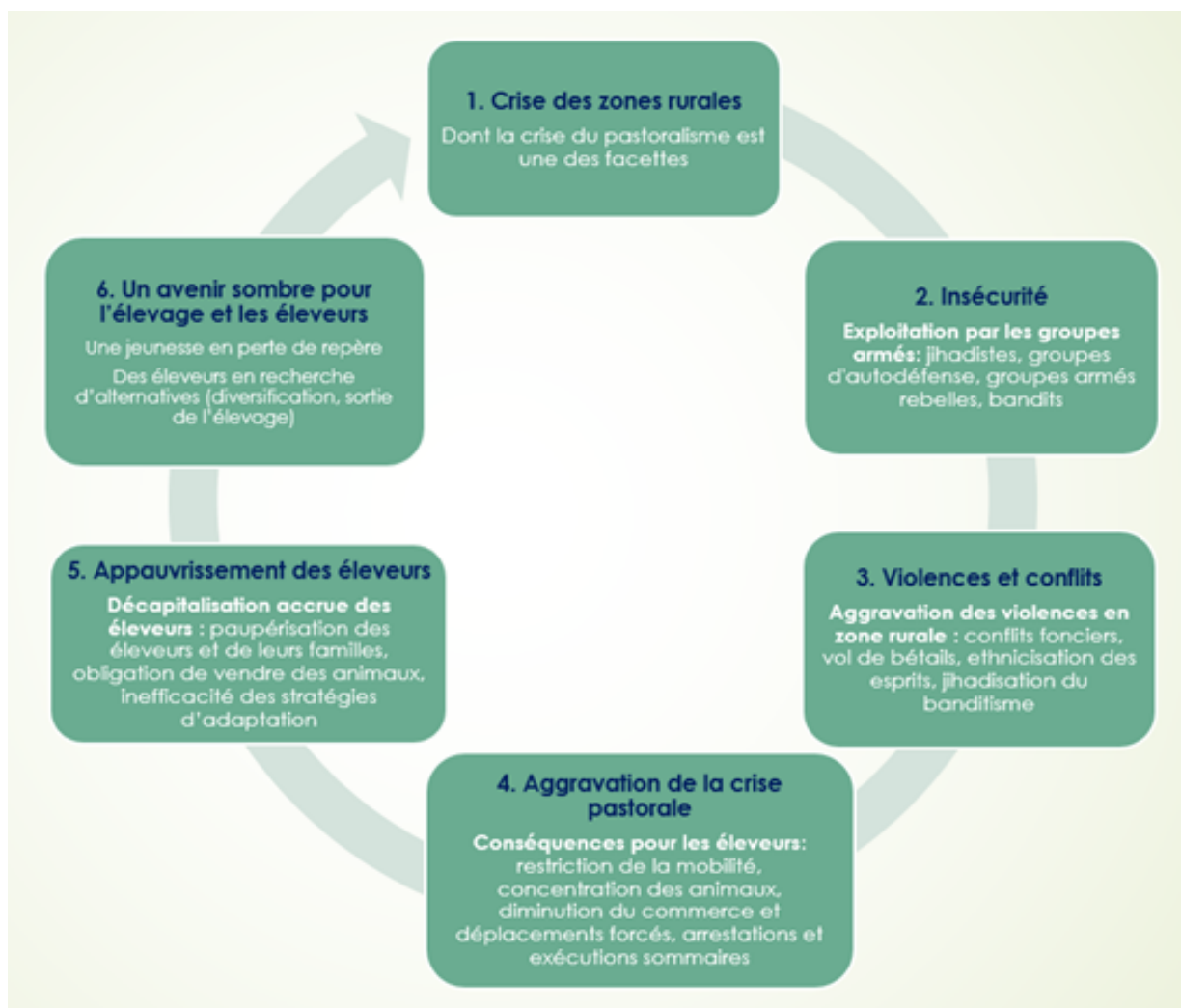


Figure 1: Vicious cycle of the pastoralist crisis



PART ONE

The pastoral crisis leaves
herders caught between
decapitalisation and injustice

The pastoral crisis is part of a general crisis of governance of rural areas. We will focus on this crisis of pastoralism. It provides a recruitment pool for armed movements, even if only a tiny minority of herders become involved. Solving the pastoral crisis could therefore help reduce the scale of the security crisis. It is therefore important to examine the causes and symptoms of this pastoral crisis, as it promotes conflicts, feeds injustices among pastoralists, and contributes to their decapitalisation.

I. EFFECTS OF THE PASTORAL CRISIS ON HERDERS: INCREASING INJUSTICE

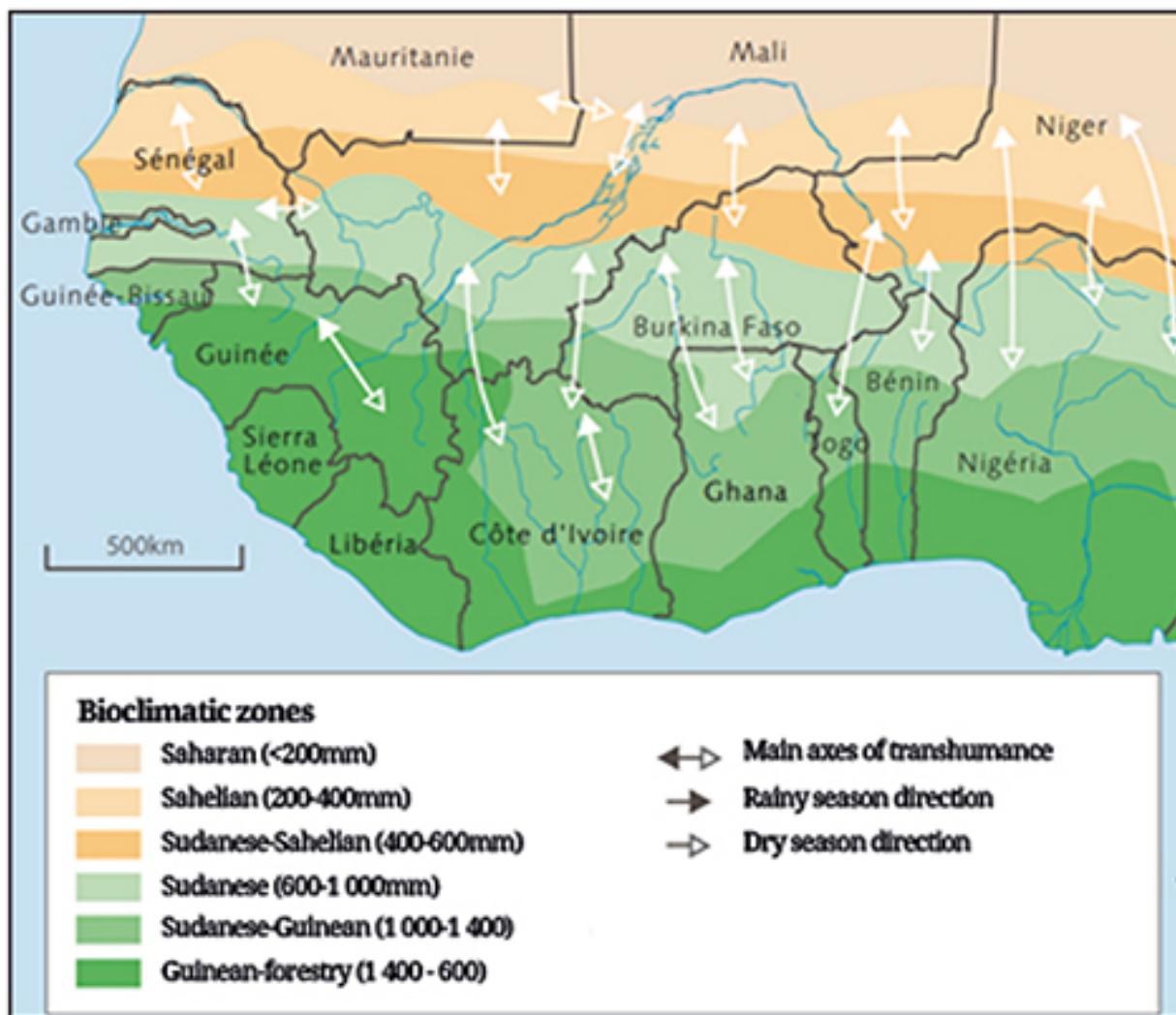
The pastoral crisis stems from major destructive trends observable at least since independence. This has led to increasing decapitalisation among herders and a growing sense of injustice among them. A variety of largely structural factors contribute to making herders and their herds ever more vulnerable, regardless of the current security crisis, the impact of which we will see later. This decapitalisation begins with the continuous decline in pastoral areas as a result of extending agricultural land, rurbanisation, and the commodification of land brought about by agribusiness. This land-grabbing fosters speculative tendencies conducive to the privatisation of land, to the detriment of pastoral land rights on which herders depend for access to pastoral resources.

Scarcity of pastoral resources and the decline in fodder biomass adversely affect animal productivity and force herders illegally to access resources on protected land or to circumvent resource-protection laws. This has created an industry of corruption and racketeering among government agents from which herders suffer across the Sahel. The fragmentation of pastoral areas, and in particular of transhumance routes and corridors, disrupts herders' mobility and drives encroachments on crop fields, causing rural conflicts for which herders inevitably pay. Changes to migration patterns increase the risk of death or illness among livestock. Changes in grazing and overexposure to diseases resulting from livestock concentration on less suitable pastures increase livestock's natural mortality rate. Both the reduction in quantity and the degradation in quality of pastures contribute globally to a decrease in fodder biomass, and therefore in the productivity and value of animals.

These dynamics affect pastoral mobility, essential for adapting to the spatial and temporal distribution of rainfall which determines the availability of fodder and water resources in arid and semi-arid zones.⁴ These routes are therefore optimised to seek the best grazing land. The security crisis limits or even suppresses entirely herders' mobility. Moving herds is becoming more and more expensive. There are invisible costs, difficult to quantify, linked to transhumance: "Harassment at border crossings, limited access to water or to grazing lands, the invasion of fields, cattle theft, armed robbery and blockades along herding routes are all difficulties that can arouse conflicts, the resolution of which often entails costs (money, animals)."⁵

⁴ Broadly speaking, herds leave the northern pastures at the start of the dry season, when crop residues in the fields have been exhausted. They travel at different speeds towards the pastures of the south, where they spend the rest of the dry season. Forage and water are more abundant there. The first rains come earlier, bringing vegetation back to life. The herds then gradually move north at the start of the rainy season, following the pattern of regrowth. They spend the rainy season in the pastures of the north. See Alexis Gonin, "Des pâturages en partage. Territoires du pastoralisme en Afrique de l'Ouest", *Revue Internationale des Etudes du Développement*, 2018.

⁵ Brigitte Thébaut, "La transhumance dans les pays côtiers : un enjeu vital à l'issue incertaine", NCG, February 2018.



Map 1: Bioclimatic zones and transhumance routes in the study area.
Source: Alexis Gonin, 2017.⁶

1. CHALLENGING PASTORAL LAND RIGHTS

The pastoral crisis is rooted in Sahelian states' inability to secure pastoral land. In the Sahel, this increasingly boils down to areas which have not yet been cultivated or which are not yet off-limits.

Pastoral land involves a variety of spaces⁷ access to and use of which are negotiated according to the context (drought, availability of water and fodder), over-occupation of space, animal health, etc.⁸ This system is based on reciprocity of access across a very large network of herders and farmers, and is self-regulated via consultation. The appropriation of spaces and facilities encourages the privatisation of land rights, putting the whole system in jeopardy. Outside their “home territories”, herders are often secondary

⁶ Alexis Gonin, “La terre est finie! Quel avenir pour le pastoralisme en Afrique de l’Ouest?”, *Métropolitiques*, 18 September 2017.

⁷ Pastures, farmland, markets, fallback areas or areas of sustainable migration, networks of water points, salt cures, networks of trails.

⁸ Brigitte Thébaud, “Le foncier dans le Sahel pastoral. Situation et perspectives”, date unknown.

rights holders.⁹ The “territorialisation of the bush”, to use Alexis Gonin’s expression, is largely detrimental to herders. It deepens their decapitalisation, intensifies conflict, and violates legal provisions in the Sahel.¹⁰

Usage rights have been increasingly privatised by agro-pastoralists and farmers. They therefore tend to tax herders’ access to water points or grazing fields, and sometimes even simply to prohibit this access. The privatisation of water points, including some public points, is a very strong dynamic, as will become apparent.¹¹ This change to access rights can sometimes be more insidious, imposed through agricultural practices less productive than “delimiting”. Planting trees for arboriculture makes it possible to establish ownership of a space over time, opening the way to compensation in the event of eviction. This is not the case for rainfed fields or flood plains. The same is true of early bush fires which make it possible to “protect” villages from herding, or of lad clearance, of which Alexis Gonin says that it “makes it possible to express, through agricultural development, the land-control limits claimed by a given village’s various indigenous lineages.”¹²

This appropriation dynamic reflects the decline in socio-professional complementarities between farmers and herders. As agro-pastoralists now own the majority of the Sahelian herd, they use their own oxen for animal husbandry and reserve access to crop residues for their own animals, which provide them with organic manure in return. The use of shepherds to drive animal mobility is sometimes the last link that can unite farmers, livestock owners, and herders. Our study sheds light on this undermining of complementary relationships and its impact on social cohesion.

- ◆ **In the Hauts-Bassins** in Banzon and Bama (Houet), farmers refuse herders access to crop residues in rice paddies in order to protect their infrastructures.
- ◆ **In the Gao region**, herders complain of unsanctioned wells and sumps or the unregulated occupation of wild fonio plains despite these being forbidden by the pastoral charter adopted in 2001.
- ◆ **In northern Nigeria**, a study showed farmers burned crop residues to deter herders from visiting their fields.¹³
- ◆ **In the Tillabéri region** in the first decade of the 2000s a number of conflicts began when farmers cleared and then prohibited herders access to certain areas.¹⁴

Since the 1990s, states have tried to regulate user rights by formalising them through rural, pastoral, and land codes, as well as through decentralisation policies promoting local natural-resources management. States are trying to reconcile these different rights: this is the meaning of the Agricultural Land Law (LFA) adopted in 2018 in Mali, of the 2009-34 rural land law in Burkina Faso, and of the Law on the Rural Code and the Pastoral Code adopted by Niger in 2010. In practice, lack of sufficient resources means these reforms are rarely if ever implemented and, when they are, they generate complications which (sometimes) reflect their relative inadequacy:

- ◆ **In Mali**, the Agricultural Land Law was the result of an consultative process acclaimed, in particular, for taking into account the opinions of POs.¹⁵ It recognises home territories and the priority rights of use associated with them. It establishes the recognition of collective customary land rights based on a local land-management system consisting of agricultural and land commissions at the municipal and village levels. So far, however, these Land Commissions (Cofos) suffer from membership and representativeness problems while the “two-tiered implementation of the LFA exacerbates people’s

⁹ Catherine Le Côme, Henk Nugteren, “Libérer le potentiel du pastoralisme pour développer l’Afrique de l’Ouest”, SNV, KIT, 2015. The home territory corresponds to the area where herders have been established for the longest time, where they return most regularly, and where they have the best-structured social network. In this space, they have privileged, but not exclusive, access to resources. See André Marty, 1993, Op. Cit.

¹⁰ Alexis Gonin, “Les éleveurs face à la territorialisation des brousses: repenser le foncier pastoral en Afrique de l’Ouest, *Annales de géographie*”, Armand Colin, 2016, 2 (707), p. 28-50

¹¹ For specific examples from the Zinder region (Niger), see IIED, “Droits fonciers et accès à l’eau au Sahel. Défis et perspectives pour l’agriculture et l’élevage”, 2006.

¹² Alexis Gonin, 2016, Op. Cit

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ IWGIA and AREN, 2011, Op. Cit.

¹⁵ See CTFP, “Les enjeux du foncier agricole et rural au Mali”, *Foncier et Développement*, n°30, March 2020

feelings of frustration.”¹⁶ In addition, unlike in Niger, Mali, and Burkina Faso, the village and communal scales chosen for the establishment of land commissions seem poorly adapted to the reality of the pastoral world. In Mali, the possibility of commissions dominated by tribal factions risks creating a legal puzzle for pastoral communities that come from one faction, but evolve in spaces controlled by village authorities.

- ◆ **In Burkina Faso**, pastoral policy suffers from a lack of clarity. The law on agro-silvo-pastoral, halieutic, and wildlife orientation was adopted in October 2015 while official strategies – in particular the 2002 law on pastoralism – emphasise the need to evolve towards intensive farming and have failed to effectively protect herders’ mobility.¹⁷ In terms of concerted resources-management, Law 034-2009 has allowed undeniable progress, enshrining land-policy decentralisation and authorising the development of municipal-level land charters to govern user rights, management of common-use areas, or local rules relating to land lending. This particularly complex law sought to regulate rural land tenure, but has proven limited in application. Very few land charters have been drawn up, and herders are often excluded from these processes despite the activism of certain pastoral associations:¹⁸ the NGO A2N contributed to land-charter development and is active in the institutions responsible for its operation and application in the Kougari pastoral zone (Dori, Sahel), while the NGO AGED has drawn up land charters in the province of Gourma in the east.¹⁹ This law nevertheless risks accentuating the commodification of rural land by providing a legal framework for it, largely to the detriment of agricultural and pastoral migrants who historically benefited from land loans. This trend is favoured by the deaths of patriarchs, which open the way to undermining old agreements (land loans, donations) by their heirs.
- ◆ **In Niger**, the Pastoral Code was the result of a broad consultation in which pastoral civil society played a particularly dynamic role, resulting in an innovative text. It fixes northern crop limit of crops to protect the pastoral zone from the agricultural front, explicitly recognises the right to mobility, and forbids the state from granting private concessions within pastoral zones. Only four decrees implementing the Pastoral Code have been issued, however; 14 are required, of which five relate directly to land use. Meanwhile, departmental and communal Land Commissions have yet to address the issue of formalising priority use rights (of pastoral wells and fodder resources) under the Rural Code. AREN has also successfully submitted several priority-right-of-use formalisation requests to the Land Commissions of Tahoua and Dosso. While insufficient, this formal recognition nevertheless provides legal protection for rights holders. Land Commissions must, however, operate in local political economies, where they might threaten the interests of some members. The result, as Abdoulaye Mohamadou demonstrated in the early 2000s in Tchintabaraden, may be that members don’t seek to implement them correctly.²⁰

In these three countries – and in Burkina Faso and Mali even more – the suitability of laws designed before the security crisis must be questioned. Today in central and northern Mali and in northern and eastern Burkina Faso, states struggle to fulfil their sovereign functions. Administrations’ control is often limited to urban areas. Various legal layers stack up without overlapping. This results in distortions and the confusion of law, customary law, and practices arising from the local political economy.²¹ Recent work in central Mali has highlighted clear examples.²² In Niger two parallel systems of land management coexist, despite clarifications offered by the Rural Code: the decentralised management provided for by the Rural Code and the traditional one, which bypasses land commissions. Thus, pastoral land in Niger is often said

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ For a detailed analysis of the 2002 law, see Clingendael Institute, “Between hope and despair. Pastoralist adaptation in Burkina Faso”, February 2021.

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ See A2N, 2019 Annual Report. See also AIB, “Gourma: Des structures locales de dialogue pour pacifier les rapports entre agriculteurs et éleveurs”, 18 February 2019.

²⁰ Abdoulaye Mohamadou, “Le foncier pastoral : construction des droits d’usage, pratiques de gestion et sécurisation foncière : une étude de cas dans la commune de Tchintabaraden (Niger)”, Colloque International, Montpellier, 2006.

²¹ This finding is not new. See, for example, Ced Hesse, Brigitte Thébaud, “La législation sur l’élevage nuit-elle aux pasteurs nomades au Sahel?” 2007.

²² Niagalé Bagayoko & Al, “Gestion des ressources naturelles et configuration des relations de pouvoir dans le Centre du Mali: entre ruptures et continuité”, African Security Network, June 2017.

to be sold illegally by village and township leaders.²³ The Sahelian political economy means that decisions taken to preserve pastoral resources – such as the inclusion in Niger of pastoral land in communes’ rural files – are often dead letters, killed by institutional weakness or overwhelming political and/or community interests. Designing laws that cannot be enforced by either the state or its citizens creates spaces conducive to various forms (both *ad hoc* and organised) of racketeering.

Coastal states have adopted texts that severely limit pastoral user rights as well as pastoral mobility.

Benin and Togo have implemented grazing taxes for cross-border transhumants (via a tax on entry to the territory) and other taxes for local benefit, even if bilateral agreements – such as that between Benin and Niger – have suspended these local taxes. In Ivory Coast, Law No. 2016-413 of 15 June 2016 relating to transhumance and the movement of livestock includes provisions promoting access by transhumants to specially dedicated fallback areas through the creation and development of “transhumant reception areas”, but also by prohibiting the conveyance of cattle on foot and taxing access to pastoral resources. Benin and Togo have established systems to strictly regulate livestock mobility by controlling the transhumance calendar, limiting the number of animals authorised to enter the territory, enforcing designated herding routes, etc. The provisions have tightened considerably since 2018, but it should be borne in mind that they reflect a fundamental dynamic in coastal countries. Benin prohibited transhumance on its territory from 1995 to 2003. The country demonstrates ambivalence, however, since at the same time the country adopted a Pastoral Code (Law 18-20 of 23 April 2019). Ghana and certain Nigerian states, such as Benue State, apply the same logic.

At the transnational level, ECOWAS established a regulatory framework on the mobility of livestock in community areas with the adoption of Decision A/DEC.5/10/98 and by Regulation C/REG.3/01/03 of 28 January 2003. These regulate and secure transhumance while respecting the right to the free movement of goods and people who lead herds in community areas. This text responds to the desire to promote peaceful relationships between rural areas’ various users. To strengthen this quest for peaceful transhumance, the countries concluded bilateral cooperation agreements. Cross-border movements of livestock are nevertheless often hampered by the persistence of old practices, as well as by the above-mentioned public policies.

If the question of user rights is central in the context of pastoral mobility, that of land ownership is essential for agro-pastoralists whose enterprise and investments require greater land-tenure security. This under-studied issue develops according to historical socio-political contexts. In the sub-Saharan zone, land rights remain limited for agro-pastoralists – who originate from nomadic communities – with the exception of the territories conquered by the Fulani Jihad of the 19th century. These include Macina in Mali, the Fulani Emirates in Burkina Faso (Liptako, Thiou, Barani...), and the Sokoto Caliphate in Nigeria (Sokoto State) and Niger (Banguï). In Burkina Faso, pastoralists (especially Fulani) who helped create the Mossi Kingdoms also have land rights. Agro-pastoralists otherwise very rarely succeed in securing land rights. This harms their territorial and socio-professional base and discourages transhumant herders from settling, despite the intentions behind most Sahelian and West African land laws. Niger’s Rural Code nevertheless provides for land ownership for sedentary herders, but here again the overlap with customary law complicates the situation. As part of this study, cases of agro-pastoralists without access to land or whose land had been expropriated were identified in most predominantly agricultural areas. This dynamic is exacerbated everywhere by land speculation:

- ◆ **In northern Ivory Coast and Burkina Faso’s Great West**, this was the perception observed in Bouna, Doropo, Kpéré, Gaoua, Kampti, Ouangolodougou, and Ferkessédougou. In most of these areas, especially in Gouin and Lobi areas, land is not sold, especially not to “non-native” herders. It remains customary property.²⁴ In Lobi country, settling herders in certain villages requires donating a bull and a sum that varies by locale. In the south west region, herders interviewed believe they are “banned from land ownership”.

²³ IIED, 2018, Op. Cit.

²⁴ See, e.g., **Patiende Pascal Nana**, “Du groupe à l’individu: dynamique de la gestion foncière en pays gouin (sud-ouest du Burkina Faso)”, *Belgeo*, 2018.

- ◆ **In the Boucle du Mouhoun**, in Kossi and Bourasso, agro-pastoralists renting land to cultivate risked having their rights challenged. This was the case in 2020 in the province of Balé, where the sale of land did not exist.
- ◆ In the **Hauts-Bassins**, in Tondogosso, Fulani herders who have been living in a camp for three generations are facing eviction after the loan agreement was challenged in court.
- ◆ **In Sikasso**, the situation is similar. According to one herder, “it is impossible for a Fulani herder to have a space in his name.” This precariousness exposes them to evictions, with some herders removed from their land as soon as clearing and organic manuring have made the land more attractive to customary landowners – often farmers.
- ◆ **In the Tillabéri region**, herders doubt their ability to access land ownership because their precarious land tenure would allow farmers to blackmail them. As one noted, “They are threatening to drive us out because we don’t have our own land. What would their levers be if we became owners?”

The issue of land ownership remains extremely sensitive in areas where herders of nomadic origin seek above all to maintain good relations with so-called “indigenous” communities. Many fear that land claims could damage these relations and accentuate the precariousness of their situation. In Burkina Faso, in particular, article 36 of Law 034-2009 greatly displeased customary owners by indicating that “the continuous, public, peaceful and unequivocal development of rural land for the purpose of rural production as *de facto* owner for at least thirty years,” could constitute a “basis of land ownership”. It has prompted many homeowners to question usage loan agreements to guard against such a risk.

2. CONFLICTS AND REDUCTION IN ACCESS TO RESOURCES

Increasingly widespread deprivation of access to essential resources such as land, fodder resources, and water demonstrate the threat to pastoral land rights. This livelihood-threatening dynamic is what drives herders. Such pressure is not new. From the end of the 1980s, livestock specialists in the Sahel warned the extension of cultivated areas threatened livestock.²⁵ The dynamic has since intensified. Farms now represent 22.4% of West African land, compared with 10.7% in 1975, driven by average annual population growth of 3%.²⁶ Most of the regions affected by the continuous advance of agricultural fronts are reaching land saturation.²⁷ The Sahelian zone is only slightly affected by this phenomenon due to soil aridity, lack of water, and lower population densities. Northern Mopti, the Gourma in Mali, northern Soum, and Oudalan are thus spared from these difficulties, as a herder from the commune of Nassoumbou (Soum) reminds us: “Here we have enough space for our animals and also for those who want to cultivate, but the priority is animals, which have vast spaces reaching as far as Mali.” Elsewhere, including in the southern part of these same provinces, crops encroach on pastures, border water points, and tend to encroach on transhumance trails. They hamper herds’ mobility, undermine pastoral use rights, and promote conflicts between the various rights holders. In all the Sudano-Sahelian zones covered by the study, herders complained about the erosion of pastoral land by agriculture. It should be emphasised that this is not necessarily done by sedentary people, but sometimes also by individuals from nomadic communities and in particular former slave communities (Bellah, Rimaibe) or agro-pastoralists. Other factors – some structural, others cyclical – drive this reduction in pastoral resources.

²⁵ André Marty noted that the primary cause of competition between agriculture and livestock was the reduction of pastoral space in favour of cultivated areas. See André Marty, 1993, Op. Cit. In 1988, Brigitte Thébaud wondered about the future of herders in Niger in the face of the continued agricultural expansion supported by development projects unsuited to the reality of the pastoral world. See Brigitte Thébaud, “Élevage et développement au Niger. Quel avenir pour les éleveurs du Sahel?”, 1988.

²⁶ <https://eros.usgs.gov/westafrica/agriculture-expansion>. According to SIPSA’s slightly more alarmist data, cultivated areas in the Sahel have multiplied by 2.5 between 1970 and 2012.

²⁷ Alexis Gonin, 2016, Op. Cit.

STRUCTURAL FACTORS: POPULATION GROWTH, INTERNAL MIGRATION, AND CLIMATE CHANGE

- ◆ **Continuous population growth** since independence is the most obvious structural dynamic pressurising access to resources. It is accompanied by a concomitant increase in food needs, the satisfaction of which depends in part on increased agricultural production. Several underlying structural trends fuel this dynamic: the absence of intensified agricultural production methods (apart from the spread of harnessed cultivation, which contributes to the spread of agricultural land), reduced land fertility – noted by almost everyone interviewed for this study – and diversification of production methods. Indeed, the development of agro-pastoralism and agro-breeding favours the cultivation of new areas to increase crop sizes.
- ◆ **The expansion of agricultural lands is also driven largely by the internal migration of mainly sedentary populations.** People migrate to seek employment (in agriculture) or new cultivable land, encouraged sometimes by public policies and agricultural projects. This is particularly observable in Burkina Faso, where some scientifically qualify the phenomenon of “agricultural colonisation” of populations mainly from the Centre, Centre-Nord, and Nord regions, all three saturated with cultivable land.²⁸
 - ◆ **Burkina Faso’s Great West** is historically prone to internal migrations.²⁹ In the **Boucle du Mouhoun** in particular, the arrival of large numbers of long-term agricultural migrants has upended demographic balances, with migrants outnumbering customary owners. In the provinces of Sourou, Banwa, and Mouhoun, banana plantations – which are detrimental to livestock farming – were established along the watercourses mostly by agricultural migrants who came from the Nord and Centre-Nord regions in the 1990s.
 - ◆ In the **Burkinabè Sahel**, these migrations have increased competition for access to land, which we will see is closely linked to the insecurity prevalent in the area. In **Seno**, agricultural migration mainly concerns Gorgadji. This Centre-Nord border town has vast pastoral lands – including the Peterguesse pastoral zone – coveted by farmers from the Centre-Nord. In **Soum**, the same migratory pressure has been observable since the mid-2000s, with people coming from the Centre-Nord and Nord regions. The same tensions resulted. These were exploited by armed groups starting in 2016.

The WAPOK zone is an area of high agricultural migration, creating increasing need for land:

- ◆ In the **Est region**, Mossi migratory pressure from the Centre-Nord can be seen mainly in the province of Gourma and to a lesser extent in Tapoa, which explains why land disputes are concentrated in this area.
- ◆ In **northern Togo**, respondents maintain that internal agricultural migrants from Dapaong or Cinkassé and regional migrations from Burkina Faso have contributed to the saturation of certain areas such as Mandouri, Bagré, and Oti.
- ◆ In **northern Bénin**, land saturation in Materi, Tanguiéta, Cobly, Malanville, and Karimama is in part linked to the arrival in large numbers of herders and farmers from Burkina Faso, Niger, and Nigeria.

Migratory pressures also result from population displacements for security reasons. In Burkina Faso, in the west and east of the country, the need for land between 2009 and 2014 was driven by the forced return of Burkinabè – the vast majority of whom are farmers of Mossi origin – from Ivory Coast. Some settled in developed pastoral areas. The current security crisis has generated displacement flows among the farming communities of the Centre-Nord and the Nord regions since 2019, generating increased need for arable land. In 2020 in Sidéradougou (Cascades) 2,100 displaced people from these areas expressed such needs; this was in addition to the needs of Burkinabè expelled from Ivory Coast, creating a local speculative land

²⁸ Bernard Tallet, “Comment gérer un espace fini ? Nouveaux enjeux fonciers en zone de colonisation agricole dans l’Ouest du Burkina Faso”, Conference proceedings, 2003.

²⁹ Peter Hochet, *La terre, l’étranger et le citoyen: les relations sociales et politiques à propos de la terre dans un village bwa*, Paris, 2012.

bubble. The arrival of agricultural and pastoral migrants in the South-West region increased pressure on resources there, as well.

- ◆ **Climate change** is a last major trend that affects the intensity of agricultural cultivation, internal and regional migrations, and unbalances the herder-farmer relationship, fostering tensions between them. The impact of climate change should not be overestimated, however.³⁰ In terms of migration, periods of drought trigger displacement to wetter areas, but this movement also results from more structural dynamics related to optimised pastoral mobility.³¹ Historically, the great droughts of 1972, 1973, 1984, and 1985 led to profound social upheaval. The severe decapitalisation of herders caused their social downgrading and led them to migrate south. Analyses of rainfall since 1960 have concluded that there is a 15% deficit of rainfall events since the droughts of the 1970s and 1980s, and a 40% increase in intense rains in the Sahel, resulting in more severe dry periods, and higher precipitation when it rains (heavy storms and droughts).³² The farmers interviewed confirmed this scientific finding: they feel the effects of aridity, variability of the rains, and extreme episodes. According to them, seasonal variability translates into random and changing seasons, marked by heavy rain and rainy seasons which start and end at random and are therefore unpredictable. A herder from Djibo sums up the situation in these terms: “Today herders live in complete uncertainty.”³³

According to the herders interviewed, this irregularity of the seasons, and consequently of the filling of ponds and watercourses, brings about conflicts with farmers since it would be at the origin of the herders’ often early arrival at and their delayed departure from fields:

- ◆ **In Gao**, late onset of the rains forces herders waiting to begin transhumance to settle in the Niger River Valley, where the last water points in the region remain, causing conflicts with farmers who grow rice in the minor bed of the river, traditionally reserved for bourgou fields.
- ◆ **In the Cascades region**, herders note that some ponds are drying early due to the lengthening of the dry season and the shortening of the rainy season from six months to only four or five. This contributes to fodder scarcity. Fodder is now available only three months of the year, whereas previously it was present year-round.
- ◆ **In the regions of Tahoua and Maradi**, the movement of animals from north to south early – that is to say before fields are liberated – is one of the main causes of rural conflicts in Matankari, Birni Lallé, Dogondoutchi, and Dogon Kiria, leading to fines and lawsuits. This early descent is linked to the drying up of ponds in pastoral areas, without ruling out that insecurity in North Tillabéri and North Tahoua may also play a role. While field clearance generally occurs between 8 and 15 December, it sometimes is delayed as late as 31 December, or even longer in a few rare cases. Conversely, herders are often forced to delay their departure north because of the late onset of rains in pastoral areas. Their rise sometimes causes damage to the countryside. In the departments of Dogondoutchi, Bagaroua, and Konni, to access on the rangeland pastures, transhumant herders are forced to cross fallow land, causing damage.

While climate change, population growth, and migration can increase pressures on resources, they do not in themselves explain the conflicts that result above all from socio-political dynamics. These are the result of agro-silvo-pastoral public policies and the local political economy, that is to say, local power relations that guide the governance of rural territories. Tor Benjaminsen demonstrates this at the scale of central Mali: “if the scarcity of resources can theoretically contribute to the increase in the number of conflicts, state

³⁰ On this, see Leif Brottem Andrew McDonnell, “Pastoralism and Conflict in Sudano-Sahel: A Review of the Literature”, Search For Common Ground, July 2020. More recently, see also International Crisis Group, “Le Sahel central, théâtre des nouvelles guerres climatiques?”, *Briefing* n° 154, 24 avril 2020.

³¹ The “climate refugees” of the 1984 drought in the sub-Saharan zone are thus less numerous than those who subsequently joined this zone out of opportunism. See Thomas Bassett, Matthew Turner, “Sudden Shift or Migratory Drift? Fulbe Herd Movements to the Sudano-Guinean Region of West Africa”, *Human Ecology*, 2007, 35(1).

³² Thierry Lebel, Gérémy Panthou, Théo Vischel, “Au Sahel, pas de retour à la normale après la ‘grande sécheresse’”, *The Conversation*, 12 November 2018.

³³ Ian Scoones, “Living with Uncertainty: New Directions in Pastoral Development in Africa”, Institute of Development Studies, 1995.

policy – which leads to the marginalisation of pastoralists – constitutes a much more important element. decisive explanation of the multiplication of conflicts in the interior delta zone in Mali.”³⁴

FACTORS ARISING FROM THE POLITICAL ECONOMY OF LAND IN THE CENTRAL SAHEL

In addition to these structural and largely natural phenomena over which public authorities have relatively little control, there are factors that are much more relevant to the political economy of the land sector in these areas. This concept of “political economy” refers to the way in which national public policies, intervention by partners, local decision-making processes, and the weight of sedentary communities and local or national political notabilities on these intervene to circumvent/hijack the law. All of this contributes to creating imbalances in access to resources, which in the Central Sahel appear to be generally unfavorable to herders.

THE EFFECT OF CASH CROPS

Throughout the region, commercial production of cash crops grown to meet external demand are undoubtedly the more important driver of expansion of cultivated areas: cotton, rice, sesame, cashew, mango, etc. The situation which prevails in **KénéDougou** – cotton basin of the sub-region – is worrisome in this respect.

- ◆ **In Burkina Faso**, which, with 39%, has the highest percentage of agricultural land in West Africa, the Great West is an agricultural pioneer front. This race for land certainly pits farmers against herders, but also pits non-native against indigenous farmers. In the livestock sector that interests us here, in the Hauts Bassins and Boucle du Mouhoun, the growth of agricultural holdings is felt where cotton and fruit (especially cashews) are expanding. In Karangasso Vigué, in the space of 15 years, fields of cotton, cashew trees, and mango trees – to which is now added artisanal gold mining – have absorbed most of the pasture areas in some villages, including Diosso and Bio.
- ◆ **In northern Ivory Coast**, in Tchologo, of the 20 herders interviewed, 15 believe that the main source of insecurity is linked to market gardening and plantations (mangos and cashews) which encroach on areas reserved for breeding, which are too few in number.
- ◆ **In the Sikasso region**, the continuous expansion of cotton production has led to a virtual saturation of agricultural land since the end of the 1990s, causing a decline in plant cover due to land clearing.³⁵ In the cotton zone, the growth rate of cultivated areas was estimated at 7% per year in 2000.³⁶ This growth is largely to the detriment of common areas, and in particular the grazing plains of these areas.³⁷ In addition to cotton, interviewees in Kléla (Sikasso circle) also complain about the impact of growing onions and potatoes.
- ◆ Herder from Maro (Kléla): “All existing pastures are potential fields. You stay in a pasture or a yard, and the following year, in the same place, you come across a field and your animals cause damage. Every year there are new agricultural developments.”

³⁴ Tor Arve Benjaminsen, “Changements climatiques et conflits au Sahel”, in Denis Gautier et al., *Environnement, discours et pouvoir*, Editions Quæ, “Update Sciences & Technologies”, 2012, pp 181- 200.

³⁵ Between 1960 and 2013, agricultural land in Ziguena increased by 47%, while the vegetation cover reduced 54.90%. Abdou Ballo, Souleymane Sidi Traoré, Baba Coulibaly, Cheick Hamalla Diakité, Moriké Diawara, Alou Traoré, Sidi Dombélé, “Pressions Anthropiques Et Dynamique D’occupation Des Terres Dans Le Terroir De Ziguéna, Zone Cotonnière Du Mali”, *European Scientific Journal* February 2016 edition vol.12, No.5.

³⁶ Republic of Mali, “Étude prospective du secteur forestier en Afrique”, Direction Nationale de la Conservation de la Nature, 2000.

³⁷ On this subject, see Abdou Ballo, Salif Ballo, “L’impact de l’agriculture sur les aires de pâture dans la commune Gouanan au Mali”, *Revue de géographie du L’ARDYMEs*, June 2019.

In addition to Kéné Dougou, other regions are developing cash crops in areas that are also devoted to herding:

- ◆ In the **Inner Niger Delta**, the paradox of “concomitant growth of cultivated areas and herds” was highlighted in 1985, leaving *de facto* less and less pasture for herders.³⁸ This paradox has expanded under the notable effect of the exponential growth of rice crops promoted by the state, which encroaches on the bourgou fields.³⁹ Throughout the Inner Delta, but in particular in areas such as Diondiori, Dia, Sougoulbé, and Karéri where herders and farmers meet, conflicts are on the rise, linked to the non-respect of passages by transhumants, but also to the obstruction of passages leading to aquatic pastures (burti), to cultivation on stocking areas and even on plains reserved for bovids by farmers.
- ◆ In **Burkina’s East region**, the extension of cotton and sesame fields in Pama, Diapaga, or Tapoa has caused recurrent rural damage since the mid-2000s, sometimes leading to the destruction of Fulani camps. Even though the Gourmantché population is predominantly agro-pastoral, these localised conflicts have caused conflict between individuals from these two communities.

ACCESS TO WATER

The overcrowding of water points automatically creates problems around watering and pasture access for herders.

- ◆ In **southwestern Niger**, in Bagaroua, market gardening around Dan Douchi’s permanent pond makes it difficult for herds to access water and creates regular access conflicts. In addition, herders are accused by fishermen of damaging their fishing nets. In Konni, in the Maggia Valley, a Fulani notable complained that herders have lost access to a pastoral well because of cultivation around the well.
- ◆ In **Burkina Faso’s Great West**, there are many examples. In the **Hauts Bassins**, the banks of water points occupied by farmers are subject to damage by animals. In the **Boucle de Mouhoun**, in Dédougou and Tchérība, herders from many villages have difficulty accessing the Mouhoun river and its tributaries because of the saturation of space. Around Dédougou, farmers are prevented from accessing water by the installation of vegetable gardens and banana plantations within 100m of natural water points (despite this being banned by law). The situation is similar in Ouarkoye, where the almost systematic occupation of the river banks by arborists and banana gardens contributes to the saturation of areas dedicated to livestock. In **Cascades**, in Banfora, during the development of the Bodadiougou land charter, indigenous herders were not allowed to retain use of the only trail allowing animals to be taken to the village watering point during the rainy season. Herders believe that this refusal is intended to push them into leaving their camps so they will lose their access to land granted by previous generations of farmers. The undermining of the most precarious land rights by the new generation is quite frequent, and is just as much to the detriment of agricultural migrants.
- ◆ In the **northern Ivory Coast**, the pastoral boreholes built in Ferkessedougou in the 1980s to promote the sedentarisation of herders have gradually been taken over by local farmers, who now impose access conditions (tariffs) on herders. The blockage of water points by market gardeners, crop damage, and the ban on watering animals are a source of recurring conflicts. The saturation of access to these boreholes disrupts herders’ mobility, leading them to occupy undeveloped areas. Herders met in Tchologo also complain of being unable to access water points in certain villages in the commune of Kampti due to opposition from the Lobis, who prevent the animals from drinking. This regularly triggers conflicts.
- ◆ In **central Mali**, in the zone overseen by the Office du Niger, lack of water is central to tensions between farmers and herders: after the rainy season, the herders in transhumance in the exposed area are forced to return in October to the flooded area due to lack of water despite the existence of infrastructure intended for breeding, but which would be appropriated by farmers. In exposed areas, in

³⁸ Quoted by Cédric Jourde, Marie Brossier, Modibo Ghaly Cissé, “Prédation et violence au Mali : élites statutaires peules et logiques de domination dans la région de Mopti”, *UQAM*, 2018.

³⁹ Kadidia Nianti, Bouaré Trianneau. “Dynamiques spatiales et mobilités paysannes: les relations agriculture/élevage dans deux terroirs agro-pastoraux du Delta intérieur du fleuve Niger (Mali)”, *Sciences de l’Homme et Société*. Université de Poitiers, 2012.

the sandy plains of the Dogon country, Fulani hamlets are increasingly dependent on Dogon farmers for access to water points.

- ◆ In **northern Tillabéri**, in Aboyok village, a deadly conflict arose when farmers blocked access to water points. In Weidabangou (Banibangou), the cultivation of gardens since the 1990s has gradually deprived herders of access to village ponds. This has led to herders committing rural damage after which they had to pay a fine of XOF 1,000,000 without any authority having intervened. A herder from this village testifies: “The farmers often go to the heart of the pastoral zone to make fields around the ponds without the state reacting.”
- ◆ In **northwestern Nigéria**, in **Sokoto and Zamfara** states, access to water points is mentioned as a source of frustration for most herders and a major source of conflict with farmers. In Sokoto, a pastoral leader from the Isa area confesses: “If the water points and the roads leading to them were preserved as was the case before, I assure you that there would not be any of this insecurity.”

ENCROACHMENT ON AREAS DEDICATED TO LIVESTOCK

Trails and transhumance roads are often blocked, grazing areas, pastoral enclaves, and stockage areas are regularly occupied, and, when they are preserved, suffer from a lack of infrastructure, all as an immediate consequence of the extension of cultivated land. This trend is one of the main obstacles to pastoral mobility, in particular to transhumance, which now looks like an “obstacle course”, to use Brigitte Thébaut’s analysis.⁴⁰

Livestock trails are often obstructed across the entire area. In **Burkina Faso**, there are no longer any cattle trails connecting the towns of Djibo (Soum) and Fada N’Gourma (Est region) to the bush. Here, as in **southwestern Niger**, the situation is the same: herders are forced to take paved or lateritic roads which are not only dangerous due to road traffic, but also risky for herders because of the fields bordering the tar. A Soum leader questioned “the laxity of the state, its representatives and communities” on this matter. It is one of the main sources of conflict in most of the study area. In **northern Ivory Coast and the Sud-Ouest region of Burkina**, 72% of the transhumants questioned say that social relations with resident farmers are conflictual and attribute this primarily to the obstruction of tracks, which leads to damage to the countryside. In **northwestern Nigéria**, herders all complain about encroachment on pastoral land, which they consider central to tensions and violence between herders and farmers in the area. A young herder from Sabon Birni (Sokoto state) illustrates this reality: “When you arrive in the city, look at all the herds on the highway, it is not normal for a herder and it is the result of the disappearance of trails and grazing areas. The animals run in the middle of the cars and that causes a lot of accidents and conflicts.”

Pastoral areas or enclaves intended to guarantee herders access to fodder, including in agricultural areas, are too often occupied by farmers or agro-pastoralists, especially in Niger and Burkina Faso. After establishing a crop field, they will gradually bring their families and settle permanently:

- ◆ In **Est in Burkina Faso**, the majority of conflicts between farmers and herders concern pastoral areas in a context of pressure from agricultural migrants from the Centre-Nord. In the majority of cases, as in the pastoral zone of Peli (Gayeri), Koukounfouanou, Potiamanga, and Ouro-Seni, authorities created these zones without ever having had the means to secure their access. Even when the authorities ordered “evictions”, the farmers eventually returned. Conflicts related to grazing areas are among the most likely to cause community conflict.⁴¹
- ◆ In the **Burkinabè Sahel**, in Tongomayel (Soum), the Fetoo hoore traditional pastoral zone used by herders from Soum, Centre-Nord, and other regions has since 2012 been occupied by farmers from the Centre-Nord region.
- ◆ In **Cascades**, the pastoral zone in Sidéradougou is said to be occupied by farmers who began by exploiting fodder crops (in the name of modernising animal husbandry), before replacing them with corn and then cotton.

⁴⁰ Annabelle Powell, Brigitte Thébaut, “Economies locales: que laissent les transhumants derrière eux ?”, Inter-reseaux.org, 2017

⁴¹ For details on each of these disputes, see Etude de l’AFD sur la région de l’Est, in preparation for publication, 2020.

- ◆ In the **exposed floodplains of central Mali**, the majority of conflicts between herders and farmers result from farming on transhumance tracks (as in 2011, when the Sékou Amadou track caused conflict in Koubaye), stocking areas (as in Soye in December 2013), and the grazing areas called *harima* (Korombana in 2015).
- ◆ In **southwestern Niger**, most of the grazing areas have been farmed. The large grazing area in Yani, where three departments (Dogondoutchi, Filingué, and Loga) meet saw the rate of agricultural cultivation rise from 0.90% in 1972 to 21.28% in 2017.⁴² The Madatiya grazing area (Allélà, Tahoua) has shrunk by 20% since 2016. In the region of Maradi, this encroachment is criticised by all the herders in the communes of Sarkin Yamma, Chadakori, and Guidan Sori.
- ◆ In **northern Bénin**, the areas bordering the W National Park (Buffer Zone) and that of Pendjari (Controlled Occupation Zone) are intended for shared occupation by farmers, herders, and even traditional healers, but today they are mainly occupied by crops, including those planted by populations from Burkina Faso and Niger. This generates conflicts (see box) and forces some herders to enter the park at the risk of being apprehended by rangers. In June 2020, a herder was killed and four others injured by rangers in Wagnadjè (Karimama) while searching for lost cattle.
- ◆ In **northern Togo**, of three areas identified, one was affected without the consent of the population and another lack of water points. In the end, the usable area for transhumants was only 28,000 ha, instead of the 84,500-ha planned.⁴³

⁴² Abdoul Hadi Kassoum, Mahamadou Sani Moussa, Boureima Amadou, “Dynamique d’occupation des espaces pastoraux dans l’ouest du Niger, de l’anthropisation au changement climatique: cas de l’aire de pâturage Yani”, *Cahier du Foncier au Tchad*, Vol.2, December 2019.

⁴³ Brigitte Thébaud, “La transhumance dans les pays côtiers: un enjeu vital à l’issue incertaine”, NCG, February 2018.

THE WORRYING FREQUENCY OF CONFLICTS OVER RESOURCES IN NORTHERN BENIN

Conflicts between herders and farmers are both common and very violent across the different regions of northern Benin, especially in the communes of Karimama, Malanville, Tanguiéta, and Colby, and to a lesser extent in Banikoara, Kandi, Materi, and Toucountouna.

On the outskirts of W National Park, conflicts in and near the villages of Karimama and Malanville are generally linked to the occupation of land (or the cutting of leaves) and to water points. Three particularly deadly conflicts have arisen since 2016, killing 28 people in all. In the area bordering Pendjari Park, the frequency and intensity of conflicts are similar. Several deadly conflicts have occurred in Coby since 2010, killing at least 16 people. A conflict in Materi in 2017 led to the burning of five Fulani camps. In Tanguiéta, in 2018, two conflicts led to the destruction of 80 huts belonging to Fulani herders. Beyond the loss of life, each of these conflicts has been accompanied by the destruction, loss, or theft of livestock.

These conflicts occur in a historical context of contested Fulani usage rights. The sedentary communities accuse the Fulani of being “outsiders” whose land rights they don’t recognise. This promotes the communitarianisation of conflicts. These conflicts usually start from simple damage to the countryside or a customary dispute, but often lead to punitive expeditions against Fulani hamlets, then to major population displacements in the targeted villages. This is not without cause for concern given the area’s exposure to penetration by armed groups.

The authorities have reacted with ambivalence. Local elected officials and some customary chiefs are accused of supporting the sedentary communities they de facto represent. Fortunately, in Benin, the DSF and the judiciary generally have so far arrested those responsible and prevented the escalation of violence, but the climate of tension between the communities continues.

PRESSURE ON LOWLANDS AND FLOODED AREAS

Since the end of the 1980s, the need for new land to compensate for the lack of substantial growth in agricultural yields has led to encroachment on pastoral areas in lowlands and flooded areas, thanks in particular to small-scale irrigation. The exploitation of lowlands by farmers has spread increasingly throughout the areas bordering the Sahelian and Sudano-Sahelian zones, a configuration particularly conducive to conflict since these lands are often exploited by transhumant communities and coveted by sedentary populations:

- ◆ In the **Burkinabè Sahel**, new agricultural cultivation has appeared since the mid-2000s targetting these areas, whether in Djibo, Arbinda, Kelbo, Tongomayel, and Pobé-Mengao in Soum, in Oudalan, or in Seno. Conflicts around lowlands have been triggered, for example, in Béléhédé (Soum) and Désou (Oudlalan) in connection with the above-mentioned arrival of agricultural migrants.
- ◆ In **northern Togo**, in Kpendjari, herders claim that ten years ago the entire Kpendjari plain was a forest – therefore a breeding area – which has today been turned into farms, even in the shallows.

RURBANISATION

Rurbanisation or peri-urban growth is a direct consequence of demographic growth and the expansion of urban as well as rural communities. In both Burkina Faso and Mali, the rapid expansion of cities is generating speculative real-estate bubbles in which local authorities and construction companies are often complicit.

Rapidly developing subdivision policies derive less from the need to meet the social needs of citizens than from speculative logic:

- ◆ In the **Great West of Burkina Faso**, the urban expansion of Bobo-Dioulasso to a radius of 50km has reduced the grazing areas. Villages that received transhumants no longer have available space. In smaller rural municipalities, including in the Sahel and Centre-Nord, subdivision policies have led to the same phenomenon.
- ◆ In **Tillabéri**, a recent cartographic inventory documented that pastoral areas have been purchased, demarcated, and subdivided in several municipalities close to Niamey (Bittinkodj, N'Dounga, and Torodi).⁴⁴ The international transhumance corridor that connects Niger to Burkina Faso via Torodi is also blocked.⁴⁵ In the departments of Kollo, Ouallam, Abala, and Filingué, cases of the sale of community lands by certain village chiefs with the complicity of judges and politicians, such as the pastoral lands bought in Kollo in 2010 by a national deputy, have caused a stir.⁴⁶
- ◆ In the **regions of Tahoua and Maradi**, the expansion of rural and urban communes ended up absorbing transhumance corridors. In Madaoua, Guidan Roundji, and Chadakori, transhumant herders now cross these municipalities in a climate of permanent hostility that has already caused armed conflicts.

It should be noted, however, that this rurbanisation is also the work of agro-pastoralists and agro-pastoralists, notably through the development of so-called periurban livestock farming throughout the Sahel, in particular in KénéDougou, where modern farms are multiplying. For reasons of profitability, they are often located on the immediate outskirts of cities.

LACK OF A HOLISTIC VISION OF PUBLIC POLICIES AND PROJECTS

Deprivation of access to pastoral resources is also often the result of public policies or development projects that prioritise sectoral approaches suffering from a lack of holistic vision, promoting agriculture, environmental protection, or even hunting to the detriment of pastoral use rights. They then unbalance local socioeconomic relations.

Public policies promoting agriculture are intended to support external demand for products from cash crops and/or to meet the needs expressed by the agricultural workforce. For example, in **northwestern Nigeria, in particular in Zamfara State**, some herders blame the authorities for having rented to farmers a lot of land belonging to herders and made valuable by the organic manuring of their animals. This greatly fueled tensions between these social groups. In the **Great West of Burkina Faso**, the state has for a long time encouraged the establishment of large agricultural projects and is currently supporting the development of arboriculture (cashew nuts). This dynamic was accentuated by the resale of old pastoral concessions signed by the state in the 1980s with a view to creating developed pastoral zones. In **the Hauts Bassins**, several herders explained the inconsistencies in public policies, especially when the Ministry of Agriculture provides cotton inputs to farmers located in pastoral areas, or when the Ministry of the Environment authorises the production of charcoal in a developed pastoral zone whereas this is formally prohibited by law. Some herders complain that the state promotes the use of tractors by farmers, contributing to the extension of cultivated areas to the detriment of pastoral areas, while herders do not have any similar technical means for breeding (balers, mowers, etc.). It results in a feeling of injustice.

Policies for developing grazing areas illustrate this lack of a holistic vision. Ostensibly intended to preserve pastoral resources, they often result in making herders more vulnerable. The assisted natural regeneration operations of these areas are carried out with the aim of combating desertification and restoring productive capital. Herders in the Tahoua and Maradi regions have been very critical of these operations, which deprive them of access to pasture during the period of land reclamation and restoration of fodder

⁴⁴ RBM, La sécurisation du foncier pastoral, 2015.

⁴⁵ Ibid.

⁴⁶ Between 2008 and 2014, 33,828 ha of community pastoral land were granted 269 land titles nationwide. Florence Bron-Saïdatou, "La gouvernance foncière au Niger: malgré des acquis, de nombreuses difficultés", Inter-Réseaux, 17 September 2015.

potential, then the five years that the site is off-limits. During this period, animals that enter the area are fined, all cutting of wood and grass is prohibited for the population, including the collection and sale of straw. These provisions are considered unsuitable in the general context of scarcity of resources, forcing herders to modify their routes, even though the conditions provided for by the Rural Code are not respected, namely that such rehabilitation must be at the request of the herders themselves. In Maradi, herders from Rouga Hardo Marini, Rouga Hassan, and Chadakori strongly criticised the attitude of the administration, which forbids herders from accessing these areas while agents of the technical services of the environment are accused of collecting seeds of local wild species, dry grass, pods from fodder trees, and firewood, all for resale. According to a herder in Alléla, during the fallow period, farmers would take the opportunity to encroach on the area and establish permanent fields. In Bermo another herder complained that “farmers are authorised to cut wood or collect straw there.”

Conservationist policies adopted to preserve natural parks and hunting tourism offer another illustration, widely used in the areas studied, of unbalanced policies which frustrate the various users of natural resources, including herders. As early as 1990, Gérard Sournia foresaw the untenable nature of conservationist models in French-speaking Africa, where protected areas are like “pantries surrounded by hunger”.⁴⁷ Since then, states have attempted a number of initiatives to increase local community participation in wildlife and floral-resources management, such as the Zones villageoises d'intérêt cynégétique (ZOVIC) in Burkina Faso, but these have proven insufficient to counteract the negative effects of policies that are still too exclusionary, and are particularly harmful to herders, as has also been documented in other contexts.⁴⁸ ZOVICs have been criticised in Burkina Faso because they often exclude herders from their management. This community-participation mechanism is in no way immune to the local political economy, which neglects the role of herders.

- ◆ **Burkina Faso** has received a lot of attention due to the large number of protected areas, especially in the Est region. In 2010, Alexis Kaboré noted that across Burkina Faso what are “protected areas for some” were “the bush for others”, namely rural populations for whom the means of existence as much as the attachment to the symbolic dimension of land (like the Gourmantché in eastern Burkina Faso, for example) take precedence over any conservationist logic.⁴⁹ Frustration among the various users of resources grew, fueled by multifaceted injustices – including forced displacement accompanied by physical violence, as occurred after the opening of hunting areas in 1996 in the Est region.⁵⁰ The inaccessibility of these areas resulted in armed local groups, whether they were farmers, fishermen, or poachers, but also herders.⁵¹ It has been documented with precision that among the combatants who joined these groups were individuals “evicted” during the 1990s. These policies are in part ineffective and unfair. Ineffective because they fuel an industry of corruption in all the regions studied in Burkina Faso. In eastern Burkina Faso, they have become “a real business” benefiting foresters, as noted, for example, by an association president in a commune of Fada N’Gourma. Unfair because herders would often be the only ones to have to pay to access these areas.
- ◆ Beyond the Est, which is often the focus of attention on this subject, in the **Great West of Burkina Faso**, similar discrimination in access to classified forests to the detriment of herders has been observed. In the **Hauts Bassins**, in the countryside of the provinces of Tuy and Houet, herders claim to be victims of injustice on the part of foresters because of the pruning of trees during transhumance: farmers clear land and cut or even uproot the trees and are not punished, while the herders prune the trees to allow animals to access pods or to establish night stockage areas, and are fined hundreds of thousands of CFA. While this injustice can be explained as a result of the way the law is worded, in practice, ranchers feel that pruning trees is simply prohibited because they are fined everywhere. In the Sud-Ouest region, herders complain that farmers and gold miners are allowed to occupy classified forests. The Bontioli reserve is home to more than 50 old and new gold mines, which have resulted in

⁴⁷ Gérard Sournia, “Les aires de conservation en Afrique francophone: aujourd’hui et demain espaces à protéger ou espaces à partager?”, *Les Cahiers d’Outre-Mer*, 1990.

⁴⁸ On which see Manu Harchies, Aurélie Binot et Eléonore Wolff, “Impacts mutuels de la conservation et de l’élevage transhumants sur l’occupation des sols et les ressources environnementales”, *Vertigo - la revue électronique en sciences de l’environnement*, Hors-série 4, November 2007.

⁴⁹ Alexis Kaboré, *Brousse des uns, aire protégée des autres*, doctoral thesis, Geneva, 2010.

⁵⁰ AFD, Etude sur l’Est du Burkina Faso, scheduled for publication.

⁵¹ See Nicolas Hubert, “The nature of peace: How environmental regulation can cause conflicts”, *World Development*, Volume 141, May 2021.

the destruction of 200 hectares of forest. They are hardly hampered in their activities, unlike the herders, who say they are systematically arrested and fined.

- ◆ In **northern Togo**, herders claim that protected areas hamper their activities, as they are fined while charcoal burners and farmers establish fields in places such as Kéran Park (Mandouri).
- ◆ In **northern Benin**, with the privatisation of these parks, the problems faced by herders (systematic slaughter of animals, prison, arrest, and fines) have increased. The privatisation of management no longer allows herders to cross the park.
- ◆ In **southwestern Niger**, the exploitation of classified forests is the subject of cultivation contracts between environmental agents and farmers; herders are excluded. In the classified forest of Wourwoussaw (Chadakori, Maradi), 200 ha of agricultural land have been made available to the populations for two years, after which they must reforest the exploited areas. Herders complain that at the end of these contracts, these areas often become perennial fields or even villages due to a lack of monitoring by the environment and agriculture services. The Dan Kaka classified forest has thus become a village with water points. The contents of these contracts are vague and are suspected to be the result of patronage, while this mode of exploitation arouses the interest of town halls in search of resources. This mechanism is interesting in the sense that it favours a reasoned exploitation of resources, but lacking of follow-up and equity, it leads to the sustainable installation of farmers even as it excludes herders who could just as much benefit from “pasturing contracts”.

Conservation policies – however important for protecting wildlife and floral resources from unreasonable exploitation – seem largely inadequate. The situation experienced specifically by herders questions a number of actors, including rangers, aware of the fact that certain vegetative species risk disappearing from forests if they are not helped by herds through zoochory (transport of seeds) or opening and maintenance of monospecific forests that have reached their climax (brush clearing, pruning, even tree felling, early fires for preventive use). The actors observe a *de facto* complementarity between livestock and forest areas, while governance advocates a strict separation between these two objects up to the institutional level between the different bodies of field agents for agriculture, breeding, and the environment due to separate training, when a common core previously existed.

AGRIBUSINESS, RANCHING, AND MINING

The privatisation of pastoral areas has been fuelled by three dynamics driven by different actors who nevertheless all follow the same logic: investment in the sectors of agriculture (agribusiness) and livestock (ranching) and extractive resources (mining, petroleum) often for speculative purposes.

Agribusiness has developed since the late 1990s in the Sahel and West Africa, supported by incentives and public policies and carried by urban actors (urban elites, civil servants, politicians, traders, national or foreign investors). Pastoral spaces are put on sale, often in defiance of the law, for the benefit of these projects.

- ◆ In **central Mali**, especially in flood lands, national or foreign investors’ interest in the Delta has contributed to increasing pressure on pastures.
- ◆ In **Burkina Faso**, since the early 2000s, the demand for land linked to the arrival of new actors has worsened the process of territorial eviction of livestock farmers to the extent that they have appropriated areas that are traditionally reserved for grazing.⁵² In the **Hauts-Bassins**, in the capitals of urban municipalities (Bobo, Orodara, Houndé) agribusinessmen are increasing demands in order to create poultry and dairy farms. Land is often resold without being developed, however, betraying speculative aspirations. The same observation is made in the regions of the Sud-Ouest, Cascades.

The same logic applies in ranching. Acting for Life notes that there are several forms of ranching in West Africa: research ranching, re-breeding ranching, private ranching, and herder ranching. It is the latter

⁵² See Groupe de Recherche et d’Action sur le Foncier, “L’expérience de l’agro-business sur les terres non aménagées au Burkina Faso”, 2010.

type of ranching that is dominant in the Sahel – notably in Nigeria, in Niger, or Burkina Faso – and which results in the creation of areas dedicated to livestock, supposedly secure and equipped. As Acting for Life specifies, “it was clear that, based on an end to mobility and subject to climatic hazards, the model did not offer decisive advantages for pastoralism, while introducing the perverse effects of a privatisation of community grazing. This privatisation mainly benefited the rich and influential herders who had quickly positioned themselves when the plots were allocated”.⁵³ In the Sahelian countries, private ranching has above all enabled the appropriation of pastoral land through concessions or the privatisation of water points which ensure exclusive access to pastures. In this sense, ranching is a definite brake on pastoral mobility and often contravenes the law, as in Niger where, despite an ordinance adopted in December 2014 to prohibit ranching, 58,300 ha of existing fenced ranches remain.⁵⁴ The political economy of the country prevents the operationalisation of this decision due to the profile of these ranchers. In the department of Abala, two national deputies of the ruling party bought several hectares in the pastoral reserve to build private ranches near Ekarfane (Abala, Tillabéri) and this has been the subject of tensions with the herders. On three occasions, young armed herders have prevented the construction of water points on these ranches. The justice of Filingué was seized by herders, but without effect.

Another form of intensive land exploitation should be mentioned: that caused by mining, in particular gold, whether industrial, semi-mechanised, or artisanal. It is a source of pressure on pastoral resources and has long been caused by industrial mining companies.⁵⁵ Since the mid-2000s, this risk has spread geographically in the – numerous – areas where artisanal and semi-mechanised gold mining has developed. It is a factor in the appropriation of space and a threat to livestock (particularly by poisoning) in areas that were until now were free from this pressure, particularly in the north of Niger⁵⁶ or in Agadem (Diffa),⁵⁷ or in the Malian Gourma. In the context of our study, a particular concern emerges in northern Ivory Coast, where many herders expressed concerns about farms which encroach on pastoral areas and the recurring conflicts that result from them. In view of the proliferation of new artisanal gold sites to the south of the right bank of the Niger River in Tillabéri, in the north of Mali, and especially throughout Burkinabè territory, this problem must be better understood.

3. HERDERS CAUGHT BETWEEN RACKETEERING AND THEFT OF THEIR CAPITAL

“When we start a season with a herd of 50 animals, we sometimes in the end have between 15 and 20 left.”

A herder in the Hauts Bassins (Burkina Faso)

Decapitalisation of herders is not just the result of reduced access to resources. It also stems from their overexposure to a (more or less) organised economy of ransom, cattle rustling and, increasingly, a nascent kidnapping industry that targets them in certain regions.

⁵³ Acting for Life, “Le Ranching en Afrique de l’Ouest : quelles questions se poser”, February 2019.

⁵⁴ Source: AREN/RECA.

⁵⁵ On this subject, see Abdoukader Afane, Laurent Gagnol, “Convoitises et conflits entre ressources pastorales et extractives au Nord-Niger : Verts pâturages et yellow cake chez les “hommes bleus””, in *Afrique contemporaine* 2014/1 (n° 249), pages 53 to 68.

⁵⁶ On this subject, see HACP, “Typologie des conflits liés au secteur minier au Niger”, February 2019.

⁵⁷ Oil exploitation by CNPC at Agadem covers 2.7 million ha. Herders, in addition to being excluded from this zone, have been victims of serious effects: the vibrations produced during the surveys lead to the collapse of farmers’ wells, and the cooling of the boreholes with groundwater has an impact on the water-table level in Lake Chad basin. Source: DEMIE.

DAMAGE TO FIELDS AND DECAPITALISATION

Damage to fields is one of the most widespread sources of conflict. They occur in all the study areas and find their origin in a multitude of factors: fewer and increasingly younger (or sometimes even women or very old) shepherds' lack of professionalism in animal management; a lack of information for herders; obstruction of trails; encroachment on areas dedicated to livestock; the search for the best pasture which pushes certain herders benefiting from protection to knowingly graze on fields.

Field damage does not necessarily mean conflict. Damage is frequent, as are false accusations of damage, and is in the majority of cases managed amicably through the village chiefs or at village level through simple neighbourhood or family relations without involving any authority. Rural damage is nevertheless not resolved equitably, namely that the owner of the field should be compensated for what he has actually lost and not for what he demands. During the return of herders, the resolution of the dispute often hangs on the source of the damage estimate, namely what was destroyed the same day (sowing with little dry matter) or what the field would have produced at the end of wintering (stem and ears with much more dry matter).

Although it is not possible to generalise across all study areas, the trend that emerges is one in which local power relations, a lack of mastery of the texts, and the constraints weighing on nomadic herders place herders in a disadvantageous negotiating position. Numerous cases have been identified where herders prefer to pay the amount requested rather than resorting to the formal mechanisms provided for at the village or commune level, or even asking the police, whom they believe will discriminate against them. In addition, the loss occasioned by keeping animals on site or the need to reach the market in time pushes the herder to pay rather than waiting *in situ* for a fair settlement. As rational actors, owners take advantage of herders' vulnerability to negotiate upwards. Local, customary and/or decentralised authorities very often become complicit themselves to derive a benefit, to the point, for example, of abusing the impounding of animals (see below).

“Some farmers with customary authorities create, promote, or exploit incidents with transhumants in order to extract something from them. They take advantage of the fact that the transhumants do not have enough guardians and time to initiate any legal proceedings. We don't have the material time to prove this in front of a judge who takes all his time to investigate. If you go before a customary chief, you have no chance, because he has an interest in compensation. The only thing that can work out for us is to give them something and leave them with God.”

Garso, Tillabéri

In several regions, damage-recognition mechanisms have been criticised for giving rise to disguised forms of racketeering:

- ◆ In **northern Ivory Coast**, several herders indicated that they feel aggrieved when the technical services assess the damage in the absence of livestock officials. The amount of compensation is said to be excessive, not to mention the fact that herders often bear the costs of authorities' travel and investigations.

- ◆ In **northern Togo**, herders claim they are injured for the benefit of farmers. According to one of them, “when there is damage to the fields, the herder alone pays the transport costs, which are set from 25,000 FCFA to 40,000 FCFA”.
- ◆ In **the Hauts-Bassins**, certain state agents are suspected of colluding with fields’ owners to overestimate damage. The procedure for ascertaining the damage does not comply with the regulations, which require that field agents in both breeding and agriculture be requisitioned jointly to investigate. Damage to fields is no longer evaluated in proportion to the number of heads that caused it, but systematically involves the entire herd, on which the municipality systematically collects 3,100 FCA for straying animals.
- ◆ In **the regions of Maradi and Tahoua**, the procedure for ascertaining damage is performed illegally, without any representative for the herder, and often by the sole representative of the village chief who is in the majority of cases from a sedentary community. According to an official in Bagaroua, “the damage was neither noted nor assessed by the representatives of the chiefs with the two parties. In the event of disputes, the two parties meet with the chief of the Hausa village, who often sends dogaris acquired to his cause to see the damage without taking into account the herder’s opinion.” In addition to excessive compensation, this opens the way to forms of corruption with which the owners of the fields are sometimes not satisfied either.
- ◆ In **northwestern Nigeria**, several herders are complained of a similar situation. In Zamfara State, in Dangulbi, “when herders are accused of field damage, Hausa chiefs impose excessive fines on us, far greater than the value of what we destroyed, just because they think we are each richer than the next. My children had to pay 500,000 Naira for a field whose total harvest value did not exceed 200,000. It has become a source of income for the chiefs, who wait for the slightest opportunity to detain us.”

This situation fuels herders’ decapitalisation of herders in a manner discreet enough that the rackets operated by the DSF and the authorities contribute to it. The cumulative amounts that herders must pay each year for damage to fields are unknown, but likely very high if we accept local perceptions and the few existing data. By analysing the 2014–2015 transhumance, Brigitte Thébaud showed that the most significant payments transhumant herders must bear are linked to conflicts over fields, even compared to “harassment” when crossing borders.⁵⁸ Most worrying is that the determinants of this state of affairs are set to worsen over time, namely the growing deprivation of access to pastoral resources. This situation has worsened since then. Brigitte Thébaud even maintains that only “large-scale herders” are able to overcome these costs without placing themselves in a very precarious situation: “only herders who have sufficient numbers to recover their losses can bear the price to pay (for conflicts) in money and animals. For others, mobility ends, which explains a growing asymmetry between rich and poor herders: With fewer than 40 cattle, you lose more than you earn.”⁵⁹ This situation, combined with other forms of exaction and more organised racketeering, even cattle rustling, contributes mechanically to the exit of certain decapitalised herders from pastoralism, and to the increase in inequalities among herders, with a concentration of livestock in the hands of a small number of herders.

TARGETS OF RACKETEERING

With the exception of northern Mali, where the presence of state agents has long been limited due to the rebellions that have marked the area, herders complain of racketeering by officials. Water and forestry officers and gendarmes are most often accused of fining herders and seizing livestock, generally arguing for laws interpreted abusively or quite simply in an erroneous manner, even if sometimes the racketeering is more explicit and is not based on any law, often at market exits – as has been confirmed in most regions, including the Burkinabè Sahel, Sikasso, or northern Togo (Kpendjal and Kondjoari). Racketeering differs from corruption in the sense that it induces a forced levy from herders who are nevertheless within their rights.

⁵⁸ Brigitte Thébaud, 2018, Op. Cit.

⁵⁹ Annabelle Powell, Brigitte Thébaud, 2017, Op. Cit.

The imposition of fines is rarely accompanied by a receipt, and is most often based on the absence of identity documents or any other argument capable of justifying a fine. A specific example in the Hauts-Bassins illustrates this general trend in the Sahel: “On 7 March 2020, the DSF met a herd of 15 animals going from Samogoyiri to Monon with two herders. After presentation of identity documents and valid vaccination certificates, the SDS demanded 24,000 FCFA from the herders on the pretext that the cattle were stolen. After an external intervention, the herders only had to pay 2,000 FCFA.” In the region of Maradi, herders who have been fined for not having respected limits to grazing areas denounce the excessive amounts claimed by the water and forestry officers: “The fines applied to livestock entering a developed area are extortion. They are so excessive that they often exceed the price of livestock.”

These rackets also occur when crossing borders, in particular at the Ivorian border, which remains well-manned compared to other border areas. In the Hauts-Bassins region, herders note that in Ivory Coast, the SDS do not accept papers including the International Certificate of Transhumance, which they believe is done only to justify the imposition of fines. On the Ivorian side, criticisms converge on the behavior of the Ivorian DSF vis-à-vis transhumants regularly subjected to racketeering in Helentira. Herders from the Burkinabè Sahel who go to Niger or Ivory Coast share the same opinion.

The establishment of decentralised municipalities has also had the effect of generating new taxes (formal or informal) and fees to be paid to access resource areas, often in contradiction with national laws. In Bourasso (Kossi, Boucle du Mouhoun), a herder confirms this: “Here, municipal officials colluding with the tax, water, and forest services have introduced a fraudulent tax of 25,000 FCFA per year and per herd to have access to a natural pasture plain.” For herders, these expenses are added to the “traditional” taxes already levied on the use of resources (the case of bourgou fields or harvest residues).

The impounding of animals is becoming an organised racket in a number of areas. It is often considered theft by herders because this channel, although legal, covers a lot of abuse. The most widespread cases have been identified in Burkina Faso and Niger.

- ◆ In the **Great West of Burkina Faso**, herders afraid of the DSF frequently abandon their cattle, which are then impounded with the help of the Dozos. This is the case in the Cascades, as demonstrated by the case of Tiéfora (slightly east of Banfora) where the DSF drive animals to the pound and extort herders. In the Hauts-Bassins region, many pounds exist, including illegal pounds. In Orodara (Kéné Dougou province), where two pounds have been officially established by the municipality, herders can name nearly ten different ones. According to herders, this is due to the fact that clandestine pounds have been set up through a racketeering network which is said to be piloted by local notables, belonging in particular to local decision-making spaces. In the municipality of Karankasso-Vigué, there is also the proliferation of illegal pounds.
- ◆ In **Est of Burkina Faso**, in Koaré, an illegal pound was created to hold stolen animals and then sell them at auction.
- ◆ The feeling is the same in the **region of Tillabéri**, where the herders complain local authorities are complacent, especially concerned management of the pounds, which are public services. The 2006 decree on the management of pounds in Niger prohibits the impounding of animals whose owners are known (art 49 of ord. 2010-29). But we have witnessed abuses of all kinds, especially when herders face an authority or an influential person. By way of illustration, in 2017 a herder allegedly committed damage in the field of the prosecutor of the Tillabéri Tribunal de Grande Instance, and the herder found himself in prison and his animals impounded despite this article of law. Likewise, although the aforementioned decree limits the number of pounds to one per commune, some village chiefs and former state officials set up enclosures to hold the animals in order to extort herders. The fact that shepherds are young children also limits their ability to resist pressure from these actors.
- ◆ In the **Maradi region** of Dakoro, a gendarmerie official was arrested in 2018 after it was established that for several years he had been reselling animals he had illegally impounded.
- ◆ In the **Dosso region**, several abuses have been recorded in recent years. In 2016, in a village southwest of Loga, a customary leader, with the help of members of his community, seized and slaughtered animals belonging to herders. In 2019, more than 4,000 sheep belonging to Ouda herders traveling up the Dalal Dosso were seized and kept by locals, having benefited from the arrest of the herders by the gendarmerie. The animals were only returned after the mobilisation of a pastoral organisation. In the

same area, in a village south of Balléyara, in 2015 a customary official parked 140 head of cattle in an illegal enclosure with the complicity of certain herders, before the courts sanctioned the person concerned.

These examples identified in Niger involve various actors, namely gendarmes, customary leaders, and a judge, although in certain cases, these same actors put an end to these practices after pastoral organisations intervened by taking judicial or even political action. This shows it is essential to reduce the context of impunity that prevails in rural areas by giving herders more means of redress: to be able to count on pastoral organisations that are better equipped to meet growing needs; to be able to have legal and judicial assistance to defend their rights; and to improve their relations with the DSF so that they have benevolent agents who can oppose such practices.

Two factors are particularly aggravating for herders. On the one hand, the establishment of rules that herders know little or nothing about encourages predatory practices. As Brigitte Thébaud summarises, “through various measures (taxation, private management of reception areas, control of transhumants), it is to be feared that the legislator will paradoxically contribute to creating an environment even more conducive to predation, complicity, and, ultimately, to conflicts.”⁶⁰ On the other hand, herders lack support and/or recourse, are not encouraged or even reluctant to do so for fear that it will take too much time and perhaps even more money. Many herders denounce these practices, but many also come to terms with them, making corruption or avoidance their main coping strategy in the face of abuses by the authorities.

INSECURITY: THEFT AND KIDNAPPING

Herders are also exposed to the rise insecurity targeting their capital: the theft of their livestock and the kidnapping of herders or members of their families. These two types of threat have some peculiarities that distinguish them from racketeering. First of all, pastoralists are indeed not the only victims: all livestock owners and all notables can be targeted as long as they have capital. Additionally, some breeders are as much actors as victims.

Cattle theft is not a new phenomenon in the Sahel. It has always been relatively well organised, and was the prerogative of more or less structured groups of armed bandits (Tillabéri, central Mali, Niger-Nigeria border) or of rebel groups whose armament allowed them to control livestock theft networks (northern Mali). These sectors were often based on complicity within local and national authorities, in particular customary leaders, judges, and members of the DSF, as well as tradesmen, starting with butchers, transporters, livestock market managers, and traders. This configuration still prevails, for example, in the Kéné Dougou area, even if there too the networks have a certain sophistication. The networks from Ghana are better armed, better organised, and today constitute an essential threat to herders, according to testimonies collected in the Great West of Burkina Faso and the North of Ivory Coast. The conversion of these “ex-shepherds” into cattle rustlers often starts with the theft of their own animals. These “initiator” flights can be read as arising from the frustrations linked to their socio-economic downgrading. Many former herders denounce the fact that these shepherds allow themselves to be perverted by “the easy agent search.” These initiator flights lock them in a criminal trajectory. In areas where animal husbandry dominates the local and regional economy, such as the Mopti region, for example, cattle thieves (*terere*) constitute a category in their own right. These thefts are generally targeted, the victims chosen according to the size of their herd. From this point of view they differ from the more classic banditry, that of the *coupeurs de route*. In many areas, the approaches to cattle markets have been frequented by these groups of bandits since the 1980s because they collected large sums. These “cutters” are part of the long history of raids of which the Tuareg and Toubou communities were masters before colonial conquest came to slow down these phenomena of violence.

⁶⁰ Brigitte Thébaud, “10 constats sur la mobilité du bétail en Afrique de l’Ouest”, 2018, BRACED-AFL.

An old and very deadly conflict between herders foreshadowed what is happening today, namely that cattle rustling has given way to cattle abduction: cattle are now taken as spoils of war.⁶¹ This is the conflict between Fulani and Daoussahaks in Liptako (Tillabéri/Ménaka). The militarisation of community relations has progressively placed the abduction of livestock at the heart of the fighting between herders, between herders and farmers or agro-pastoralists, as we will see later. Just as engaging in cattle rustling often resulted from individual or family decapitalisation, joining armed groups that engage in these practices is also a way for many herders to recapitalise themselves to the detriment of sedentary communities. Conversely, for sedentary communities, seeking the protection of vigilante groups becomes necessary to protect their livestock. These logics of revenge and protection are gradually giving way to predatory logics where, under the guise of “community war” or “jihad”, each party to the conflict justifies the attack and the looting of a village or a family on the grounds of affiliation with the other party. Depending on the groups involved, their agenda, and their composition, the tendency to switch to this predation is more or less pronounced, as we will see, but all armed groups are now involved in the abduction of cattle: vigilante groups, rebel groups, jihadist groups. The individual interests of the members of these groups wishing to recapitalise themselves and the collective warlike interests of each group become inseparable: cattle are a resource at the heart of the war economy.

Cattle theft now has a particular resonance in Northwestern Nigeria and Southwestern Niger where it is at the heart of the clashes between Hausa vigilante groups, bandits, and Fulani vigilantes which have multiplied since 2013 in Zamfara, Sokoto, and Katsina states. Theft and concealment of livestock have always existed in this area, but have taken on a particular scale thanks to the increase in the prices of livestock and the spread of firearms resulting from the Libyan crisis after 2011. The better organised thieves have primarily targeted small breeders, reinforcing the decapitalisation of the most vulnerable. More than 70% of the herders interviewed in the departments of Madaoua, Guidan Roundji, and Bermo maintain that small herders (those with fewer than 50 head of cattle) are targeted most often. In Madarounda, the situation is different, all herders being targeted equally, according to respondents. In all departments, including Madarounfa, accusations have been leveled against “big ranchers” of buying their security from bandits.

In this border area of Niger and Nigeria, these are the same actors that we find engaged in kidnapping networks today. They have diversified their activities: kidnapping is less risky than cattle theft, as it is less visible and does not require clearly increasingly complicated livestock outlets due to the surveillance of the markets where the stolen livestock was traditionally concealed, as in Bagaroua, for example.

The kidnapping-for-ransom sector is relatively new to the Sahel, if we do not take into account the kidnappings carried out since the early 2000s by jihadist groups mainly targeting Westerners or Sahelians for political reasons, with the exception of Jama’atu Ahlis-Sunnah (JAS), for whom this modus operandi has become a source of funding in the Diffa region in particular. For the moment, kidnapping for ransom is the prerogative of Nigerian groups operating in northwestern Nigeria, whose mode of action now seems to be extending to neighbouring countries, namely Niger and Benin. All communities (Hausa, Touareg, Fulani) are represented at the head of the various sectors involved, but the Fulani are reputed to be more numerous. In any case, herders suffer from these kidnappings and many have had to pay substantial sums. It is spreading in most of the border villages of Nigeria: Douchi, Konni, Madaoua, Bangui, Guidan Roundji, Madarounfa. Here too, herders, farmers, traders, and notables were targeted indiscriminately, even if the herders were the primary targets. Today, wealthy herders who live in the city of Bangui or Madaoua are said to be generally safe, and some are even said to have connections with these groups.

These phenomena have reached an unprecedented scale very directly affecting the livelihoods of herders and obliging them to protect themselves by modifying and usually reducing their mobility patterns or even by selling out. But this phenomenon affects both herders and farmers. The security crisis has dramatically increased cattle rustling. The number of heads of bovids but also of small ruminants stolen since 2012 easily exceeds one million in this area if we add up the estimates made in each of the areas covered by the study.

⁶¹ Here we borrow the distinction made by ISS between theft and abduction of cattle. ISS, “Extrémisme violent, criminalité organisée et conflits locaux dans le Liptako-Gourma”, December 2019.

It is coupled with the generalisation of the practice of *zakat* on the part of jihadist groups, of which herders are the primary victims.

4. INEQUALITIES AND TENSIONS AMONG HERDERS

Injustices also stem from a rise in inequalities among pastoralists, inequalities that can be read in different forms.

The decapitalisation of pastoralists benefits “new breeders”, who are the main beneficiaries of the growth in the number of herds at the regional level. Changes can be observed in the distribution of the herd according to the socio-economic categories of breeders.⁶² This decapitalisation has historically been observed during droughts, which were the most significant episodes for herders. During the droughts of the 1970s and 1980s, more than a third of the herd died,⁶³ and a large part of the rest of the herd was sold off at low cost in favour of sedentary breeders, sedentary notables who recapitalised themselves. In the Inner Delta, in particular, the gradual transfer of ownership of herds to non-pastoral owners has been greatly favoured by these droughts, which forced many herding families to sell their herds to businessmen, civil servants, or members of the military. Herders have become shepherds, “transhumance workers”.⁶⁴ This trend has continued to grow under the effect of the appearance of “new breeders”, large traders, civil servants, military, or agribusinessmen who invest in breeding for the sole purpose of profit. The proportion of “poor” breeders, that is to say herders and agro-pastoralists below the threshold of viability, is growing tendentially. According to CARE, this applies to more than 60% of Sahelian households (herders and agro-pastoralists combined)⁶⁵ while at the same time, larger and more efficient herds are under the care of a smaller number of people. A 2012 study in Niger confirms this trend: 20% of the most prosperous households own 63% of the total number of animals, while the poorest 20% own 2% of the animals.⁶⁶ Today, agro-pastoralists hold a large part of the herd in the Sudanese and Sudano-Guinean zones (45% of the cattle herd in Burkina Faso, for example).⁶⁷ The result is a concentration of chattel which raises questions in terms of development and distribution of growth. In other words, the growth of herds and the good health of the meat and milk markets in West Africa and the Sahel doesn’t mean that all herders benefit. Wealth is redistributed to the detriment of those who continue to live exclusively from livestock.

This reversal of the terms of trade has undermined the complementarity that prevailed between production systems and their actors. The development of agro-pastoralism has somewhat erased the differences between these production systems, but above all it has increased competition between them by increasing the pressure on available resources and by privatising access to them: agro-pastoralists now favour the access of their own animals to their land for crop residues and manure, sometimes even fencing their land, whereas they granted access to specialised herders in the past. Conversely, pastoralists are increasingly setting themselves up to cultivate food fields. This has therefore fostered a certain community withdrawal, with agro-breeders no longer needing breeders, and breeders seeing the latter as new competitors both in terms of access to resources and control of herds. When ethnic identities are superimposed on historical socio-professional specialisations, such a withdrawal is conducive to the exacerbation of relations between ethnic groups. This could, for example, have contributed to the deterioration of relations between Dogon and Fulani on the Seno Plain (Mali). Historically, the complementarities that prevailed between them benefited peaceful coexistence: manure contracts in exchange for a right to water, Dogon who housed Fulani, “milk for grain” bartering.⁶⁸ The capitalisation of farmers in livestock has profoundly modified the

⁶² SNV, 2015, Op. Cit.

⁶³ FAO/CIRAD, “Système d’information sur le pastoralisme au Sahel – Atlas des évolutions des systèmes pastoraux au Sahel 1970-2012”, 2012.

⁶⁴ Mirjam De Bruijn, Han van Dijk, “Changing Population Mobility in West Africa: Fulbe Pastoralists in Central and South Mali”, *African Affairs*, 2003.

⁶⁵ SNV, 2015, Op. Cit.

⁶⁶ APESS, “Eléments de bilan du soutien public à l’élevage au Niger depuis Maputo”, 2014.

⁶⁷ See Alexis Gonin, 2016, Op. Cit.

⁶⁸ See notamment Dougoukolo Alpha Oumar Ba-Konaré, “Peuls et Dogon dans la tourmente au Mali : histoire d’une longue relation ambivalente”, *Le Monde*, 29 March 2019.

terms of traditional trade with breeders.⁶⁹ As Pierre Bonte sums it up, “The Fulani political domination of the 19th century has been replaced by the current economic superiority of the Dogon.”⁷⁰ In the Sahelian political economy, economic domination is often found at the political level, from which the Dogon community has benefited through communalisation.

Beyond the production system, the category “mobile herder” refers to a plurality of profiles. Transhumant herding, dominant in the Sahel because it concerns between 70 to 80% of cattle, itself includes a wide variety of herders and varying distances of travel.⁷¹ Depending on the degree of mobility (internal or cross-border transhumance, low-amplitude mobility), the type of animals raised, the education level of herders, their home region or their community (or statutory membership within the community), their degree of socio-political integration, and their connection with local, national or sub-regional networks of influence, herders are more or less protected or, on the contrary, exposed to the consequences of this pastoral crisis. Herders who have political influence are more resistant to having their rights to use pastoral infrastructure questioned and are to a certain extent protected against cattle theft and racketeering. From this point of view, our study shows that “large breeders” have the financial capacity to pay the illegal taxes imposed by livestock agents.

Viewed from an ethnic perspective, the nomadic communities are no less strongly composite and from this point of view the reduction of pastoral areas tends to exacerbate the tensions between them. In north Tillabéri, the advance towards the north of the pioneer agricultural front has historically contributed to pushing Fulani herders to covet pastoral resources in Malian territory to the point of creating tensions and clashes with Daoussahak herders, a situation which weighed heavily in training of the IS-GS in this space (see part II). Likewise, fleeing agricultural pressure in north Tillabéri, the Tolébé migrated to the far north of Burkina Faso, causing increased rivalry – still under-studied – between Fulani of the Tolébé and Djelgobé tribes. Nomadic societies are also very hierarchical from within, with both Fulani and Tuareg communities having resorted extensively to slavery.⁷² In the former territory of the Fulani Empire of Macina (Diina) and in the Burkinabè Djelgoji, the promotion of rice cultivation to the detriment of pastures – accentuated by the droughts of the 1980s – had the effect of promoting Rimaïbé peasants within the Fulani community to the detriment of Rimbé aristocratic elites and the Jowro. This enrichment helped to reverse the animal ownership relationship. This caused major tensions with the Jowro,⁷³ who then went to court to be recognised as having customary authority over the land. A first instance decision, reinforced by a Supreme Court decision in 1997, gives them power in this area beyond what customary law provides.

These growing inequalities between social groups, including even within herder groups, encourage the will and the temptation to question the social hierarchy, which involves questioning structurally inegalitarian systems of governance, including through weapons, as we will see.

5. DOES THE SAHEL HAVE A PLACE FOR NOMADIC POPULATIONS?

These different expressions of the pastoralism crisis raise the question of the acceptance of the nomadic way of life by local and national authorities built largely around a sedentary model. Suffering largely from this system, herders find it difficult to identify with it. If the issue of livestock is at the heart of the governance crisis in the Sahelian bush, it is largely because herders believe that they have no place within local power systems.

⁶⁹ Bénédicte Thibaud, “Le pays dogon au Mali : de l’enclavement à l’ouverture ?”, *Espace, Populations, Sociétés*, 2005.

⁷⁰ Roger Botte, Jean Boutrais, Jean Schmitz, *Figures peules*, 1999, Karthala.

⁷¹ Transhumant herding is the mode of animal production best suited to the agro-ecological conditions of particularly unpredictable and variable (semi) arid zones, “where the search for an optimal return on invested capital is permanent, through risk mitigation and the apprehension of market opportunities, while minimising environmental costs”, SNV, 2015, Op. Cit. On the diversity of the routes, see FAO/CIRAD, “Système d’information sur le pastoralisme au Sahel – Atlas des évolutions des systèmes pastoraux au Sahel 1970-2012”, 2012.

⁷² See Jean Schmitz, Roger Botte, Christian Dupuy, Jean Boutrais, *Figure Peules*, Paris, Karthala, 1999, 24,5 cm, 539 p.

⁷³ Cédric Jourde, Marie Brossier, Modibo Ghaly Cissé, “Prédation et violence au Mali: élites statutaires peules et logiques de domination dans la région de Mopti”, *UQAM*, 2018.

Partial authorities and incapable injustice

At the very least, the majority of interviewees believe that the state is not doing enough in the area of livestock, whether to secure pastoral land or develop dedicated infrastructure. This feeling would almost be good news because it shows herders have expectations of the state. However, it is nuanced by a more worrying and generalised perception that the state is biased in favor of farmers. This clear-cut perception, which obscures the loss of complementarity between these socio-professional groups which now combine the two activities, is also shared by agro-pastoralists, who invest in agriculture. Power systems favouring sedentary people are therefore in the majority of cases often seen by herders as one of the root causes of the inequalities they experience in resources access. Thus, in the Sahelian zone, local institutions, even elected ones, are seen as on the side of local agricultural populations who voted for them, to the detriment of those – nomads – who are administratively attached elsewhere and do not vote on the spot. These then suffer from a presumption of partiality which undermines their legitimacy. Less than the absolute reality of these accusations, the fact that they result from the view breeders have of this reality reflects the physical and moral distance which separates breeders from public authorities. The perceptions collected support previous studies which also found a crisis of representation whose consequence is the rejection of that which is supposed to embody it, namely the state.⁷⁴

It should be noted that the data having been partly collected in focus groups, the confidence rates appear to be higher than what reality might suggest. By way of illustration, in the Hauts-Bassins region, individual semi-structured interviews indicate a confidence rate of 20%, but this reaches 55–60% when the focus groups are included. In “stable” areas, this bias created by the focus groups is greater than in insurgent areas where breeders are generally less afraid of openly revealing their mistrust.

Degree of trust in authorities	
REGION	
Est, Burkina (292 surveyed)	8,5%
Northern Bénin (151 surveyed)	29%
Alibori	10%
Atacora	22%
Donga	40%
Borgou	45%
Sahel, Burkina (142 surveyed)	31%
Seno	60%
Oudalan	25%
Yagha	32%
Soum	7%
Hauts-Bassins	55–60%

⁷⁴ UQM, 2018, Op. Cit.

Cascades	43%
Boucle du Mouhoun	40%
Ménaka/Gao (Mali) (40 surveyed)	2,5%
Malian Gourma	9%
Northwestern Nigeria (187 surveyed)	Unavailable
Mopti exposed flood plain (100 repondants)	13%
Mopti/Ségou exposed flood plain (18 repondants)	20%
Sikasso	13%

Table 1: Degree of confidence in the authorities of the herders interviewed

The arguments put forward are often the same from one area to another. The most common feeling is that farmers would be favoured because they are the electoral heart of their elected representatives, to whom they are also related.

- ◆ According to a breeder in northern Togo, “Farmers are favoured quite simply because all positions are held by their sons, whether in the gendarmerie, the police, deputies, or municipal councillors, so there is political and ethnic influence. Next to them, the Fulani herders are seen as people from elsewhere.” This dependence on their electorate is supported by this other herder in this area: “Whenever there is a conflict between the two actors, the authorities ask us to satisfy the farmer in order to avoid a popular uprising, which means that the state fears farmers.”
- ◆ In **Burkina Faso’s Est region**, local authorities have come under harsh criticism for exactly this. The decision to evict farmers occupying the pastoral zone in Matiakoali effectively led to the closure of the town hall by farmers, who accused the mayor of bias. A community conflict was avoided only by the combined efforts of all local actors (Village Development Committees or CVDs, customary and religious leaders).
- ◆ In **south-west Niger**, in all regions (Dogarawa, Arzarori, Madaoua, Guidan Roundji, Chadakori) where livestock routes are blocked by new housing developments in towns and villages, herders accuse mayors of allowing people to settle there. The same fear has been reported in Togo: a mission led by administrative authorities noted erosion caused by farmers in the Marké area, but permission for restoration work was refused.
- ◆ In **northern Benin**, local authorities (delegates, district chiefs and mayors) are suspected of involvement in these conflicts by supporting settlers, particularly in Tanguiéta, Matéri, Cobly, Karimama and Malanville.
- ◆ In **Tillabéri**, an Agaye Peulh herder summarises: *‘We may well fall under the jurisdiction of these authorities, but because they are not generally from herding communities, we do not trust them. In some cases, we turn to them, but they intimidate us because they know we do not know how to appeal.’*

However, such accusations of bias are far from unidirectional. While herders accuse authorities of sympathising with the settled farming communities they represent, farmers in turn claim *‘the herders always win’* through corrupting decision-makers, whether the judiciary or local authorities. These conflicts, where

both sides accuse each other of benefitting from special treatment, are particularly acute between Rimaïbe farmers and landowners (jowro), in Tenenkou (Mopti). Corruption is indeed the major obstacle to justice. Tor Benjaminsen illustrates perfectly how legal battles actually play out in terms of corruption levels in land disputes.⁷⁵

CONFLICT RESOLUTION MECHANISMS AND A JUDICIAL SYSTEM WITH LITTLE LEGITIMACY

This crisis not only alienates producers from their authorities, but also distorts existing tools for regulating resource access and managing conflicts. The most frequent criticism is a lack of inclusivity, with herders complaining that they are often absent, under or poorly represented. However, this does not mean such mechanisms – largely based on conciliation models - are totally ineffective (see box).

- ◆ In **Niger**, in **Tillabéri** and in the **south-west**, herder under-representation is often cited as a reason for mistrust of village or communal land commissions (CVFs). The majority of interviewees said they do not always use them. In south-western Niger, in every commune, herders feel disadvantaged in relation to farmers when it comes to conflict resolution. This is true at all levels, according to an association leader: *'village chiefs, canton chiefs, COFODEP'*. Conciliation, which is the norm in Niger, is therefore faced with a neutrality issue. Commission make up is criticised, with some members under political influence. The fact that they are chaired by CVF mayors (COFOCOM) or county land commission prefects (COFODEP) only reinforces this feeling.
- ◆ In **northern Benin**, despite the principal of direct conciliation, herders seem to prefer to use the DSF and the formal justice system. When local authorities or traditional mechanisms involve the delegate, the district chief, or the land chief in certain villages, they are suspected of complicity.
- ◆ In the north of **Ivory Coast**, the majority of herders consider local or traditional dispute resolution bodies to be composed in part of settled community leaders who can act as both judge and jury because they own the fields. Younger herders' perception is that these bodies are corrupt. *'It's who will pay the most between us and them,'* says one.
- ◆ In the **north of Togo**, herders say they are not represented at an institutional level and claim they are not listened to. No herders are reported to be members of CVDs. In particular, there are no Fulani in the CVD's offices, and the CVDs work under village chief control.
- ◆ In the **Sahel region of Burkina Faso**, a similar observation can be made: CVD neutrality is often questioned, either due to political interests or because of herder under-representation. A Dori area leader believes *'a quota system should be considered, as is done for young people and women, but for herders so they are adequately represented'*.
- ◆ In the **east of Burkina Faso**, existing, inactive mechanisms are viewed negatively and herders distrust them on the grounds that they are represented in small numbers. This is the case, for example, in Diapaga (Tapoa), where the conciliation committee includes only one herder.

⁷⁵ Tor Arve Benjaminsen and Boubacar Ba, "Farmer-herder conflicts, pastoral marginalization and corruption. A case study from the inland Niger delta of Mali", *The Geographic Journal*, Vol.175, 71-81

TOWARDS A CONFLICT RESOLUTION MODEL BASED ON CONCILIATION

In all the countries covered by the study, conciliation is becoming the established resource conflict resolution model.

Niger was a pioneer. Their conciliation system – with customary and religious authorities taking precedence over municipal and prefectural involvement and state justice as a last resort – was codified in 1987. Mali, Ivory Coast and Burkina Faso now operate in much the same way, at least as codified in recently amended texts, which make conciliation an obligatory step before going to court.

In Ivory Coast, the same pyramidal conflict resolution process is based on conciliation and ultimately leads to state justice. It provides for amicable settlements between affected parties only. If the conflict persists, a village conflict resolution committee - chaired by the village chief - takes charge of the dispute. The conflict must be settled within 3 days, otherwise the matter goes before the sub-prefectoral committee, chaired by the sub-prefect, before being handled by other higher authorities.

In Burkina Faso, Law 034-2002 and Order 31-2000 lay out procedures for resolving farmer-herder disputes, prioritising amicable settlement. Here, a judge can only take up resource conflict cases when in possession of a ‘non-resolution statement’. Village land conciliation commissions (CCFVs, under CVD authority) were formally created by law 034-2009. But in 2017, they existed in just 62 of the country's 351 communes, (17%).

In Mali, land commissions are not very operational in the centre and north of the country. Heavy dependence on international projects undermines their sustainability. As a result, the reality on the ground differs significantly from what is legally laid out.

In other words, the problem is not so much about legal codes but implementation and trust. Take Niger, where according to the Rural Code, the Cofos operating manual takes everything about land tenure into account. The Cofos are trained and some are equipped (at the department and commune levels). Their composition is very diverse and includes all stakeholders at all levels (from Cofodep to Cofob). However, on the ground, these structures are dysfunctional. Decision-making is problematic and training has not been assimilated. Some of those affected remain totally unfamiliar with the mechanisms despite the training and awareness-raising efforts already made. While everyone is represented in theory, in practice herders often do not have a say. At Cofob level, for example, the village or tribal chiefs who preside over them concentrate most of the power in their hands.

◆ In the **Great West of Burkina**, where the presence of nomadic community herders is more recent, they suffer from a lack of CVD and CCFV representation in the three regions (Boucle du Mouhoun, Hauts Bassins, Cascades). Apart from the Commune of Madiasso, no Fulani herder is a member of a CVD or CCFV in the province. This is due to the way in which the CVDs are elected, where customary chiefs put their own descendants on membership lists, hence the Fulani's exclusion.⁷⁶ Herder representatives are therefore often agrofarmers in direct competition with nomadic herders for dry season pastures. Sometimes they are not even livestock owners at all. This trend is confirmed at CCFV level, where recent research in the commune of Solenzo (Boucle du Mouhoun) clearly calls into question the implementation of Law 034-2019, since the settled population refuses to include nomadic herders, thus

⁷⁶ The CVD is responsible for helping the commune to manage development in the village; the CFV (Village Land Commission) and the CCFV are elected at village level and manage local land affairs; it is the CFV that initiates and has the local land charters validated at a village assembly (provisions of law 034/2009 and application decrees).

reinforcing structural inequalities and disadvantages.⁷⁷ As one herder in Comoé province summarised, *'these institutions are indigenous affairs'*. One exception is the Mossi. Through their political and economic influence, they have managed to establish villages in several provinces where they are CVD office members or even village councillors. It should be noted that other examples of CVDs working impartially do exist (see box below). Barani herders are represented, because Barani is a former Falani Emirate. In some communes, the Falani herding community has had traditional representation, such as in the Commune of Oury (Province des Balés, Hauts-Bassins) and so the Falani canton chief is respected.

WHEN CVDS PEACEFULLY RESOLVE CONFLICTS

The fact that the CVDs reflect local political balances and under-represent herders does not mean all these structures systematically take the side of the sedentary people, fortunately. A few cases identified during the study give a more nuanced picture.

In Banakélédaga, in the **Haut Bassins'** Houet province, a herder injured a farmer with a machete, and the inhabitants organised themselves to ransack all the Fulani camps in the area. Thanks to the CVD president and the intervention of indigenous sage elders and representatives of these settlements, the situation was calmed down. They offered sacrifices to the landowners and the matter was closed.

In **northern Togo**, an example of successful CVD intervention through the traditional Sabiagou (Oti prefecture) chief was found. After a farmer's death, the village mobilised to attack the Fulani whom they blamed. On the CVD's initiative, the Sabiagou chief was able to prevent this until the police arrested the person responsible, who was not in fact a herder.

Representation issues also occur *within* the herder community. When there are only one or two representatives on external bodies, and these are dignitaries or intellectuals of herder origin who are no longer nomadic themselves, questions over their legitimacy naturally arise. How can they stand for all the interests of such a diverse group? This feeling has been expressed in many regions, including south-western Niger, Tillabéri, and in the Soum province of Burkina Faso. A herder from Oursi (in the Sahel region of Burkina Faso) summed the problem up: *'[Our CVD representatives] are mainly representatives of large nomadic herders who do not generally have the same concerns as small-scale sedentary herders (they are even competitors for dry-season pastures), who in a few rare cases represent all the herders in the area in decision-making bodies at the communal, provincial or regional level. Unfortunately very often it is the farmers or guardians of the large herders who represent all herders in decision-making bodies, especially as no account is taken of the period during which we (the nomadic herders) can be there and available.'*

⁷⁷ Ouango Koala, Florence De Longueville, Pierre Ozer, 'The likely effects of Law 034/2009 re rural land tenure security in Burkina Faso on agricultural migrants from the great droughts of the 1970s and 1980s', 2017.

THE MOBILISATION OF LOCAL ELECTED OFFICIALS IN EASING TENSIONS AND RESOLVING CONFLICTS

In 2019, in south-west Niger, when herders were heading south, a group of Nigerian Oudas herders spent the night in a farmer's field in a Bagaji village. The farmer heard and started chasing the sheep. In an attempt to defend himself, he was killed by the herders. When the villagers discovered his death, they informed the mayor and the canton chief and set off on motorbikes in pursuit of the herders. After several kilometres, they were found hidden in a bush towards Matankari. The Mayor's on-the-spot intervention prevented a gun battle and police arrested the individuals concerned. The whole village of Matankari was in uproar in front of the town hall and many people who had arrived on motorbikes from Bagaji and Matankari threatened to return by force to take justice into their own hands. The Mayor had to bring in the dead man's families and the village chief, talk with them for a while, and finally the families and the village chief begged the assembled population to leave and let the gendarmes through so those arrested could be transferred to Douchi.

The courts are not systematically called upon to deal with resource-related conflicts, given the model of compulsory conciliation tends to be the norm. However, the courts are used when conciliation has failed and in criminal matters, following conflicts that have caused deaths. In most cases, however, case management leads to dissatisfaction for one of the parties and risks the conflict being reignited, even if good practices exist in all areas (see box). In rural areas, justice is therefore difficult to impose. There are two scenarios.

- ◆ In the majority of cases, judgments are difficult to reach, whether because of difficulties in establishing the facts, for political reasons or in the name of public order. Pre-trial detention drags on or provisional release happens without justice being done, making the authorities look weak. This was the case in the Bangui conflict (see Part III). Often, once the pressure has died down, perpetrators are released under pressure from local or national figures. This is what happened in central Mali following massacres in Malémana⁷⁸, Ogossagou and recently in Bouna. For one side or the other, a feeling of injustice and impunity reigns. In the absence of a judgement, administrative and customary authorities are effectively working to keep the conflict 'frozen', hoping that this will last. Rarely are reconciliation processes undertaken and/or material losses financially compensated, a necessary step in any reconciliatory justice process.
- ◆ In other cases, a legal decision is handed down, but either it is not applied due to a lack of means and/or will, or it is contested by all available means. The ensuing legal battles sometimes last several decades, maintaining a climate of tension in which the conflict is – again – 'frozen', but likely to be reignited. A final judgement may eventually be reached, but it is not respected. One of the parties seeks to override it. This serves to illustrate judicial institutions' lack of legitimacy and authority in rural areas. Both parties end up believing justice serves their opposition. For example, a leader of an agricultural association in Somadougou (Mopti) says that for a long time the justice system has favoured herders to the detriment of farmers.

⁷⁸ Of the twelve on trial, nine were acquitted, while three others were given a symbolic five year suspended prison sentence.

WHEN JUSTICE DOES ITS JOB

In Dori, there has been a decrease in conflicts, said to be due to awareness-raising efforts and the demarcation of grazing areas in the commune and surrounding villages. In Falagountou, an elected official notes they are doing 'everything possible to get farmers and herders to talk to each other, and that makes conflict management easier'. In 2016, in the Dori village of Sambo Naye, a conflict reared up between a sedentary herder and a farmer who had extended his field blocking the traditional access. The herder was accused of damaging the field. After village level attempts to resolve the problem, it was referred to the prefecture. Technical services (Police, Agriculture and Livestock) were asked to assess the damage. On the basis of their report, the prefect found the farmer at fault. The farmer contested that verdict and took the matter to court, where he was convicted.

In jihadist-influenced areas, the fragility of this justice system is exposed. Long-term or 'frozen' conflicts are reopened by arms, in new forms of vigilantism.⁷⁹ This explains why, in so many of the situations analysed in this study, a losing party in court ignores that judicial decision and takes revenge, armed with weapons, through jihadist groups, by using the DSF or by seeking the help of self-defence groups (see Part III).

LIVESTOCK FARMERS AND THE LAW: BETWEEN LACK OF INFORMATION, DISINTEREST AND EXPLICIT REJECTION

Conflicts also stem from herders' lack of knowledge about rules regulating access to resources. This is mainly due to lack of access to education and so lower literacy levels, combined with insufficient official efforts to communicate in local languages. As a result, herders have less awareness of the importance of written rules and the need to respect them.

This study asked farmers in all regions two questions: which rules they were aware of and which ones they considered crucial. The results show an overall lack of knowledge, and this in turn may be the result of a lack of interest in laws that in their eyes have no value, for various reasons:

- ◆ they emanate from authorities that do not represent them or represent them only to a limited extent. This feeling is very noticeable in Gourma: *'It is not a problem not to accept Mali laws. You're only subject to a country's laws if that country treats you as a citizen. First Mali needs to change and be fair to us. Until that happens, we're not going to listen to laws in our country.'* Here state legitimacy is clearly being questioned.
- ◆ some herders are not engaged. An agrofarmer in Ansongo deplores the lack of consultation with the local people: *'There was no communication about the Pastoral Charter. The government should have carried out campaigns, radio missions and awareness-raising caravans, but none of that happened.'*
- ◆ some herders feel the authorities do not respect their own laws. In central Mali's exposed floodplains, a herder said: *'What's the point in knowing the law when you know it won't be respected?' In Gossi, that feeling is shared: 'What rules! This rogue state abandons us, calls us terrorists and then wants us to follow its rules? Rules that the state itself violates because its representatives have always been unfair to us.'* In Danderesso, Sikasso, a senior herder testifies: *'A former prefect was the first and last to apply the laws in the commune by showing the farmers that the state owns the land.'* Even in areas considered 'safe', livestock farmers seem resigned and no longer believe in legal texts. Take the Boucle du Mouhoun, where livestock farmers even feel the rural land tenure law does them more harm than good.
- ◆ laws are deemed out of step with reality. A Sikasso region association leader therefore is not bothered: *'Everything's based on land ownership, but we're excluded from land ownership in Sikasso so, what's*

⁷⁹ UQAM, 2018, Op. Cit.

the point of knowing these rules?’ In Ménaka, a herder compares the letter of the law to daily life: ‘Herders don’t respect the Pastoral Charter because there is no state and it’s a total mess. It’s survival of the fittest.’

These feelings do not reflect the nuances that emerged during focus groups, where some herders acknowledged how useful it was to know the law. In Gorgadji, for example, a farmer acknowledged that ignorance of the law *'benefits the racketeers, especially the technical services who have an advantage over the herders.'* Others, in Sikasso, emphasise authorities’ efforts to take rural reality into account. Interest in, and knowledge of, the law is partly a function of the herders’ urban roots, their home area and their level of education. In Sikasso, for example, it appears that only livestock cooperative members and traders are familiar with the law. However, in general, knowledge of the actual content of legal texts is very limited. In the Burkina Sahel many livestock farmers blame the state. In the Seno though, where confidence in the state seems to be higher than elsewhere (see above), livestock farmers are self-critical. Despite the mobilisation of POs (CRUS, APESS) and NGOs such as HD, who have raised awareness of legal texts with copies in the local language, *'the herders make no effort'*, according to one herder in Seno.

Non-compliance can also be deliberate, as rules restrict the flexibility required for the survival of the herd, preventing people from changing with the times and according to need. The rigid idea of herders travelling from point A to point B is reflected in massive installations of concrete markers along nomadic routes (several tens of thousands of kilometres have been marked out over the last two decades in the Sahel). These take no account of difficulties nomadic herders have in the event of water shortages, lack of pastures, or conflicts to be avoided en route. For herders, such policies demonstrate authorities’ deep-seated desire to contain them between these markers despite the risk of seeing their animals die of hunger or thirst.

During a focus group in a Gourma commune, an exchange between three herders reflects the conflict in their different perceptions of the laws:

“We are free to mow and store hay for domestic needs if it’s on state-owned land. It’s important that people know the state also gives us access to certain resources.”

Herder 1

“You see everything he’s just quoted, and well, it doesn’t hold water or correspond to our realities. The state is corrupt and unfair. It takes money from us for rules it has either written without consulting everyone or that it applies in southern areas and then imposes on us.”

Herder 2

“Sorry brother, but do you see any semblance of organisation or applicability of state laws here? We’re not in that dynamic anymore. Now we just want to live.”

Herder 3

Region	Known Rules	Rules Considered Crucial
Cascades	Rural area land laws Orientation law on pastoralism Land ownership shared between individuals, communities and the state Existence of village land commissions International Transhumance Certificates	Vaccine Certificate acquisition Zoo-Sanitary Pass for livestock Transhumance Certificate acquisition Obligatory conciliation before recourse to justice
Boucle du Mouhoun	Prohibition on entering protected forests with animals Vaccine Certificate acquisition Existence of village land commissions	Vaccine Certificate acquisition Obligatory conciliation before recourse to justice Need to respect the distance around water points (known as the easement zone) before creating and claiming ownership of a field or a garden
Hauts Bassins	Rural area land laws Orientation law on pastoralism	Vaccine Certificate acquisition Transhumance Certificate acquisition Land ownership shared between individuals, communities and the state
Sahel	Rural area land laws Orientation law on pastoralism	Vaccine Certificate acquisition Transhumance Certificate acquisition 'For a herder, being able to keep livestock in the bush and return home is what's essential.' (Soum).
Est	Orientation law on pastoralism	Prohibition on wood cutting abuses Rules governing bush fires Prohibition re occupying pastures overnight Prohibition on encroaching on dedicated livestock areas.
Nord Togo	Land ownership rules	
Sikasso	Pastoral Charter Agricultural Orientation Law	Vaccine Certificate acquisition Transhumance Certificate acquisition
Gao et Ménaka	Pastoral Charter Agricultural Orientation Law	
Centre du Mali	Pastoral Charter Transhumance Decree Respect for Precedence Transhumance dates	Not communicated
Gourma	Respect for field release dates	'We have no knowledge of these rules. We just know that we must take good care of our animals and that they must not create disorder.' (Inadjatafane).

Table 2: Rules known and considered crucial by the farmers interviewed

NB: The results shown here do not mean that all herders know these rules, but that they were mentioned by at least one herder interviewed.

Engagement with legal texts is all the weaker because a large body of traditional oral rules already exists. These manage: water points peacefully and ecologically (water tower, right of thirst, maintenance, reciprocity); pastures (positioning of camps in relation to each other, preventive bush fires); transhumance (tribute payment, choice of dates and routes); and services rendered (bartering, packsaddles, storage, manure, crop residues, etc.) – all without needing to resort to the law, state or external aid whose development models call into question community social capital through new forms of resource management.

Low engagement levels, alongside feelings of not being listened to, heard, or supported by institutions whose mission is to deliver justice through conciliation, raises the issue of nomadic representation within the civil service and local authorities. By extension, access to competitive examinations and education is a concern, as well as - and perhaps above all - their elective and customary representation (see Part IV). Without trusted representatives or truly effective mechanisms to defend their rights, herders naturally seek protection and justice from other actors.

A blue-tinted photograph of a pastoralist scene. In the foreground, a young child is seen from the chest up, looking towards the camera with a serious expression. Behind the child, several donkeys and cattle are visible. Two men in the background are wearing traditional headwraps and robes. The scene is set in an open, arid landscape with sparse trees and a bird flying in the sky. The overall mood is somber and documentary.

PART TWO

The pastoralists crisis as a
breeding ground for armed violence

Evolution of violent incidents in the Central Sahel

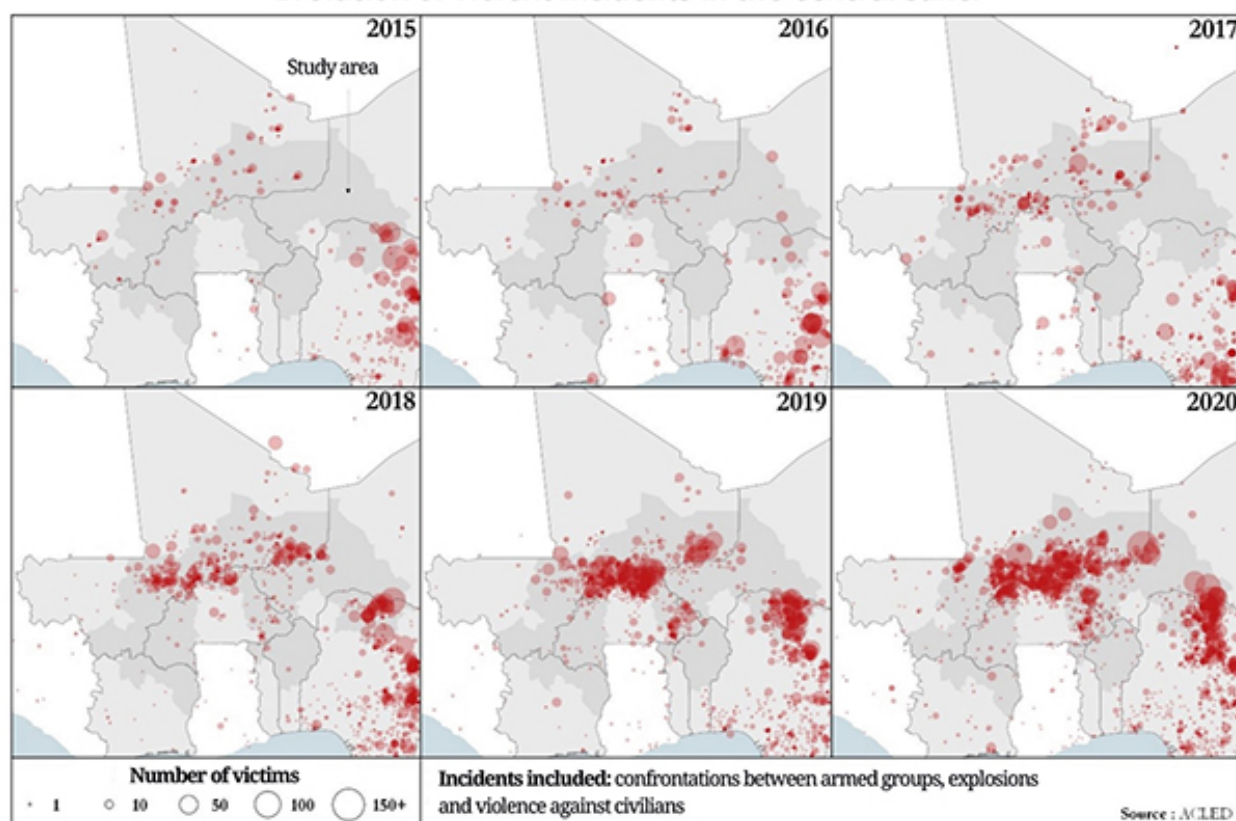


Figure 2: Increase in violence between 2015 and 2020.

Central Sahel has seen exponential levels of violence since 2015 (Figure 3). Probably the most common question is why and how the above-mentioned contexts - which have existed for several decades without causing large-scale violence - have suddenly contributed to fuelling insurgent violence, even opening up new theatres of conflict. The answer lies partly in the fact that the 'nomadic question' was limited for a long time to the north of Mali and Niger, and the Tuareg, the majority nomadic community in these areas. Since 2012 however, the AQIM jihadist project has wrong-footed ethnic interpretations of events by seeking to recruit from all communities, exploiting local weaknesses by promising to fight against injustice and restore equality between social groups. The state was scapegoated and targeted by AQIM and all insurgents who share grievances. As these jihadist groups extended their influence beyond northern Mali, they reached out to new populations where this message immediately resonated.

Religious logic is secondary to understanding the trajectory of jihad involvement in the Sahel.⁸⁰ These populations are engaged primarily in a 'societal project'. Some economically and socio-politically marginalised herders, particularly vulnerable to insecurity and victims of long-term and repeated injustices, have given in to the temptation to take up arms: to protect themselves against other armed actors, including other nomads; to defend themselves, or revenge injustices suffered for too long; to recapitalise by stealing livestock; or to regain control of lost land. These prosaic needs were quickly met by AQIM, via its various *katibats*, and in particular the Macina *katibat*. But their ambition is not so much to satisfy these particular interests as to promote and embody a new governance model, initially confined to the rural areas they are able to control. Embryonic forms of governance appear, attracting the support of some who embrace jihad and see it objectively as the best way to defend their interests. Meanwhile others remain driven by material interests (theft, banditry), or revenge that is framed, and even proscribed by the jihadist leaders of *Jamā'at*

⁸⁰ See Mathieu Pellerin, *Op. Cit.*

nuṣrat al-islām wal-muslimīn (JNIM), or by a communitarian agenda that does not fit in with the jihadist objective of uniting Muslim populations of all origins and ethnicities.

Paradoxically, these jihadist groups have been helped by states whose security responses have led to new injustices, pushing some apprentice jihadists to become even more radical and violent than the katibat linked to JNIM would tolerate. For some, the desire for revenge has taken over and pushed them to join the Islamic State in the Greater Sahara (IS-GS) where they can indulge more freely in interpersonal or inter-community score-settling. Their radicalism is caused by aggravated injustices - marked in recent years by summary executions - and which gradually threatens to turn into religious radicalism, based on a real adherence to Jihad.

With social relations atomising, largely as a result of self-defence groups forming and their anti-terrorist operations, it is increasingly difficult to distinguish the protective jihadist from the vengeful, or the strictly religious. These agendas overlap rather than complement each other and create internal tensions and arrangements. Attacks on 'enemy' villages are used to legitimise the theft of livestock, the practice of zakat goes against Islamic precepts, etc.

These contradictions often lead to herder ambivalence. Herders recognise that such groups address legitimate grievances, but the majority remain reluctant to join. Indeed, herders are first and foremost victims of the current wider security and governance crisis rather than active participants in it. For the majority of the herders interviewed, jihadist groups are not a sustainable solution.

II. FROM PASTORALIST INSURGENCIES TO JIHADISM : REGAINING CONTROL THROUGH ARMS

1. HERDERS' PERCEPTIONS OF THE ACTIONS OF ARMED GROUPS

During our study, in all areas surveyed, herders were asked to comment on the action of armed groups, and whether they could be of use to herders. In all the zones, detailed and well-argued responses were obtained, allowing those who are experiencing a double crisis, of land management and security, to have their say.

In insurgency zones, herder opinions were very divided for two reasons. Firstly, the respondents were afraid their answers would put them in danger, either from jihadists or the DSF. Secondly, many were also experiencing the insurgency's negative economic and security impacts. In other words, many herders understand why others take up arms, but do not see this as a sustainable solution for them or the wider livestock sector.

In vulnerable areas, under pressure from these groups, but where speech is still free, the usefulness of these groups is very clear. Group loyalty dominates even if the majority considers the jihadists above all as a threat. Analysis of three communes in south-west Niger, which we will not name to avoid potentially putting individuals at risk, reflects this reality.

Usefulness of jihadist groups (%)	Commune 1	Commune 2	Commune 3
To protect themselves or avenge abuses suffered by the DSF or rival communities	39,13	25	25
To secure their livestock and be able to move freely	13,04	16,67	37,5
To restore 'social justice'	47,83	58,33	37,5

Herder attitudes towards jihadists	Commune 1	Commune 2	Commune 3
Neutral/indifferent	37,50	41,67	37,5
Alliance through shared rejection of state institutions	37,50	25	25
Religious identification with the jihadist project	20,83	25	25
Rejection and DSF collaboration	4,17	8,33	12,5

Main source of threat	Commune 1	Commune 2	Commune 3
Bandits	25	58	7
Jihadist groups	45	33	65
DSF	17	8	29

Table 3: Perceptions of jihadist groups and sources of threat according to the herders interviewed (in % of responses) in three communes in south-west Niger

These results tend to support the idea that herders in this area recognise that jihadist groups can be useful, not only for pursuing 'social justice', but also through the protection they can provide, either from the DSF or from rival communities, given that there are no self-defence groups in this area. A small number (except in commune 3 where they are more numerous), perceive the jihadis as useful in protecting their livestock. Recognising objective usefulness does not, however, necessarily imply that they wish to join. In fact, most herders are neutral or indifferent. However, according to them, the majority of herders may be tempted to join these groups out of a shared rejection of the state or an identification with their ideology. Significantly, a tiny minority of herders say they are willing to collaborate with the DSF. This does not necessarily imply a rejection of the DSF, but perhaps more a fear of collaboration in the face of possible jihadist reprisals. Jihadists appear to be the priority threat in all three communes. This contrasts with the authorities' perception of their relationship with the herders, who mention, for example, the effectiveness of the mobile brigades and the escorting of herders on their rounds. This clearly points to the need for a more in-depth, sincere and lasting dialogue between these actors.

2. JIHADISTS: THE NEW PROTECTORS OF THE BUSH

The search for protection is central to pastoral mobility. As soon as the 2012 rebellion broke out, herders in northern Mali affiliated themselves to armed rebel groups according to tribal logic. Settled populations - especially in Gao - did the same with self-defence groups. Sheltering behind these groups is a necessity when national armies withdraw and, in a context of latent tension between nomadic tribes, each community seeks to arm itself to improve or even reverse the balance of power. A Tuareg herder in the Andéramboucane area says: *'Today's Kalashnikov has replaced yesterday's stick.'*

In the Gao and Ménaka regions, as well as Gourma-Rharous, the rebellion quickly pushed herders to align themselves with armed groups for protection against livestock kidnapping. These 'rebel' groups, largely structured around tribal membership, are de facto self-defence groups to which the population turns in the event of aggression or reprisals. Thus, the Chamanamass and Daoussahaks in the Ménaka region and the Ansongo circle (Talatayt) are covered by the two branches of the Mouvement pour le Salut de l'Azawad (MSA). The Touareg Autodefence Group Imghad and Allies (GATIA), a member of the Platform of Movements of 14 June 2014, ensures the security of the Imghads. The Arab herders rely on the Mouvement Arabe de l'Azawad (MAA). Following this logic, other armed groups representing other communities are seen as threats in their eyes. Some herders, such as those in Tin-Hama, Talatayt or Tessit (Ansongo cercle), are intermittently under the yoke of several armed groups, notably the GATIA or the Coordination des Mouvements de l'Azawad (CMA). When the balance of power is not in the herders' favour, they ally with the jihadist group controlling the area or leave the land. The same applies to settled groups (Ganda Izo, Ganda Koy, grouped within the Coordination des Mouvements et Fronts Patriotiques de Résistance or CMFPR) who have set up valley checkpoints on the Gao-Labbézanga, Gao-Bourem-Bamba axis to mark their presence in case of aggression against travellers or villagers. However, the valley herders rely less on

self-defence groups. Why? Because the latter cannot ensure their security in exposed pastures far from their areas of influence.

Some Tuareg communities have taken advantage of rebel group support to engage in livestock rustling and/or settle old scores with nomadic communities, in this case mainly but not only Fulani. In 2012, livestock rustling was mainly carried out by Tuareg groups affiliated to the Mouvement national de libération de l'Azawad (MNLA), who attacked Fulani with whom they had historically had a difficult relationship. During the 1990 rebellion, both in Ménaka and in the north of the Mopti region, in the Méma and Farimaké, 'Tuareg rebels' engaged in acts of killing and livestock rustling against Fulani herders. This scenario was repeated in 2012: in Douentza, the Movement for Unity and Jihad in West Africa (MUJAO) enlisted victims of MNLA 2012 abuses, which included livestock rustling; in Ménaka, the Daoussahaks' alignment with the MNLA in turn brought the Fulani closer to MUJAO. This trend has not abated, with many elements from these groups still engaging in acts of banditry, including livestock rustling.⁸¹

In the Ménaka - Tillabéri cross-border area, quests for protection and revenge drive Fulani herder involvement with jihadist groups. The injustices suffered by the region's Fulani in particular are far from new. They result primarily from the confrontation between Fulani herders of the Tolébé tribe from Niger and Daoussahak herders from Mali since the 1980s.⁸² They also stem from a succession of conflicts between the same Toledbe and the mainly agro-pastoral Zarma populations, which have led to numerous documented acts of violence.⁸³ When the Daoussahaks joined the MNLA in 2012, the Toledbe felt legitimately threatened and had to seek protection. When asked why the Toledo did not then seek protection from the state of Niger, the answer lies in a gradual buildup of mistrust between them. In both conflicts mentioned, the Niger authorities were accused of inaction and even complicity. Some herders have accused the Niger DSF of paying other herders to chase Daoussahak livestock rustlers, often without catching them. There have also been reports of customary chiefs from Niger taking part in this 'raiding mafia'. Finally, the authorities have failed to demobilise the Toledbe, who have been allowed to be armed since the early 2000s. Herders accuse the Niger authorities of favouring the Zarmas during this period conflicts. Some herders who experienced this conflict claim the Niger DSF openly supported the Zarmas, and failed to intervene when violence was perpetrated by Zarma farmers against them.

In the eyes of the Toledo herders, MUJAO was therefore the only group capable of protecting them from the MNLA-affiliated Daoussahaks. More than a form of religious radicalisation, this is a sign of the state's failure to protect its citizens. These two community conflicts have pushed herders towards the MUJAO, as this herder from Banibangou summarises: *'Herders take up arms for two reasons in our area: either to defend themselves or to take revenge. It is important to remember that before we were born, the Tuaregs took all our animals, often killing the herders, under the DSF's impotent or totally indifferent watch.'* For example, one of the main Fulani IS-GS leaders in this area was expropriated from his land by a Zarma traditional leader in Banibangou, which is said to have influenced his decision to take up arms later. In 2010, in Banibangou, thirteen young Fulani who had resisted an attack by Daoussahaks were subjected to violence and humiliation by a local state official and then imprisoned for possession of weapons.

⁸¹ For example, 2019 saw more than a thousand cattle stolen from Fulani herders by Douentza Imghads, then sold at Gao and Kidal markets. Isolated group members are involved in blockading major routes such as Sévaré-Gao, Gao-Haoussa-Foulane, Ansongo-Labbézinga, Ansongo-Ménaka and even Gao-Bourem-Kidal.

⁸² This conflict is ancient and has its roots in the northward migration of farmlands in North Tillabéri, continuously nibbled away by the agricultural pioneer front (millet, cowpea cultivation) in this region, forcing the Fulani Tolébé to claim Daoussahaks resources (vegetation, water, salt water cure) in the present Ménaka region. In Ménaka areas of competition between these two herding communities are believed to be the Azawack valley, from Andéramboucane to Tamalat.

⁸³ See AREN, 2011, Op. Cit.

HERDING: BETWEEN COMMUNITY VIOLENCE AND JIHADISM

The Fulani-Daoussahaks conflict was initially about resources, but it has changed in nature. A herder from Banibangou even says 'the conflict is in its third mutation. It was between herders before becoming a conflict between armed groups, and now both are casual friends.' In fact, today peace is imposed by force: many Daoussahak fighters who had fought the IS-GS until 2018 have resolved to negotiate peace with them, to the point of collaborating with the movement until at least 2020. The question arises as to how herders navigate these community tensions and shifting allegiances within the armed groups, for which they have paid a very heavy price, both in terms of human lives and stolen livestock.

Yet the control of resources remains at the heart of these conflicts. In 2017, in the Ménaka region, conflicts between Iboguilitanes and Daoussahaks on the one hand, and between Arabs and Daoussahaks on the other, were quickly contained and partly related to the management of resources (water, grazing). Similarly, some of the massacres perpetrated by the armed groups were reportedly partly territorial. For example, in 2018, the communal massacres perpetrated by the IS-GS against Daoussahak civilians were carried out in pastoral areas where access is historically coveted by both communities.

While the armed groups were negotiating with each other, the herders from the communities in conflict conducted a parallel peace process. This took place in the Ménaka region with the local figures, traditional and religious authorities of the different communities. A framework for concerted action on the management of pastoral resources along the border was devised. The leading principle was mutual protection between grazing areas, i.e. the chiefs of the Daoussahak fractions would welcome the Fulani towards Inékar, and likewise the Fulani would dissuade any aggression by the Daoussahak towards the Mali-Niger border. This concerted resource management method restores lost reciprocity, when from one year to the next, depending on the rainfall recorded, the pastures are open to the most needy. It recentres the initial problem, namely that communities agree on pastoral resource rights. Such agreements alone are not enough in the face of militarised conflicts, but they are part of the answer to the basic problem, as summarised by a herder from Banibangou: 'Niger herders who migrate to Mali have never understood why the Daoussahaks refuse them access to certain natural resources, whereas Malian herders who migrate to Niger are not subject to any restrictions on access to fodder resources.'

This dynamic of loyalty in exchange for protection has undergone a second wave as the violence in Liptako Gourma, and even beyond, has become more sectarian. The increase in communal violence from 2016 onwards gradually plunged the other nomadic communities in the area into violence, forcing them to align with one armed group or another.⁸⁴ From 2017 onwards, MSA and GATIA versus IS-GS enmity pushed certain Fulani communities to lock themselves into this movement. In this second wave, the desire for revenge often took precedence over the need for protection. In central Mali, the rise in violence between the Dogon and Bambara communities on the one hand, and the Fulani on the other, has also greatly boosted recruitment to the Macina katibat. The Centre-Nord region of Burkina Faso is emblematic of a situation where, after the Yirgou massacre in 2019, entire families have come under the protection of jihadist groups. Some have joined in directly, avenging extortion by indiscriminately targeting Mossi civilians. The same is true in the eastern region of Burkina Faso where, in 2020, herders abandoned many Volontaires pour la Défense de la Patrie (VDP)-controlled Gourma province areas and instead took shelter in pastoral enclaves secured by the jihadist groups. The latter even prohibit Mossi populations from entering these areas, giving the impression that community rivalries, land disputes and competing loyalties with armed groups all overlap. Resource protection therefore requires, more than ever, passive collaboration or even

⁸⁴ The majority of Idarfane are allied with Daoussahaks and therefore with MSA and GATIA, whereas their Iboguilitané rivals are allied with the Fulani in the IS-GS fold.

affiliation with an armed group. For example, in Gourma province, there are documented cases of individuals who joined jihadist groups after their herder relatives were unjustifiably arrested by the VDP in Natiaboani. Such examples are multiplying all over the Sahel and are, as we shall see below, the new main driver for joining jihadist groups today. Specifically, in Gourma-Rharous, where herders find themselves caught between JNIM-IS-GS clashes, the mechanics of protection play a large role in group membership. In Inadjatafane, a herder was particularly complimentary about JNIM: *'It's a good thing they (JNIM) are here, because without them we would all be decapitated by Daesh or robbed by thieves. Everyone has abandoned us. The state, the independence movements, the foreign forces. The whole world has abandoned us and casts these people as terrorists, yet they are better than the rest of the world who remain indifferent to what they do.'*

THE BANDITRY ROUTE: BETWEEN CRIMINALITY, PROTECTION NEEDS AND RECAPITALISATION.

Protection via armed groups is far from limited to armed rebels or jihadists. Bandit groups too are part of the picture, where they are the only ones to carry weapons and give herders security. However, the search for protection often paves the way for a shift to criminality, as herders start to engage in the very thing they were seeking to protect themselves from. The 'jihadisation of banditry' is being witnessed, whether in the Sahel and eastern Burkina Faso, in Tillabéri or Torodi, where many jihadists are former bandits, but the question is: is this a definitive shift?

In some areas, decapitalisation also pushes herders into banditry, but this is difficult to analyse without a study of individual trajectories and the dynamics behind them. The droughts of the 1970s and 1980s, their impact on herder impoverishment, and whether this fuelled banditry in the decades that followed, would merit a dedicated study. There seem to be three scenarios in the Sahel:

- ◆ areas under jihadist control where bandits are largely 'tamed' and sometimes recruited. In most of these areas, pre-insurgency conditions existed before the arrival of the jihadists and the bandits were not immune to the dynamics at work. In Torodi, the bandits are thought to be partly climate refugees from the north who fled the 1984 drought and never became sufficiently embedded in the indigenous socio-economic context. In eastern Burkina Faso, poachers who joined jihadist groups are primarily former hunters classified as criminals by conservationist legislation. A more detailed analysis of the reasons why the East became a bastion of banditry from the 1990s onwards would be very enlightening.
- ◆ areas exposed to pre-insurgency conditions where bandits are driven by greed - in a context of advanced decapitalisation - but also by a sectarian agenda. This is the case in north-western Nigeria and the Niger border strip, where Hausa-Fulani polarisation is increasing, especially in Nigeria. Although there is no statistical monitoring based on victims' ethnic origin, the sectarian agenda probably plays a role in bandits' target choices. Hausa self-defence groups mostly target Fulani herders, and in retaliation Fulani bandits target Hausa agro-pastoralists. However, this paradigm has limitations: many bandits are Hausa, and many victims of Fulani bandits are also Fulani.⁸⁵ The idea of recapitalisation through theft and kidnapping needs to be explored further. Forming one's own bandit group is necessary to protect oneself (and one's family or village) from banditry. It is quite noticeable, especially in North-Western Nigeria, that many bandits have formed groups for this purpose. According to a young herder in Alléla, *'all the youths whose parents' herds were stolen by bandits in Nigeria have become easy prey for bandits and jihadists to recruit. Some young people have already mastered the use of homemade weapons. The same applies to young people who have lost their parents, killed either by bandits, jihadists or the military.'* Similarly, in the Maradi region, one of the main Hausa Katsinawa bandits is said to have formed his group to protect his village from possible attacks. In Madaoua (Tahoua), also affected by the same banditry phenomenon, one of the main bandits arrested at the end of 2020 by the Niger authorities is a Niger Tuareg who is said to own several thousand heads of livestock, suggesting recapitalisation through banditry. Faced with advancing banditry, jihadist groups seeking to establish themselves more permanently in this area have already clashed with local bandit groups. In early 2019, jihadists from northern Tillabéri came to the Konni area

⁸⁵ For a more detailed analysis of the sectarian aspects of banditry along this border, see International Crisis Group, 'Sud-Ouest du Niger : prévenir un nouveau front insurrectionnel', Rapport Afrique n°301, avril 2021. ('South-western Niger : averting a new insurrection front', Africa Report n°301, April 2021.

to fight bandit groups from Zamfara and returned stolen livestock and ransom money to the victims.⁸⁶ The community dimension plays an important role here, as the jihadists in question originate from the Konni area, a distant legacy of the Sokoto Caliphate of Usman Don Fodio.

- ◆ areas where banditry stems from decapitalisation, but remains for the time being immune to insurgent ideas. In these areas, banditry indiscriminately targets those with capital, whether they are herders or farmers. In Kéné Dougou, for example, livestock rustling networks are largely run by former herdsmen or herdsmen who have lost everything or come from families who have. They have joined livestock rustling networks in Ghana, a regional hub for the evacuation and trafficking of stolen cattle from north-eastern Ivory Coast to western and central-western Burkina Faso. In northern Benin, the kidnapping network is run by Fulani from Borgou, originally from Nigeria, and only targets herders from the Fulani community (herders and traders), presumably because they know more about their own community's rich owners and because herders generally have more cash to pay ransoms. This phenomenon appeared in 2017 in Donga county before spreading to Borgou. More than 200 cases of kidnapping have been recorded since then. To a lesser extent, Atacora and Alibori *départements* are newly affected, with a few cases reported. The analogy with the situation in north-west Nigeria is interesting. Although the contexts are very different because of the absence of settled militias in the north of Benin, community polarisation is growing in this area and very embryonic forms of Fulani self-defence groups could develop there, partly as a result of kidnappings. In Bassila (Donga), some kidnappers have converted and created a 'security system' to prevent kidnapping.

3. SEEKING JUSTICE THROUGH ARMS

The second mechanism for joining jihadist groups is a direct result of the countless conflicts - often over control of resources - that have never been resolved. One side harbours resentment based on a sense of impunity and the perception that justice is only for the richest or most influential. Indeed, many of the Sahel jihadist hotbeds have emerged because of 'frozen' but rarely resolved conflicts. But it should be noted from the outset: this is neither a herder nor a jihadist prerogative. As we will see later, the use of self-defence groups to settle old land conflicts is part of the same dynamic. If justice is now done by force of arms, as we have shown, it is above all because of impasses in formal justice, and traditional conflict management mechanisms that lack legitimacy and efficiency.

Numerous examples from central Mali, the Sahel region of Burkina Faso and Tillabéri illustrate this. Central Mali, in particular, is home to many conflict hotbeds that have been reawakened by the arrival of jihadist groups since 2015 allowing these groups to become more entrenched by restoring justice through arms. As a herder from Soula (Bankass) puts it, *'the only law these people obey is force'*.

In the Koro Cercle, the May 2012 Sari conflict was one of the disputes that promoted jihadist, namely the MUJAO, advances into the area in 2013. This conflict arose from a disagreement over the use of a well where the Dogon refused the Fulani access – again part of a history of court decisions made but not respected. A dispute arising from a livestock track blocked by fields had been judged several years previously by the Koro court of first instance and the court of appeal in Sévaré. The judgements fell in favour of the Fulani herders, recognised as the first to arrive in the region, from the time of the Fulani Macina Empire founded by Sékou Amadou. The 2012 massacre can be interpreted as the Dogon's desire to take justice into their own hands just after the state had left the area. It resulted in around 30 Fulani deaths, 350 huts burnt or destroyed, and almost 800 animals stolen. The state did send an official mission to Burkina Faso to reassure the displaced and try to get them to return to Mali, but to no avail. The complaint lodged was never followed up. The Fulani Sari chief then sought the Fulani Boni chief's help. The Fulani Boni chief was then allied to the MNLA, but refused to help, although our study did not confirm this information.⁸⁷ This would have further contributed to bringing certain Sari Fulani closer to the MUJAO, enemy at that time of the

⁸⁶ Ibid

⁸⁷ According to Tor Arve Benjaminsen et Boubacar Ba, "Why do pastoralists in Mali join jihadist groups? A political ecological explanation", *The Journal of Peasant Studies*, 2018.

MNLA. According to information gathered in the Koro Cercle, several displaced persons from Sari joined the MUJAO and then the Macina katibat, in which they are still fighting today.

Multiple cases like this can be found in almost every Mopti cercle. In the Koro Cercle too, Crisis Group mentions the 2002 Gondogourou Dogon– Mbona Fulani conflict. After several court decisions, it still has not been resolved. The militarisation of each community led in 2017 to violent clashes and a series of reprisals.⁸⁸

However, it is essential to understand that militarisation is not only happening with jihadist groups, nor only through herders. In the **Djenné Cercle**, a conflict between Bozo fishermen and Bambara farmers is ongoing since 1950. Many court decisions have been made and challenged through corruption, and one of the parties has joined the Macina katibat to take justice into their own hands.⁸⁹ In the **Bankass Cercle**, the conflict between the Berdosso and Kassa villages, dating back to colonisation, has led one village to join the jihadists in order to weaken the other. Again in the **Bankass Cercle**, the Koulogon massacre on 1 January 2019 is said to be rooted in a 2010 land dispute between the Koulogon Fulani and Dogon farmers from the neighbouring Kolamatintin village. The dispute was settled by the courts in favour of the Fulani and the attack on Koulogon is said to be partly linked to that court decision, which the Dogon never accepted. All this was probably exacerbated by the deep polarisation of the communities at the time.

Similar cases can be cited elsewhere in the study areas, particularly in the Burkinabe Sahel. In Soum province, many conflicts between self-defence groups (Koglweogos, then VDP) and jihadist groups are rooted in disputes between farmers and herders or agro-pastoralists, depending on the case – but all belonging to the Fulani or Rimaibe community. Similar configurations have existed in the villages of Boukouma (Arbinda), Silgaaji, Taouremba and Beleheede (Tongomayel) or Niafo (Pobé-Mengao). The same is true in Oudalan in Gorgadji. In a number of cases, court decisions had been handed down in favour of the Fulani, as in Taouremba, for example. Most of these conflicts challenge agro-pastoralist land ownership in these areas and are not limited to managing roaming rights. Analysis of two examples illuminates this:

- ◆ **In the case of the village of Béléhédé** (Tongomayel commune, Soum province), a lowland project by Taiwanese developers attracted Mossi and Fulani agricultural migrants from 2013. Several dozen Fulani landowners were expropriated without compensation. Each side sought to take justice into their own hands, owing to the presence of armed groups in the area: the farmers affiliated with the Koglweogos, while the jihadists reportedly recruited expropriated landowners threatened by these groups.⁹⁰
- ◆ **The Gorgadji case** is equally representative and follows exactly the same logic. As already mentioned, Mossi and Fulani farmer migration is an issue here, and the pastoral area of Peterguersé is particularly coveted. Due to insecurity, Mossi farmers from the Centre-North have begun to occupy this area, in increasing numbers each year. Tensions worsen in the rainy season when the herders return to the area with their animals. These pressures have been managed by community leaders (village chief, CVD and municipal councillors), but the herders have felt wronged. Some herders joined the arriving jihadist groups to 'resolve the conflict' in their own way and take justice into their own hands. In response, some farmers have sided with the VDP/Koglweogos and the score-settling has increased. The people in the area are still paying a heavy price.

All the cases mentioned are conflicts where the use of armed groups has already happened. The purpose of our study is also to analyse areas that have not yet been affected by jihadist insurgencies. Let's now consider two communities that risk descending into armed conflict in the absence of formal justice, reparation and reconciliation: Bouna and Bangui.

⁸⁸ International Crisis Group, 'Enrayer la communautarisation de la violence au centre du Mali', Rapport Afrique N° 293, 9 November 2020. ('Curbing Sectarian Violence in Central Mali', Africa Report N° 293 etc)

⁸⁹ Ibrahima Poudiougou, Giovanni Zanoletti, 'Fabriquer l'identité à la pointe de la Kalach : Violence et question foncière au Mali', Éditions de la Sorbonne, Revue internationale des études du développement, 2020/3 N° 243, pp 37-65. ('Forging identity with Kalashnikovs : Violence and land issues in Mali', Sorbonne Press, International Review of Development Studies, 2020/3 N° 243)

⁹⁰ The author put this case forward in a report for International Crisis Group. See International Crisis Group, 'Burkina Faso : stopper la spirale de violences', Rapport Afrique, février 2020. ('Burkina Faso : Stopping spiralling violence', Africa Report, February 2020.)

- ◆ **Conflict in Bouna (north-eastern Ivory Coast)** in 2016, left 33 Fulani herders dead and led to the displacement of more than 2,500 herders. While the conflict arose directly from Lobi farmer discontent following repeated damage to their fields by Fulani herders, it also stemmed from recurring tensions involving the 'indigenous' landowners. The Lobi accuse them of being responsible for the presence of the Fulani.⁹¹ An aggravating factor here is the presence of Dozos who are very involved in the protection of agricultural land and are central to this massacre. The easing of community tensions is partly due to the Ivorian authorities' attitude in the conflict's aftermath. But other signals sent are worrying. The main Dozo leader involved was imprisoned and this contributed greatly to avoiding a spiral of violence. However, this same individual was released in June 2020, which raises questions. Community authority involvement in the area is important and defuses emerging tensions, as seen in Hapo village (Bouna). The conflict remains largely frozen and resentment latent. Some sources are already talking about victims from Bouna joining jihadist groups.⁹²
- ◆ **Conflict in Bangui** (Madaoua, Niger), arose in November 2016 between farmers and herders, based on false reports of field damage. It caused the death of 20 Fulani (women, children and old people) and more than 40 injured. This conflict has specific explanations that need to be laid out. Although the dispute is based on competition for land and increasing field damage incidents, it also reveals the importance of the local institutional control, which has led to very strong community rivalries. The commune was led by a Hausa mayor for years after decentralisation. But a Fulani mayor won the 2011 municipal elections. This power shift impacted the Hausa's control of territory and resources. They complained of uncompensated damage and early release of fields, etc. and organised themselves to resist these pressures, but to no avail. In November 2016, after field damage that the Bangui Fulani refused to acknowledge, the Hausa community mobilised to respond with violence, with the potential support of elected officials and local figures. All the Fulani villages and camps around Bangui and within were attacked. It took the intervention of the forces of law and order to stop the drama, and years of awareness-raising sessions by the administrative authorities (the Prefect of Madaoua) and their partners to calm things down. However, rivalries remain strong, although not very visible. The case is dragging on in court and the main perpetrators are free in Bangui or Nigeria. No material compensation for losses has been paid. For example, during the study we met an agro-pastoralist who had seen his mini-dairy, in which he had just invested several million CFA francs, completely destroyed. He had to rebuild his business without any assistance, on a small-scale, because he could not reinvest.

The fact that these two conflicts did not escalate can be partly explained by the fact that in both cases the Fulani communities are a local minority. They know that it is not in their interests - security or economic - to take revenge, even if they have a traditional chieftaincy in Bangui. The sense of injustice is no less strong, as long as impunity prevails. For the time being, peace is also largely thanks to customary and administrative authority involvement, as well as civil society in both cases. However, these conflicts could one day flare up again in the wake of a new incident, since armed groups are now operating on the outskirts of these areas and may offer an opportunity for justice. A new incident in either of these areas could trigger ties with armed groups. Unless justice is done.

4. BECOMING KING OF THE BUSH

Jihadist groups have certainly enabled herders to overturn injustices by means of arms. They now also increasingly embody a justice model involving not only violence, but also resource management and consultation to ease conflicts not necessarily related to them. They feed off shortcomings in conflict prevention and resolution – above all, the justice system's exclusivity and corruption. Gradually they are establishing themselves in certain territories as governors of the bush. In the Sahel, they fight theft, punish fraud, deliver justice, settle conflicts, negotiate peace with communities with whom they were in conflict, and regulate access to resources. By way of comparison, the Islamic State in Iraq administration model and

⁹¹ See Jérémy Speight, Bouna, une instabilité permanente, *Afrique Contemporaine*, N° 263-264, 2017. (Bouna, a permanent instability, *Contemporary Africa*, etc)

⁹² See Lassina Diarra, 'Radicalisation et perception de la menace terroriste dans l'extrême nord de la Ivory Coast : le cas de Bounkani', *Timbuktu Institute*, juin 2021. (Radicalisation and the perception of terrorist threat in Ivory Coast's extreme north : the Boukani case', *Timbuktu Institute*, June 2021)

its West African (ISWAP) branch's governance in Lake Chad show that jihadist groups can compete with and even supplant state administrations in rural areas.⁹³

In the rural areas they control, jihadist groups perform a policing role, with an Islamic dimension. Religious injunctions to which populations - including herders - are subjected vary according to time and area. From 2012, AQIM's emir had warned members that excessive prohibitions among a population mostly hostile to the jihadist ideology would mean a loss of support.⁹⁴ AQIM, and later JNIM, scrupulously respected these instructions: on the one hand, they ensured a balance between preaching and prohibition, and on the other, they won over the population by making them feel secure. Security is undeniably how JNIM gained the most support, imposing itself in many territories as the only one capable of fighting effectively against highwaymen, and by punishing cases of swindling or theft. Many recorded cases testify to this:

- ◆ In the **floodzone of central Mali**, the Macina katibat has set up an official in each locality it controls to receive complaints and settle disputes. In some of the larger villages, notably Diguicere, Doungoura and Toguere-Coumbe, these officials have the title of 'Mobo' (marabouts). The majority of respondents affirm that their judgement is fair and equitable, and according to respondents in Tenenkou, villagers can voluntarily ask these officials to rule on their disputes.
- ◆ In **Gourma**, the bandits who had been cutting off roads have, since 2018, been progressively fought by the jihadists, before being forced to leave the GATIA and repent to JNIM. This actually helped to strengthen JNIM's local legitimacy. A herder from N'tillit said: *'JNIM really helped the population by arresting all the known thieves in the area last year, they broke up several groups of small organised bandits.'* Another Gossi herder testifies to justice as delivered by JNIM: *'Sometimes victims are compensated after they've been harmed by others and the jihadists follow up on the compensation until it is effective.'*
- ◆ In the **Tillabéri** region, 54% of herders consider that since the jihadists have taken control of part of the region's rural areas, herders no longer have the weapons they used to possess for protection. A herder from Abala said: *'Before the jihadists arrived, almost every herder's family had a weapon, but it's no longer needed. It is the jihadists who ensure the security of all the herders.'* Livestock rustling no longer exists in Tillabéri, unless it is carried out in disguised forms by the IS-GS.

The jihadis even impose sanctions on themselves if they get out of line. On several occasions, farmers or herders have set off Improvised Explosive Devices (IEDs) planted by jihadists, causing the death of entire families. The JNIM acknowledges its responsibility, punishes the perpetrators and compensates the families of the victims. A notable figure from the Koro Cercle (central Mali) reacts to this: *'It doesn't mean people will forgive them, and often they refuse the money, but at least they recognise their wrong. When the Malian State kills civilians, have you ever seen them acknowledge it and punish the perpetrators?'*

Their ambition is to rule the bush, including access to and exploitation of resources where their influence is strongest. This is particularly the case in areas under JNIM control. They aim to be neutral in matters of land and resources, and in the resolution of disputes that may arise. They also have sufficient authority (through inspiring fear) to enforce decisions. This is especially true in the Inner Niger Delta, where rules governing herder migration are respected. The jowro role is limited to what has been assigned to them since the time of Sékou Amadou. Theft is severely punished, regardless of the offender's community. For example, a Fulani who committed theft in the area was punished and justice was thus served to a settler from another community. Some see a 'model' here and its strength in central Mali lies in the fact that its actors are often the victims of yesterday: powerless young victims of a system they used to call out, now find themselves in a position to ensure order and justice. The disenfranchised youth are now in charge. The Katibat Macina sets and enforces dates for entering and leaving pastures. Some farmers recognise their efforts to be neutral, as in a Ouro-Guiré (Tenenkou Cercle) village: *'In my locality, they have forbidden all villagers to leave their animals unattended during harvest periods and migration dates, while warning herders not to return early on pain of punishment.'* The majority of respondents consider that these rules have improved the transhumance management.

⁹³ See International Crisis Group, 'Facing the Challenge of the Islamic State in West Africa Province', Africa Report, 16 May 2019.

⁹⁴ Jeune Afrique, 'Comment Aqmi a essayé de créer un État islamique au Nord-Mali', Benjamin Roger, 7 October 2013. (Young Africa, 'How AQIM tried to create an Islamic state in North Mali')

In the **Tillabéri region**, where the jihadists are less involved in territorial governance, the same qualities are recognised by herders, such as one in Banibangou: *'The jihadists are more effective than the authorities in managing conflicts over access to resources. They have imposed free access to resources on everyone without distinction [...]. They have systematically banned livestock rustling in our locality and that favours transhumance, especially when it is accompanied by freedom of access to resources.'* In a recorded example from Abala commune, after deliberately damaging a field, a farmer demanded 120,000 CFA francs from his victim, who refused to pay the sum. Two jihadists then listened to the parties, went to see the damage and set the amount at 200,000 FCFA to be paid immediately. The jihadists asked young people to take livestock as collateral up to the amount of the sum they had agreed to. The village chief was warned not to deal with the victim. More broadly, as well as theft, the jihadis are sometimes credited with curbing illegal occupations, regulating straw gathering, and the prohibition of tree felling without good reason (on the grounds that they are God's resources for all). These are normally the responsibility of public authorities, but, according to a herder association leader, 'through negligence, the state has lost much of its authority to armed groups'. Regulation of resources (dung collection, herder responsibility to free up pastures in central Mali's floodzones, and logging restrictions in Gourma and Tillabéri) is widespread.

In **eastern Burkina Faso**, jihadist groups have 'liberated the land' in accordance with their promises to the people joining them since 2017. The symbols of the oppression - the water and forestry agents - have been driven out of most protected areas and hunting zones in this region. Some of the people who had been expelled - not without violence - from these areas (going back in some cases to the 1980s) feel that their rights have been restored. Some have reportedly even joined jihadist groups. Herders can once again benefit from the fodder biomass of these areas. This 'liberation of the land' has benefitted not only the herders, but also other categories of user previously denied access, including Gourma farmers, hunters (who had become poachers by force of circumstance) or fishermen. The jihadists set up the same rules for land and resource management as in neighbouring areas.

The jihadists influence over security, social and even economic affairs makes them key players in any attempt at dialogue between communities, as the events of recent years have shown in the flooded and exposed parts of central Mali. Peace in the various bushlands cannot be achieved at present without involving the jihadist groups that control them. Attempts to negotiate in the Koro and Bankass cercles, as well as in Karéri, systematically failed until the summer of 2019, when negotiations between Bambara Dozos and the Macina katibat, via the Faso Dambe Ton association, led to a peace agreement that is still in force today, despite the difficulties that the security context entails. In 2020 and 2021, in the Koro and Bankass cercles, peace only returned as a result of direct dialogue between the jihadists, the area's Dogon communities and some local Dozos. The implications for the civilian population - both herders and farmers - are major. During the fighting, farmers were forbidden to cultivate, the Dozos boycotted Fulani products and sometimes prevented the sale of cereals to them, while each community was the victim of large-scale livestock theft. These agreements allowed each community to resume its agro-pastoral activities. The jihadists seek to pacify community relations, but some believe that such a rapprochement will be to the detriment of Sahelian security overall. The challenge remains for states and their partners to recognise that, in central Mali in particular, jihadists are not living outside or against society. They are increasingly influential actors within it.

5. JIHAD: A WAY OF CHANGING THE SOCIAL ORDER

We have seen that restoring social justice is both central to the jihadists' project and decisive in understanding why herders join them. Inner Niger Delta's example helps us to understand how the jihadists have overturned the social order to the benefit of the least privileged.

Until 2015, the gradual monetisation of pasture access gave rise to predatory practices in which the jowro, the local authorities and the DSF played a big part. 'Foreign' users, especially herders on exposed

land, were the main victims, as they were subject to multiple taxes.⁹⁵ A herder interviewed in Tenenkou said: *'the jowro shared part of the tolo, the access rights to the pastures with the DSF and elected officials, and the tolo went from a symbolic value (the loan of a head of livestock for its milk for the duration of the access to the pasture) to several hundred thousand CFA francs.'* The jowro have also been accused of granting pastoral land to farmers, including grazing areas, routes and even plains, effectively restricting the herder mobility. They are said to have allowed fishermen to dig canals along the Diaka arm (a tributary of the Niger) in order to fish during the river's ebb. Hippo grass pastures are now a commodity and no longer part of reciprocal processes. The jowro have become a symbol of the injustices experienced by Inner Delta herders. Some of the herders in exposed floodplains have mobilised against this social order by joining the Macina katibat and are now the masters of the Delta. A very enlightening report on this subject sums up the situation: *'The violence suffered in the past explains the revenge of today. The herders want to overthrow Jowro authority. They want revenge . . . They are even organising themselves in places against them, and the arrival of the jihadists in the region is an un hoped-for windfall, an opportunity not to be missed.'*⁹⁶ Since 2015, the Macina katibat has preached egalitarianism, finding a favourable echo among these herders, based on the idea that 'the land and all that it contains belongs only to God.'

The question is whether the jihadist agenda has been so successful that it is no longer about sharing resources. Current events in 2020 seem to show that it has not, or that the two agendas have become intrinsically linked, indicating that bushland control is now achieved through belonging to jihadist groups. Indeed, since the beginning of 2019, Hamadoun Kouffa's position on the jowros has evolved. The jowro function has gradually been rehabilitated on the grounds that they cannot be expropriated and deprived of rights established at the time of the Dina. This has led to strong protests among herders. The IS-GS - locally known as Dawlatoul Islam - has exploited these protests by openly denouncing JNIM for preventing free access to the pastures. The IS-GS argument is the same as the Kouffa's in 2015, namely that 'the land belongs to God'. Thus, when the IS-GS arrived in the Inner Niger Delta, some Douma, Gondo and Seno origin herders were said to have joined IS-GS ranks to attack the pastures. They started by chasing jowros away and even killed some village chiefs.⁹⁷ Peace was only restored when the IS-GS defeated JNIM in January 2020. Since then, tensions remain high. In July 2020, herders in the exposed areas - who it is difficult to say are still affiliated to the IS-GS - were still promising revenge against the Macina katibat. On the other hand, according to a leader in Dialloubé, the major worry of herders from the floodzone who were due to migrate to the exposed zone from September 2020 onwards is their animals or themselves being killed. As a result, many have changed their routes and moved down to the Sikasso area.

Belonging to jihadist groups is not only a means of overturning social order, it is also a recapitalisation method for herders who are members, particularly through attacks on villages considered enemies because they are affiliated, closely or distantly, to self-defence groups or the DSF. Within the JNIM this is highly regulated and community-based revenge prohibited. But, within the IS-GS, recapitalisation tends to turn into predation. The IS-GS is often incriminated in livestock abduction. The targets of these kidnappings are twofold. One target set is elected officials, civil servants, political leaders and the DSF. The other, herds belonging to villages considered enemies because they harbour informers, for example, or because they have set up self-defence groups. For example, in the Gao region, the mayor of the commune was robbed of 497 oxen; a project leader in Gao, more than 200 head of oxen; the mayor of Bourra, more than 50 head of oxen; and in Haoussa-Foulane, an elected official was robbed of 130 oxen. In the region of Tillabéri, during the winter of 2020, the jihadists seized a herd of about 60 Azawak livestock belonging to the family of a General from Toukounous. A few days later, they seized more than 500 head of Azawak animals belonging to a former minister and a ranch owner. Communities or villages are also targeted according to their links with certain personalities or tribes, or the position they have adopted towards the IS-GS. For example, in the Gao region, more than a hundred head of livestock were stolen in 2019 from the former First Lady's village (Baria, Bourem commune). The Gabero Sidibe clan villages were

⁹⁵ Baba Coulibaly, Elisabeth Dorier, 'Décentralisation politique, patrimonialisation et arrangements locaux : quand les Jowro s'accrochent aux bourgoutières (Delta intérieur du Niger)', *Autrepart*, N° 84, 2017. (Political décentralisation, heritage appropriation and local arrangements : when the Jowra hold onto pastures (Inner Niger Delta)') etc)

⁹⁶ UQAM, 2018, Op. Cit.

⁹⁷ His killing 'seems linked to a conflict between two Fulani groups over pasture access. During this, Kouffa partisans came to back up the (nomadic) tioki Fulani who challenge the land rights of the settled Macina Fulani'. See International Crisis Group, 'Mali central : la fabrique d'une insurrection ?', *Rapport Afrique* N° 238, 6 July 2016. ('Central Mali : insurrection factory?', *Africa Report* 238 etc)

also targeted in 2019 because of their communal alliances with the Imghads, IS-GS's known enemies. However, the JNIM is not to be outdone, being particularly harsh on civil servants who are animal owners, or those occupying political positions, NGO, MINUSMA, and Barkhane postholders, or those linked to other opposing armed groups (jihadist or not).

Beyond any ideological dimension, for many fighters from nomadic communities, these measures are potentially forms of recapitalisation at the expense of actors enriched by the same system that has impoverished them. In this respect, it is interesting to observe the role played by herders in this rustling jihadist economy. The main rustlers are the IS-GS and bandits who take advantage of the general chaos. In most of the Gao region cercles, herders or former herders are incriminated in these activities. One herder said: *'The spies are among us, they know us, they even know the bull that drives the herd'*. Livestock thefts are carried out with the help of informers who know the owner well, along the same lines as zakat collection, for which 'accomplices', who often turn out to be herdsman, are paid. Such accomplices are said to be paid CFAF 5,000 per head of beef sold. Other herders are accused of having abandoned a profession which is more difficult and precarious than in the past. They are said to develop sales channels, abetted by butchers in urban centres, or to take care of getting the cattle to West African markets, to Nigeria, Benin, Ivory Coast or Ghana. As a rule, herds of ten head or less are sold in local markets frequented by all, while larger herds are transported outside the country.

In the Burkinabe Sahel, in most Seno and Oudalan localities, herders agree that former bandits joined the IS-GS from 2018 onwards to continue their crimes. In the wake of the post-Yirgou January 2019 uprisings, cattle thefts targeting settled agro-pastoralists in the Centre-North, Soum and Oudalan reached record levels. Numerous testimonies support the idea that the jihadist insurgents coexisted with bandit groups or simple herders who 'cleaned up' after the settled farmers had left. The former were essentially driven by sectarian revenge after the series of executions specifically targeting the Fulani community in the first half of 2019. The latter often took advantage of the context to loot villages and seize cattle left behind. In Gao and Ménaka, financial gain is the third most important reason for taking up arms. Thus, many young herders who have not found their feet in the armed groups resort to arms to steal livestock.

III. INSURRECTIONS THAT EXACERBATE THE PASTORAL CRISIS

The security crisis that has prevailed since 2012 is of an unprecedented scale and duration. It has considerably tested the resilience of livestock farmers. Unlike previous climatic pastoral crises, which some categories of herders managed to resist, all socio-professional groups are now affected by the splintering of social relations. This opens the way to indiscriminate violence between armed – largely sectarian – groups. Such violence is often rooted in the control of resources, whether land or livestock subject to industrial scale theft in which all these armed groups participate. The short term outlook is not positive and raises serious questions about the future of livestock farming not only in those areas affected by the insurgencies, but also in those that have been spared the violence – so far.

A. THE INCREASING THREAT TO HERDERS

1. GROWING SECTARIAN MINDSETS AND ACTIONS

Many national and international decision-makers view the current growing security crisis through an ethnic lens. It is said to be symptomatic of a 'Fulani crisis'. Discourse normalising this idea is becoming widespread, based on presumed Fulani over-representation within jihadist groups. Such discourse goes hand-in-hand with cultural prejudices. These 'explain' that the Fulani engage in violence because they are 'deceitful' or because they have 'always been close to religion.' Almost no country in the Sahel and West Africa is immune to this trend. Tuareg communities have long been victims of similar prejudices.

However, perceptions shape actions: they encourage violence specifically targeted against these communities, contributing to the communities turning inward. This distances them even further from states with whom relations of trust were already largely weakened and provides objective reasons for community members to rise up. Finally, seeing the crisis as primarily ethnic obscures its socio-economic dimension. Seasonal migratory herders, mobile herders, agro-pastoralists and settled nomads are now increasingly perceived according to their ethnicity. This prism guides responses from states and their partners, with the risk of losing sight of the need to sort out the pastoral crisis.

In all the study areas, the same feeling of stigmatisation was found among all the herders, regardless of their ethnic origin:

REGION	Percentage of herders feeling stigmatised
East Burkina	99%
North Bénin	97%
North Togo	95%
Sahel Burkinabe	97%

Menaka/Gao (Mali)	Indisponible
Tillabéri (Niger)	91%
Central Mali (dried floodzone)	98%
Northwest Nigéria	Indisponible
Sikasso	85%
Great West of Burkina Faso	77%

Tableau 4: Percentage of herders interviewed who feel stigmatised

“There is a stigmatisation of Fulani and of herders more generally, especially since the establishment of self-defence groups composed solely of Mossi and Fulsé.”

A herder in Soum

“The feeling of stigmatisation is real in my area. Sometimes the DSF openly tell us that they will finish with all the Fulani, either by arresting them or executing them.”

A herder in Tillabéri

“With Islamist corridor between Konni and Doutchi, beyond the Fulani, even the Tuareg herders who have been in the area for 30 years are accused of complicity with the jihadists.”

A farmer in Konni

“The Fulani have become the enemy of the whole world.”

A farmer in Sikasso

The main lesson to be learned from here is that the stigmatisation is felt just as much in insurgent areas as in those where the situation remains stable. Two hypotheses can be formulated here: the stigmatisation of nomadic populations is not necessarily linked to jihadism, but to their mobility. It is therefore not new. The

extent of the stigmatisation and its consequences are, however, new. Above all, it takes different forms in different areas:

'A Fulani is a Fulani.' With this phrase, a herder in northern Ivory Coast recalls an old Sahel and West African trend that seems stronger at present, namely that Fulani are assumed to be complicit with each other. The effect of this, seen across the study areas, is that one Fulani will necessarily pay (including by violence) for field damage committed by another Fulani herder. As one Hausa farmer in Maradi said: *'They pretend not to know each other, but they are all accomplices. When a Fulani passes over a field, the others are responsible'*. This widespread perception is at the root of bloody reprisals targeting established and permanent Fulani hamlets following damage to fields by a seasonal herder. The same logic applies to cattle theft. Again in Maradi, a Hausa village chief explains that he cannot integrate Fulani into emerging self-defence groups because *'they are the ones who steal cattle'*. Distrust of Fulani, and of nomadic populations more broadly, is detrimental to social interactions: *'Herders are afraid to go to the market because stigmatisation is a daily occurrence there'*, says a Tahoua community leader. In north-western Nigeria, in Karakkai Bungudu (Zamfara), a young herder recounts being refused permission to sell his animals at market even though he had his papers, on the grounds that they were stolen, leaving him no choice but to sell them at an illegal market in Gummi. The stigma is now spreading in urban areas and affects both men and women. A Fulani woman in Comoé (Burkina Faso) said: *'We are called stingy in the markets.'* In another locality of Zamfara, in Maru, a woman who sold her milk to Hausa buyers reported that she was suspected of spying for bandits, and threatened with rape or assassination when half her herd had been stolen by the same bandits.

Intra-community tensions between seasonal migratory and settled (often agro-pastoral) herders are increasing. This is partly due to what has already been mentioned, namely that agro-pastoralism erases complementarities: agro-pastoralists compete directly with herders for pasture, as they need to keep pasture close to their camp for the lean season. In predominantly agricultural areas where there are many settled herders, this stigmatisation is more worrying and targets seasonal herders specifically.

◆ In **Kéné Dougou**, this feeling is fairly widespread.

- ◆ In the **south-west region (Burkina Faso)**, 80% of agro-pastoralists and farmers interviewed in Djigouè, Kampti and Batié communes believe that increasing conflict is linked to the presence of seasonal herders in the host areas. They are accused of committing damage and disappearing, causing violence between settlers, either because of ethnic links or because the tracks of their animals may have joined those of settlers - voluntarily or not - and created confusion as to who had done the damage.
- ◆ In the **Hauts-Bassins and Cascades (Burkina)**, several interviewees mentioned that settled people tend to avoid seasonal herders, while the latter seek to bypass settled farmers to avoid problems. How far herders are welcome is therefore questionable. As one stakeholder put it: *'Before, herders from the north-west (Nouna) used to come and stay with their parents in Tui province (Houndé). Last March, their parents refused to accommodate them so as not to be accused of complicity with jihadists by the DSF.'* In 2020, migrating herders from Kéné Dougou stopped at the Niangologo dam to water their cattle and their host was arrested by the gendarmerie. The influence of hosts – herder intermediaries and protectors – has weakened, partly because they rely on land chiefs whose powers have been reduced since decentralisation.⁹⁸

◆ In **south-west Niger**, some conflicts occur in pastoral areas between herders, especially in deficit years. The locals accuse seasonal herders of settling next to their camps. In Guidan Roundji in July 2020, local herders attacked seasonal herders' children even though they originated from the area. Tensions between agro-pastoralists and seasonal herders are also linked to insecurity. Indeed, the former are increasingly reluctant to welcome seasonal herders for fear of being linked to jihadists by the local authorities and/or for fear that the herders will trigger conflicts with farmers and locals will suffer. According to an elected official in Bagaroua, *'the big Oudas and Kouzarawas seasonal herders from Nigeria and Niger are the ones who threaten farmers the most because of their relationship with the local political powers [...]. They*

⁹⁸ Brigitte Thebaud, 2018, Op. Cit.

are so powerful that they don't bother hiding, because they know everything will be settled at village chief level. They have large flocks of sheep. When they pass through a field, there's nothing left in the morning.

- ◆ In **north-western Nigeria**, several herders complained of stigmatisation in Niger, particularly in the Maradi region. A herder who migrates between Benue State, Zamfara and Maradi said: *'In Madarounfa, the Niger herders see us as criminals, they ignore our long history because of what they hear about us.'* Indeed, in the village of Gabi (Maradi), Niger herders we met openly accused Nigerian herders of pasture damage.
- ◆ In **northern Benin**, especially in the Alibori and Borgou counties, this type of discourse is also very present among settled herders who accuse seasonal herders of being responsible for the violence committed against them by farmers.
- ◆ In **northern Togo**, tensions between Togolese Fulani and seasonal nomadic Fulani from Sahelian countries are reportedly on the rise. The former see nomadic herders as problematic, because when they commit damage or a crime, the whole community is the target of reprisals.
- ◆ In **eastern Burkina Faso**, some herders in Potiamanga say they no longer let seasonal herders in, to avoid any DSF and VDP suspicion.

In the predominantly pastoralist regions, the same feelings are beginning to emerge, and the militarisation of nomadic tribes has led to significant conflict between them. In Liptako Gourma in particular, stigmatisation between nomadic communities is increasing as a result. A herder from Inadjatafane sums up this state of affairs: *'You know, in truth, even among ourselves stigma exists. For the Tuareg, a Fulani he doesn't know and whose family he doesn't know must belong to the IS-GS. The same goes for the Fulani. A Tuareg they doesn't know is automatically a member of the JNIM or the signatory armed groups.'* Clashes between JNIM and the IS-GS on the one hand, and between jihadist groups and armed rebel groups on the other, have led to particularly deadly inter-communal score-settling since 2017, with civilians paying the heaviest price in terms of human losses, but also in terms of stolen or abducted livestock. Fulani, Tuareg and Arab tribe representation within the armed groups in this area explains the polarisation. Within the Fulani community itself, JNIM–IS-GS clashes threatened to turn into Djelgobé–Tolébé intra-community splits. Looking at the Tuaregs and between Tuareg tribes themselves, there have been significant clashes involving the MSA (Daoussahak), the GATIA (Imghad) and certain Tuareg tribes in the area (Idarfane, Iboguilatane) who are torn between joining these groups, JNIM or IS-GS.

From region to region, the impact of growing stigmatisation will vary:

In some relatively untouched regions, it translates into racketeering that targets not only nomads as a whole, but also certain communities specifically. In **northern Togo**, a Kondjoari woman testifies that in 2019, on public transport, police demanded 1000 FCFA but only from Fulanis. Under the spectre of the jihadist threat, mass arrests are increasing in these areas. After the 2020 Kafolo attack in **Ivory Coast**, military operations have targeted pastoral areas, and Fulani communities have been subjected to waves of arrests in Bouna (Ivory Coast), in the south-west and Cascades (Mangodara) of Burkina Faso, and in Sikasso, where more than 100 people - the vast majority of them herders - are reported to have been arrested. With the jihadist insurgencies in eastern Burkina Faso, a list of 120 people (with Fulani surnames) was transmitted by Burkina to Togo in 2019: some people were mistakenly arrested on the basis of simple surnames common to many Fulani families. One of them served 19 months in prison before being released. An example recounted by a herder in Sikasso illustrates the way anti-Fulani phobia is building under jihadist pressure: *'Fulani herders who had come in large numbers for an important community family wedding in Koury were denounced to the gendarmerie as jihadists. They had done nothing except being on motorbikes. They spent the whole night in prison before being released the next day.'*

In areas affected by jihadist insurgencies, in addition to arrests, executions (sometimes mass killings) by self-defence groups and the DSF are to be deplored. The Sahel and eastern Burkina Faso, central Mali and the Tillabéri region - where these armed actors are most present - are the areas most affected by these executions.

- ◆ In **eastern Burkina Faso**, many herders believe that the Koglweogos, VDP and DSF have killed more people than the terrorists. The DSF have been a threat for a long time, but it has changed form, as one

herder in Fada summarised: *'Before we were robbed, now we are killed'*. Even more worryingly, research indicates these are not isolated acts, but a deliberate effort to eliminate herders, particularly Fulani. The interviewees listed several acts that had occurred since the beginning of 2020: abductions of Fulani civilians in KOMPIENGA at the beginning of 2020; execution of 25 Fulani herders and Gourma at the KOMPIENBIGA cattle market on 30 May 2020; execution of 12 Fulani civilians in TANWALBOUGOU on 11 May 2020; execution of 7 Fulani civilians among 13 arrested in TANWALBOUGOU at the end of June 2020. According to them, the perpetrators were DSF accompanied by VDPs trained at the end of 2019 and who can be assumed to be acting as partisan informants in the targeting of people to be eliminated (see below).

- ◆ **In the Tillabéri region**, DSF abuses remained marginal for a long time, and did not seem to reflect the stigmatisation of nomadic populations. However, since the beginning of 2020, several massacres have been attributed to the Niger DSF, including that of Inatès, where the National Human Rights Commission (CNDH) itself, at the end of months-long investigation, implicated the army. Before that, the main violence suffered by herders - in this case Fulani - was the work of armed Malian groups (MSA, GATIA). This increased IS-GS recruitment along community lines. Analysing Tillabéri region IS-GS recruits since 2018 is helpful here. As part of the anti-terrorist alliance formed by the MSA, GATIA and Barkhane in 2017 and 2018, a number of massacres have been perpetrated between the communities they represent and the Fulani community they have long-standing conflicts with. An Ayorou herder testifies: *'All the young Inatès Fulani joined the jihadist groups in reaction to the 2018 Agaye massacre where 17 victims were allegedly killed by GATIA.'* These massacres also targeted civilians from two Fulani tribes who were not previously involved with jihadist groups: the Wodaabe, including the killing of 47 migrating Dosso herders in northern Tillabéri, and Bororo pastoralists near the Tahoua Malian border.

The division of mindsets along community lines goes both ways, encouraging an inward gaze that is particularly dangerous in the current militarised social context. Community tensions are then transposed within armed groups, self-defence groups on the one hand, and jihadist groups on the other. As Boukary Sangaré put it in 2018, the factors influencing jihadist group membership have changed since the beginning of the crisis: *'In 2012, the search for protection and social recognition was the main motivation. Nowadays, the motivations are ideological and identity-based.'*⁹⁹

2. VIGILANTE INTERFERENCE: ORIGINAL SIN IN THE FIGHT AGAINST TERRORISM?

Self-defence groups are mostly perceived by herders as threats, often ahead of the threat from jihadist groups and national armies. Increasing violence by self-defence groups against nomadic populations in general, and the Fulani in particular, is the explanation. Self-defence group creation, often guided by anti-terrorism, has effectively split farmer-herder social violence along community lines. Self-defence groups are above all intended to protect their essentially sedentary members' land. Nomads have not been systematically excluded from these groups: the Koglwéogós in northern Burkina Faso had a minority of Fulani. The KénéDougou Dozos still have Fulani members. Still, exclusion has happened as polarisation between sedentary and nomadic communities has increased. Relying on these more or less ethnic groups for anti-terrorism runs the risk of encouraging score-settling in communities animated by resource management. Self-defence groups are particularly active in various insurgency zones: the Sahel, the centre-north and east in Burkina Faso and central Mali. Almost all the herders we met in these areas have a negative perception of these groups. Criticism includes the way they: target herders' livestock; appropriate land under the guise of anti-terrorism; and engage in community-based score-settling. Therefore, relying on these groups in the fight against terrorism risks subverting how the fight is conducted.

⁹⁹ Boukary Sangaré, 'Le Centre du Mali : vers une question peule?', in *Biographies de la Radicalisation : Des messages cachés du changement social*, Mirjam de Bruijn, 2018 ('Central Mali: towards a Fulani question?', in *Radicalisation Biographies: the hidden messages of social change*, etc)

◆ **In the Sahel region as well as in the Centre-North (Burkina Faso)**, herders consider self-defence groups the primary threat where they are most active, i.e. Soum, Oudalan and some communes of Seno (Dori, Gorgadji). The Koglweogos' role has gradually changed since 2014 under the jihadist insurgent effect. Their anti-terrorist activity - and the VDP's from 2020 - is inseparable from their mostly Mossi and Fulse membership, and the Fulani's increasing exclusion. Herders accuse them of assimilating jihadists into the Fulani community, but also of defending settlers' land interests. This, alongside violent incidents in these two regions from 2017 onwards, led to the Yirgou massacre in January 2019. In October 2019, in Oudalan, the Koglweogos are suspected of having killed more than thirty people, mostly women and children, in Petalkou (Gorom-Gorom), a livestock-breeding hamlet whose fertile land used by herders in the rainy season is coveted by farmers. Since the chief of a neighbouring village was enthroned as chief of these Koglweogos, the herders have been constantly threatened and ordered to leave the area, under the pretext that *'they are not from here.'* One herder said: *'This group is known to have been making threats for a long time, such as 'we will exterminate the Fulani here, we will finish you all off.'* In Soum province, all the herders interviewed maintain that tensions and other conflicts linked to resource access have now become purely communal. They confess to having had to leave the communes of Arbinda, Kelbo and Pobé-Mengao at the risk of being killed. In return, the majority of Mossi farmers who were in the Nassoumbou, Tongomayel and Baraboulé communes have retreated to the Centre-North region. The self-defence groups are also accused of a large number of animal thefts since 2018, amounting to hundreds of thousands: the Regional Council of Sahel Unions (CRUS) speaks of 300,000 head. As an example, a notary who guarantees the animal origin at Dori market testifies that between January and July 2020, more than 3,000 head of stolen livestock (mostly large ruminants) were seized to prevent their resale.

The VDPs are just as much to blame as those who supervise them, whether it be certain mayors or the DSF. Numerous accounts point to the organised dimension of livestock theft by the VDP. Animals are then found at the markets of Dori, Kaya or Ouagadougou. A herder in Soum province testifies anonymously: *'Between March and April 2020, nearly 500 head were illegally impounded in the XXXX camp¹⁰⁰ before being sold at auction, with the town hall's knowledge. These animals' owners were all killed or disappeared. A few women went to claim their animals but were arrested, had their phones confiscated, were threatened and left empty-handed.'*

However, there are counter-examples where self-defence group formation is not necessarily at the expense of social cohesion. In Bani and Sampelga, the mainly Gourma communities have created their own Kogweogos to avoid being influenced by those from the Centre-North. These agro-pastoralist communities have good relations with the Fulani herders, which explains the herders' generally positive assessment of the self-defence groups in these areas. Including all herder communities in the groups is the best guarantee against the drift toward community splits.

“Herders are like game at the mercy of Koglweogo bandits to whom the state has given permission to kill and whom it has armed.”

A herder from the commune of Kelbo

"Many have been killed and their livestock taken away by the VDP, some are forced to flee for their lives, with or without their livestock.”

A herder from Pobé-Mengao (Soum)

¹⁰⁰ The details of the place in question have been redacted to avoid putting local populations in danger.

- ◆ **In the east of Burkina Faso**, in Gourma province, self-defence groups are a threat to all the herders we met. A distinction must be made between the first generation Koglweogos in the east in 2017 and the VDPs formed at the end of 2019. The former, mostly Gourma, are recognised for their effectiveness in securing property and combating theft, all while including the Fulani community. In Gayeri and Komondjari, these Koglweogos maintain a good reputation among herders, remain active and are not accused of blunders. However, the formation of VDPs in these areas in 2021 could change the situation. All the herders agree that the VDP mainly active in the Gourma and composed of Mossi from the Centre-North (Boulsa), specifically exclude the Fulani and represent a threat. These VDPs are accused of violence against herders. The army is implicated as it provides them tutelage. The executions, arrests or torture recorded in Nagaré and Natiaboani (November 2019), Tanwalbougou (May-June 2020) and Koaré (July 2020) reflect this reality, even if the victims are sometimes also Gourma, as in the Kompienbiga massacre in July 2020.

It is difficult to distinguish whether their actions are based on a community, security or economic agenda. One Fulani figure considers that their Natiaboani, Nagré and Tanwalbougou strongholds *'are the source of all the Fulani IDPs'*. These areas and the roads leading from Fada to Pama, Koaré and Kantchari are said to be off limits to Fulani herders. Few herders venture there today. Ultimately, the VDPs are accused of 'securing agricultural land occupied by Mossi farmers'. In response, a number of herders are said to have joined and/or placed themselves under jihadist protection in order to keep VDPs and Mossi farmers out of certain zones. The situation in the east seems to be a competition for land via armed groups. This even involves the mainly settled Gourma herders, who accuse the non-native Mossi of wanting to monopolise their land. This explains current VDP – first generation Koglweogos tensions, even though since September 2020 the VDP have been recruiting more and more of the Gourma population.

- ◆ **In central Mali**, almost all the herders we met perceive the Dozos and Dana Ambassagou as a threat. The start of their activity at the end of 2016 was a turning point in the violence. Essential for protecting settlers from jihadist groups perceived as essentially Fulani, they gradually became affiliated with the DSF and were targeted by jihadists. In cycles of reprisals, self-defence groups have been transformed into community militias (Dogon, Bambara). Thus community-based violence has grown as old antagonisms over land control resurge. Several tens of thousands of livestock have been stolen by the various armed groups operating in central Mali, each of which presents these cases as the 'spoils of war'. It is impossible to distinguish between community score-settling, competition for resources, predatory logic, and the fight against terrorism. These are all intertwined:

- ◆ **In the exposed floodplains of Kareri**, this climate has incited a conflict between Wuwarbe Fulani herders from Nampala, who migrate to the Delta in the dry season, and Bambara Dozo hunters. They used to live together and manage resources reciprocally, with cohabitation punctuated by isolated clashes. But in 2015, when some Wuwarbe Fulani joined the Macina katibat a sense reportedly spread among Bambara farmers that this addition could get a hold of their land rights and take their livestock. They sought the protection of Dozos, who had served at least as scouts for the Malian Armed Forces (Forces Armées Maliennes, FAMA) before, according to certain sources, being armed by the DSF. The jihadists reacted to this by targeting the Dozos and their political representatives, like the mayor of Karéri, on 30 April 2016, resulting in the Malémana massacre, where 43 Fulani civils were killed. In exchange, the Fulanis sought the protection of the jihadists, thus increasingly giving a communitarian appearance to a conflict that originally was no such thing.¹⁰¹ This opened the way to a cycle of retaliations, featuring notably livestock stealing from one side and the other. The logic of seeking security from one side and the other is largely connected to the absence of an impartial state between these communities. Not being capable to protect the group upon which it relies, the State pushes this group to come to an agreement with its enemy. This is exactly what happened in the summer of 2019, because the Dozos of Kareri and the jihadists of the katibat Macina closed a non-aggression agreement through the Faso Dambe Ton association. The same logic prevailed in Farabougou, beginning of 2021.

¹⁰¹ This paragraph is based mostly on the report « Prédation et violence au Mali : élites statutaires peules et logiques de domination dans la région de Mopti », UQAM, 2018.

- ◆ **In the floodplain area**, Dana Ambassagou was created in a context of strong community polarization, two months after the death of Théodore Somboro, a Dozo chief of the Dogon community who called, in an audio recording attributed to him shortly before his death, for the targeting of the Fulanis who were allegedly responsible for his murder. Acting as a scout for FAMA (Malian Armed Forces) in the framework of anti-terrorist operations conducted in the Centre of Mali, he had become a target for the jihadists. This explains why Dana Ambassagou was built a few weeks after his death on the premise of the defence of the Dogon community. In June 2017, the first community massacres occurred in the floodplain area in Koro, before spreading as reprisals to neighbouring areas and particularly to Bankass in 2018. Like in the floodplain area, a cycle of reprisals - marked by targeted killings, livestock stealing, looting, and burning of villages - was only ended by negotiating non-aggression pacts between Dogon villages and the katibat Macina in July 2020 and again in January and February 2021.
- ◆ In these two areas in the **Centre of Mali**, violence became ethnic and partly devolved from the socio-economic basis that prevailed initially. However, these remain central to the peace negotiations concluded between the belligerents. The non-aggression pacts systematically include provisions relating to the reciprocal prohibition to steal animals or to authorising farmers to cultivate, two dimensions that are essential to the concerns of the local populations that look to extract themselves from the militarization of social relations that traps them in a conflict that is not theirs. It is notable that from the mid 2020, some Dogon villages that had negotiated with the katibat Macina found themselves targeted by attacks from Dana Ambassagou. It is particularly the case in Berdosso (commune of Kassa), where this group conducted several attacks, including against the hogon (Dogon village chief).
- ◆ **In the North-West of Nigeria**, the self-defence groups (Yan Banga and Yan Sakai) are perceived by most respondents as the primary menace and the main reason for them to take up arms. They are accused of being behind a large part of the livestock stealing and of committing numerous acts of violence against the Fulani civilians. These self-defence groups are constituted on a communitarian basis and the Fulanis are excluded. According to a herder in Anka (Zamfara), « *in certain parts of Nigeria, one can see Fulani herders enrolled in self-defence groups, but in Zamfara, Katsina and Kaduna this is purely ethnic based and if one wants to join them, they will never take you* ». The vast majority of herders blame the Yan Sakai in particular as being responsible for arming the Fulani herders. Some of them confirm that the first two groups of bandits created in Tsafe and Dansadau (Maru LGA) were reactions to violence perpetrated by the self-defence groups. A repentant interviewed by the Nigerian press expresses the same feeling.¹⁰²

Where the self-defence groups don't exist, herders have an equally negative perception, like in Tillabéri, where until recently no groups of self-defence had existed, except for Torodi department where groups inspired by the Koglweogos of Burkina Faso operate. If 51% of respondents don't pronounce themselves on why these don't exist, others have a strong opinion on the issue: 31% see it as a threat and a protection at the same time and 17% see them only as protectors. Since the conduct of the field research in mid 2020, embryos of Zarmas self-defence groups appeared in the region of Tillabéri. They would have led to the massacre of Zaroumadareye and Tchiomabangou perpetrated by the IS-GS against this community in early 2021.¹⁰³ The same situation occurs in the South-West of Niger, particularly in the Maradi region, where still embryonic self-defence groups were formed in 2020 to make up for the shortcomings of DSF. Hausa based and excluding Fulanis, these groups present the same risks of communitarianisation of social relations and even violence.¹⁰⁴ In the North-West of Nigeria, formation of Yan Sakai from 2013 on was at the origin of the transformation of banditry from ordinary criminality to forms of armed insurgency.

In all these areas, the assessments made by the respondents support the thesis that the implication of self-defence groups in the fight against terrorism is an aggravating factor. Not only it has been proved useless, because there is no Sahel territory where these groups have defeated the jihadist groups, but it is above all counterproductive in the sense that it reinforces the feeling of insurrection already existent and spreads it

¹⁰² ICYMI: Why we attack, kidnap people – Repentant Fulani bandits, Punch news, August 6, 2019

¹⁰³ See Crisis Group, « Niger : éviter l'aggravation des violences contre les civils à Tillabéri », Briefing N° 172, 28 May 2021.

¹⁰⁴ See Crisis Group, « Sud-Ouest du Niger : prévenir la naissance d'un nouveau front insurrectionnel », Rapport Afrique N°301, avril 2021.

within population groups that were not sharing this feeling: thus, the prophecy of a jihad seen through communitarian involvement is self fulfilling. We thus move from a context where herders join these armed groups to protect themselves or to take justice in their own hands, to one in which nomadic populations that don't systematically practice herding join to revenge communitarian violence.

3. THE HIDDEN ECONOMY OF THE FIGHT AGAINST TERRORISM IN THE STABLE AREAS

In areas that are still stable, the jihadist push in neighbouring regions is not without impact. As we have seen, it brings wave of arrests among the herders. It also reinforces the aforementioned structural dynamics of racketeering against them and plays a role in the concealing of stolen livestock, as in the Mali - Burkina Faso – Ivory Coast cross-border area, or in the North-Western Nigeria.

While livestock theft remains limited in scope in Kéné Dougou, this area is a place where livestock stolen and/lost in the more northernmost regions is sold locally at lower prices. In the Hauts Bassins and the Cascades, converging accounts confirm the arrival of large numbers of animals (Sahelian breeds) from the Sahel and the North in the markets in the area, as in Bobo-Dioulasso, for example. This economy would benefit the local actors traditionally involved, namely traders and butchers. Many of the herders interviewed implicated the DSF based on testimonies that they had seen DSF transporting, for example, sheep, suspecting that the animals had been stolen after their owners had been arrested, fled or been executed. Local authorities, former herders, cattle herders, and drug traffickers who have turned to trafficking in stolen livestock are also accused of involvement in this trade. In Ivory Coast and southwestern Burkina Faso, some herders had their animals recovered and confiscated by elements of the DSF during the military operations launched following the Kafolo attack. In the Kong Department, herders arrested by the DSF reported that their relatives sold their animals to free them by paying large sums of money to intermediaries or directly to the DSF.

Most herders think that the Dozos are at the heart of the racketeering economy, either independently or in complicity with the DSF. They enjoy a high degree of impunity because of their proximity with the DSF, their territorial anchorage in the areas where they operate and sometimes, due to their political influence. The abuses of which they are suspected could constitute in the future a factor in fuelling possible insurrections:

- ◆ In the **Great East of Burkina Faso**, herders (including Fulanis) are slightly majoritary among the Dozos (like the Koglweogos) even if they are equally members of the group, with the exception of Niangologo, where they are a majority. While there are positive opinions about the Dozos for their contribution to territorial security, the dominant opinion is negative. In Banfora and Tiéfara (Cascades), Mangodara and Tiéfara (Hauts-Bassins), the Dozos are put under accusation: they assist water and forestry agents in protecting areas where access is regulated and at the same time, they support tree farmers in protecting cashew fields by interfering in the recording of damage. Some farmers even accuse them of openly stealing animals to take them to the communes' or foresters impound yards. In Kossi, Dozos and Koglweogos are perceived as a threat because of the open conflicts between them and Fulani herders, particularly around the Barani reserve, but also because of abuses perpetrated in the context of the fight against terrorism
- ◆ In the **North of Ivory Coast**, even if the rôle of Dozos decreased after the revolt of 2002 where they secured a part of the territory, they remain largely in control of the bush in certain areas.¹⁰⁵ They are accused of sometimes assuming the right to arrest – including with violence – herders suspected of damaging the fields, fined in consequence between 2500 and 5000 CFA Francs per cattle head. The accusations of racketeering and illegal impounding of animals are recurrent, whereas in the dry season, Dozos forbid or ask money for the access of animals to the dams. Overall, the herders think that the Dozos harm the social connection between communities. The case of the massacre of Bouna stays in

¹⁰⁵ About Dozos in Ivory Coast, see Fahiraman Rodrigue Koné, « La confrérie des chasseurs traditionnels Dozos en Ivory Coast : enjeux socio-culturels et dynamiques sécuritaires », UQAM, June 2018.

the collective memory and there is no surprise that none of the herders of this village expressed a positive opinion about the Dozos, explicitly assimilated to the Lobi settlement.¹⁰⁶ Some opinions are more positive. In the department of Ferkessédougou, in Diawala, where Dozos are also herders, Fulani herders sometimes ask for their help in case of livestock theft.

- ◆ In the **Sikasso region**, almost all herders are worried about the increasing power of Dozos, especially in Danderesso and Kadiolo, where young herders transhumating admit to having been arrested and brutalized by Ivorian Dozos.

4. INTELLIGENCE GATHERING THAT ENCOURAGES SCORE-SETTLING

In several study areas facing jihadist insurgencies, respondents complain that DSF relies on biased intelligence, imprints of a certain communitarism. Herders are worried of being accused by sedentary communities based only on their ethnicity. A herder in Dan Kassari (Maradi) illustrates this perception: « *We are stuck between Haoussas and the DSF. Those who accuse us are often so sure of their suspicions that they denounce to the militaries simple Fulanis that are passing by to supply themselves in a village* ». North of Dosso, in Dogondoutchi, the same situation was recently aggravated by the start of zakat collection in the area: « *Nowdays, as soon as a Fulani makes any damage in the camps between Bagaroua and Dogon Kiria, they call them jihadists. Some traditional leaders don't even hesitate to qualify Fulanis as terrorists* ». In Tillabéri, according to a herder from Banibangou, « *the conflict between Fulanis and Zarmas in the zarmaganda left traces. This is actually why some slanderous denunciations about the herders are made by Zarmas in our village who benefit from DSF support and essentially are in their payroll* ».

This intelligence is even perceived as dissimulating score settling between individuals, families and even communities. As mentioned, these groups of self-defence also defend the interests of sedentary populations they belong to. Such perspective has extended in several areas of Burkina Faso, in the Centre-North, Sahel and East of the country, but also in Niger, in Tillabéri region, Sokoto and Zamfara states in Nigeria and in the floodplain of Mali. In all these regions are acting groups of self-defence whose role of scouts and informers for the DSF is going along with slanderous denunciations.

The case of Sahel and Centre-North of Burkina are particularly relevant. Informers of the armed forces are often – but not only – issued of sedentary communities that entertain increasing rivalries with Fulani communities on the background of the competition for control of the land and natural and underground resources (gold, for example). A particular relevant case is the one of the Fulani landowners in Barsalogo who won a court case against farmers and Mossi municipal authorities. Due to the stigmatisation progressively developed in Centre-North after 2017 – essentially due to the perceived over-representation of Fulanis among the jihadist groups operating in the neighbouring Soum – this judicial dispute was settled with the help – conscious or innocent? - of Koglweogos from Barsalogo, who targeted these Fulani landowners.¹⁰⁷ At Silgaaji (Tongomayel), in 2019, Mossis are accused of guiding the DSF who went to kill some fifty Fulanis, before jihadists attacked the market and killed fifty Mossis at their turn, letting all the Fulanis go. In Zamfara State, herders think that the alignment of the police (MOPOL) with Hausa self-defence groups (Yan Sakai) since 2013, based on sharing intelligence, has led to numerous abuses against them.

5. PERVASIVENESS OF THE ZAKAT AND ITS ABUSES

The jihadist groups are far from being a solution for most herders. Even if some are tempted to join them, the vast majority of herders interviewed in the survey deplore their presence and estimate they are the first

¹⁰⁶ In Bouna area, justice was restored after the massacre against herders in 2016 and the imprisonment of the Dozo leader accused of being behind the massacre. With his arrest, Dozos were demobilized, and peace seems to be imposed. However, he was liberated in June 2020, raising locally a lot of questions about the reasons for his release and some fear they would mobilize themselves, seeing the number of visits this leader receives.

¹⁰⁷ For a more detailed analysis of this case, see International Crisis Group, « Enrayer la spirale des violences au Burkina Faso », Rapport Afrique, February 2020.

to suffer from it. The movement of herders forces them to cross areas under jihadist controls, thus being exposed to their pressure. This pressure is exerted primarily through the zakat, which leads to many abuses: on one hand, IS-GS often does not respect the Islamic precepts on this and collect larger amounts; on the other hand, some bandits use the fear inspired by the jihadists to present themselves in their name and extort the herders.

Collection of zakat was imposed in Liptako Gourma area and constitutes today one of the main sources of economic insecurity for the communities of herders, because they cannot avoid it due to the pressure exerted by the jihadists. Zakat is generally collected under threat. Cases of kidnappings and even executions of individuals who had refused to pay occurred in Liptako Gourma. At the end of 2019, a case of confrontation related to the refuse of herders to pay zakat occurred in Fafa area. A very large part of the cattle belonging to the village were taken away in 2019 by the IS-GS. They were recovered by armed young men, two of them being lost in combat. More recently, end 2020-beginning 2021 in Tassara and in Tilia, Tahoua region, armed opposition from Arab and Touareg communities against zakat collection led to important violence, including the Tilia massacre in March 2021. In Gourma (Tessit, N'tahaka and Doro areas), some herders accept to pay zakat because it is the only way to get access to pastures. In Gao, Ansongo and Ménaka, to avoid paying zakat, herders are more likely to limit their movements to a limited area, despite the overgrazing that this entails. This situation results in increasing mortality of cattle in 2020, because the raining season came later (by the end of June) and pastures were razed even before they could grow.

Collection of zakat mixes with other collections that contribute to the impoverishment of herders, while some accuse the jihadists of moving away from Islamic rules. Some herders complain that jihadists don't collect zakat in animals anymore, but pretend money, which is badly viewed, although it is accepted by Islamic jurisprudence.¹⁰⁸ Above all, many think that the amount demanded exceeds the value of the animals that would have been given to pay the tax. At Tillabéri, the amounts charged are 125 CFA Francs for a small ruminant and 2500 CFA Francs for a large ruminant in the lean season, and 1000 CFA Francs for small ruminant and 5000 CFA Francs for large ruminant in the normal season. In Oudalan, in Déou, Oursi, Tin-Akoff and Markoye under the influence of IS-GS, collection of zakat is generalized, but the frequency and the amount would also deviate from Islamic rules. At Mansila (Yagha), a herder testifies: *«they don't try to find out if you had already paid, then they calculate as they please, even if you don't have the headcount required.»* It is not allowed at this stage to certify that the Islamic rules on collection are not respected or that populations confuse it with other forms of contribution, especially appeals to contribute to the war effort, as it occurs since 2020 in Liptako Gourma, but also in the South-West of Niger. About thirty mostly agricultural villages from the North of Dogondoutchi, from the South of Filingué, departments of Tahoua and Illela pay a levy – presented as a guarantee for protection – based on the resources of the commune. A local elected official testifies: *« They demand 2500 CFA Francs for the large animals (cow, donkey, camel), 750 CFA Francs for the sheep and 500 CFA Francs per goat head »*. Multiplication of financial demands to herders feeds their rejection of these jihadist groups, especially since they suffer from the fact that groups of bandits pretending to be jihadists extort them by demanding for zakat. Such cases have been recorded in the three countries of Liptako Gourma. In spring 2020, in Ansongo area, several members of GATIA were thus denounced in Gao after asking the herders to pay zakat in the name of IS-GS. Similar cases were recorded in Tillabéri region, but jihadists asked the bandits incriminated to pay back the collected amounts.

The payment of zakat also strongly divides the community of herders because it becomes a business in which some herders are involved to denounce the herders who evade payment. This was a case observed specifically in Gao region. The herders who paid zakat very often denounce the other herders that still manage to evade the jihadists, either out of jealousy or in exchange for a commission.

The farmers are also exposed to zakat when they are in areas under jihadist control. This is especially the case in the **Centre of Mali**, both in the exposed and flooded area, where farmers must pay zakat by setting aside a part of their crops of millet or rice, independently of the random character of crops. In February 2020, refusing to pay zakat because the crops were bad led to a conflict between a village of farmers (Bemma, Dongo commune) and a unit of katibat Macina. 13 civilians were killed, the hamlet destroyed and the population displaced at Youwarou.

¹⁰⁸ Interview with a specialist in Islam in Sahel, April 2021.

6. THE CRISIS OF CONFIDENCE IN THE DSF

The pastoral crisis, as we have seen, has led to a gradual distrust of authorities, perceived as indifferent, even accomplices to the occupation and privatisation of pastoral resources, as a result of constant racketeering and conflicts that herders consider to be managed in a biased manner. This played a role in the decision of certain herders to take arms and make their own justice. The anti-terrorist response to these insurrections only worsened the situation, resulting in a deep crisis of confidence with the states in Sahel. The perception survey conducted among the herders reflects this reality. The DSF and the VDP are considered the main threats for herders, generally before the jihadists. This in no way means that they adhere to the latter, the vast majority of them being rejected, but simply that they perpetrated less violence against them than the states and the self-defence groups. This confidence crisis is not limited to the areas exposed to the fight against terrorism, but seems to extend way beyond the areas considered as « stable », however, with certain nuances. This is due, partly to the pastoral mobility. Thus, many herders met in Sikasso, for example, come from the Centre of Mali, where they normally live. This is also due to the fact that the fear inspired by the DSF, as we have seen, extends equally beyond the crisis hot spots, for example, in the South-West of Niger or in the Grand East of Burkina Faso.

REGION	Degree of confidence in the DSF
East of Burkina (292 interviews)	0-10%
North of Bénin (151 interviews)	Unavailable ¹⁰⁹
Alibori	
Atacora	
Donga	
Borgou	
Sahel part of Burkina (142 interviews)	25%
Seno	37%
Oudalan	25%
Yagha	32%
Soum	0%
Hauts Bassins	60%
Cascades	Unavailable
Boucle du Mouhoun	Unavailable
Malian part of Gourma	6%
Ménaka/Gao (Mali) (40 interviews)	Unavailable
North-West of Nigeria (187 interviews)	18%

¹⁰⁹ The data is unavailable because the data collected is too biased to be representative.

Mopti floodplain (100 interviews)	10%
Flooded area of Mopti/Ségou (18 interviews)	5%
Sikasso	8%

Table 1 : Degree of confidence of herders interviewed in DSF by area

Accusations against the DSF differ according to the exposure to insecurity of the areas in question:

- ◆ In insurgent areas where the DSF is conducting operations, such as in eastern Burkina, the Sahel Burkinabe, and northern and central Mali, for example, the DSF are presented as the main source of threat, ahead of the jihadists, whereas in Tillabéri, most herders equate these two actors in terms of threat. In Gao and Menaka, the particularity is that herders no longer feel threatened today by the DSF due to the predominance of armed groups and the absence of operations conducted in this area. Most herders are pleased with this situation. In Gourma-Rharous, the trend is similar.

« The DSF has killed more than the jihadists, this is a reality, it is not even my judgement »

A herder in the eastern region of Burkina Faso

« The DSF and jihadists are the main sources of insecurity for herders in the sense that the former act indiscriminately against herders and the latter terrorize and often execute them »

A herder in Abala, Tillabéri

« DSF make too many arbitrary arrests and summary executions of herders because of their ethnicity »

A herder in the circle of Koro

« We trust only the reconstituted army, with all ethnic groups and former independence fighters. Otherwise, the army is criminal, because it commits exactions »

A herder in Gossi

« I have no confidence in the authorities in charge of security or justice, because of my personal experiences and those of my relatives: they extort us in the name of the justice they claim to restore»

A herder leader of a Fulani camp in Tsafe LGA – Zamfara

In areas that are still stable, trust appears to be equally low; herders generally denounce the arrests and racketeering carried out by the DSF. However, the analysis of the qualitative interviews shows more distrust than the deep rejection in the insurgency areas:

- ◆ In **north-western Nigeria**, the DSF is perceived as a secondary threat compared to bandits and the self-defence groups, but their passivity and abuses are causing growing concern among herders. Actions of the DSF are believed to be responsible for some of the influx of displaced people into Nigeria and refugees into Niger (in Maradi), particularly coming from Sokoto State.
- ◆ In **southwestern Niger**, despite harsh criticism of the DSF, many herders feel that they have not been abandoned by these forces in the face of the insecurity they experience. There have been cases where the DSF have been mobilized to escort herders during their ascent when they cross areas of high agricultural concentration.
- ◆ In **northern Benin**, herders have a more positive impression of the DSF than of the administrative authorities, and a decline in cases of racketeering and abuse has reportedly been recorded, although foresters in protected areas remain highly critical.
- ◆ In **northern Ivory Coast**, herders' perceptions of the DSF depend on the respondent and the body concerned. The army is a growing concern for Fulanis who have been under increased security pressure since the attack on Kafolo on June 10, 2020. In the Kong department, violence was reportedly perpetrated against Fulani civilians and animals stolen in response to the attack.

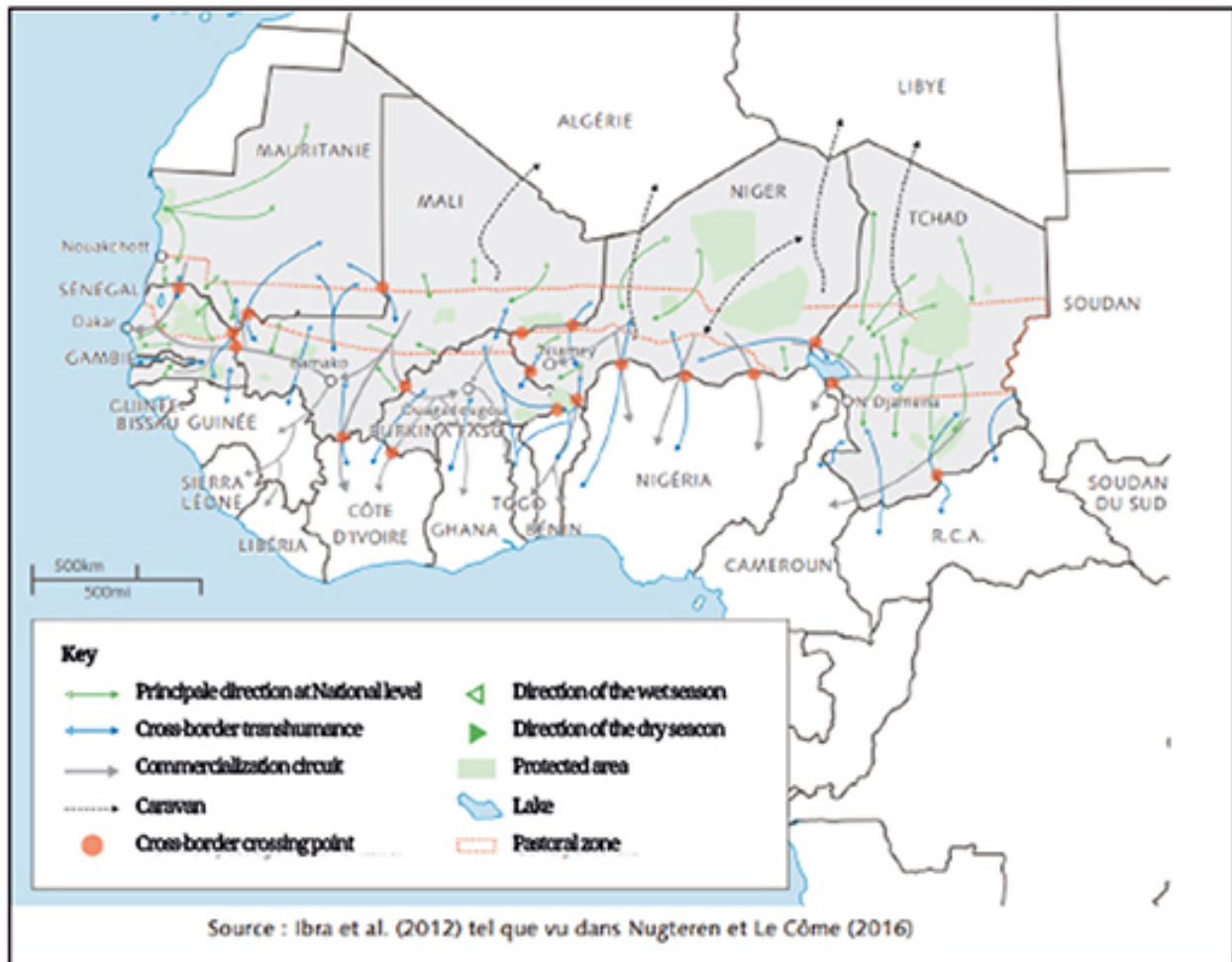
As mentioned earlier, the conduct of military operations in these areas increases the occurrence of abuses and thus increases mistrust of the DSF. There is an urgent need to consolidate what trust remains between them by conducting dialogues in these stable areas.

B. THE DEEP ECONOMIC IMPACT OF THE SECURITY CRISIS

Although some herders have a role in triggering the security crisis through these pastoral insurgencies, this only concerns a minority of individuals. Most herders are victims of this crisis. Their livelihoods are threatened. The mobility of livestock is no longer optimized but subjected to security constraints. Livestock production suffers directly. The pastoral economy has greatly suffered from this crisis, with a downward trend in prices caused by a decline in market attendance in the Sahel and, on the contrary, an increase in West African countries experiencing a decline in meat supply. The terms of trade have deteriorated significantly, with impoverished Sahelian livestock farmers having to bear the cost of transport and the price of imported livestock feed.

1. DISRUPTION OF LIVESTOCK MOBILITY AND ITS ECONOMIC CONSEQUENCES

The security factor is a brake on mobility and calls into question the very reason for mobility, namely the search for the most nutrient-rich pastures. The search for sufficiently secure pastures is now the guiding principle for herders. Thus, areas with excess biomass may become inaccessible, as in 2018 around Lake Chad and in certain areas of northern Mali, and in 2020 in eastern Burkina Faso. The pressure on resources is no longer caused solely by the expansion of cropland, but also by the inaccessibility of certain areas, which reinforces the concentration of animals in other areas.



Carte 1 : Pastoral mobility schemes in the study area

Insecurity and COVID-19 have contributed massively to the decrease in mobility of transhumant herders, as evidenced by the disruption of the 2020 transhumance, except in Sikasso. They have led to a decline in transhumance departures in eastern Burkina Faso and in the WAPO area, as well as on the western Niger-Nigeria border, despite the generalization of committees in charge of transhumance (see box). Changes in transhumance routes cause inconvenience to herders and their animals in terms of lost time, additional costs generated by border controls, among other things, the loss of weight of animals due to lack of good pasture, which leads to a discount, as well as the change in the animals' habits that can lead to their loss. Some herders who had gone on transhumance were unable to return to their region of origin because of the closure of borders due to COVID-19, such as between western Burkina Faso and north-eastern Ivory Coast. These mobility difficulties have led to a concentration of livestock, particularly in the WAP area and north-east Ivory Coast. The economic impacts of this decrease in mobility for herders are immediate, with a decrease in market attendance and therefore demand, and a decrease in animal prices, while the price of transporting them is increasing. Finally, herders who are forced to stay with their families in urban centres make frequent trips to the bush areas where their animals have remained, with all the risks that these frequent trips entail.

This observation was made in all concerned areas where mobility is affected by insecurity, particularly in the Sahel region of Burkina Faso and in central Mali, in Koro, Bankass, Djenné and Douentza.

COMMITTEES IN CHARGE OF TRANSHUMANCE: CAN THEY DELIVER PEACEFUL TRANSHUMANCE?

The model of transhumance committees is intended to ensure peaceful transhumance.. They have existed for more than a decade in West African countries, such as Benin since 1992, Togo since 2006, and more recently in Ivory Coast. They are now extending to Sahelian countries. In Niger, the National Transhumance Committee and its regional branches in Tahoua, Dosso, Diffa, Zinder and Tillabéri were set up in early 2020. It is still too early to assess their impact. In Burkina Faso, provincial committees are gradually being set up, chaired by the High Commissioners of the country's various provinces, but in the West and East, for example, actors denounce the lack of means to make them really work. In Benin, Law 2018-20 restructured the transhumance committees, which are charged by local authorities with ensuring the application of national provisions and raising awareness in this regard. These committees are of concern to herders, who are not sufficiently represented, according to the herders interviewed on this subject. At the regional level, there have been calls to strengthen cross-border cooperation on transhumance. Between Benin, Togo and Niger, a cross-border transhumance committee called BBT (Benin Burkina Togo) has been created, while in 2019 the Maradi region and the state of Katsina in Nigeria have concluded an agreement on transhumance management. Finally, in Kéné Dougou, based on a Swiss cooperation, there are cross-border consultations for transhumance between the border communes of Burkina Faso, Mali and Ivory Coast, in order to avoid the resurgence of old border conflicts.

Herders interviewed in areas of high insecurity claim that fear of the DSF and self-defence groups is the main barrier to mobility, much more than fear of jihadis. The jihadis are feared by the vast majority of herders mainly because they collect zakat and may suspect some herders of collusion with the DSF. However, unlike the DSF and self-defence groups, they do not specifically target herders.

- ◆ In **central Mali, in the Inner Delta**, insecurity leading to the inaccessibility of some routes forces herders to seek secure, but more distant, pastures. While mobility was not affected in 2020, confrontations in previous years with the Dozos in Karéri (2016) and in the area of Ke-Macina (2017, 2018 and 2019) imposed route changes to herders. In Niono, Ségou, Karéri, Toguèrè-Coumbé or Diondiori, almost all herders state that their activity and standard of living are mainly affected by insecurity. In the floodplain, particularly in Douentza, transhumant herders are so much afraid of cattle theft and military patrols that they are forced to rent trailer trucks to move their animals to areas further south (San, Sikasso, Kadiolo).
- ◆ In the **Sahel Burkinabe**, fear of armed men (DSF, jihadis, and VDP) is the main obstacle to mobility in all provinces, much more so than jihadis. The herders interviewed in this region claim that their mobility has never been so disrupted as in 2020.
- ◆ In **eastern Burkina Faso, the interdiction of transhumance decreed by Bénin was strongly resented.** In Gourma province, in Fada and Potiamanga, respondents note that most herders have not left on transhumance. In Nassougou, the disruption of transhumance would not have resulted in any additional costs, but simply an increase in the fear of being killed by armed men and the DSF. No cases of impediments to transhumance were observed.

A counter-intuitive finding from our field studies is that in areas where there is little or no perception of jihadist insurgency, herders' mobility is also affected because they fear being targeted. Herders in areas targeted by an attack - even an isolated one - restrict their mobility for fear of being targeted by the DSF. This is particularly the case in Kéné Dougou. In the north of Ivory Coast, a majority of transhumant herders interviewed in the Tchologo preferred to move for a short period of time in Ivory Coast, between Ferkessedougou and Tafieré, rather than return to Burkina Faso, for fear of the military operations conducted in the spring of 2020 in Comoé. The situation is similar in Sikasso. Herders admit to having to confine themselves to their camps or temporarily cease their activities after the attacks against the DSF, particularly in Yorosso. Some traders subcontract the sale of livestock to locals who are responsible for finding buyers and return the money to the owners through the fairground showmen. In the different regions of the Great West of Burkina Faso, fear of the DSF was mentioned as the main obstacle to mobility.

COVID-19 has impacted Sahelian pastoral economies through the closure of borders. It affects animal trade more than mobility because transhumant herders often use trails that evade border control.

- ◆ In the **north of Ivory Coast**, COVID 19 appears to be the main cause of restriction of animal mobility on the axes of transhumance represented by Batié, Helentira and Mangodara, although some people admit that they have smuggled their animals in uncontrolled areas.
- ◆ In the **Great East of Burkina Faso**, this decrease in mobility from Ivory Coast has affected the return of transhumant animals. Quarantine measures in Bobo-Dioulasso and Houndé also played a role. This situation was temporarily aggravated by the closure of the Ivorian border after the August 18, 2020, coup in Mali. The export of animals by truck was curtailed, but not the one of animals that crossed at night on foot, bypassing the border post.
- ◆ In **WAO area**, many herders have been stranded by the closure of borders, particularly those of Togo. As in northern Ivory Coast, they had to extend their stay in fallback areas and village territories where herding animals is difficult during the agricultural season.¹¹⁰
- ◆ In the **Sahel Burkinabe**, for the communes that depend on cross-border trade with Niger (Bani, Seytenga, Titabe and Tankougounadié), the closure of the borders because of COVID-19 has led to a lasting drop in animal prices in Seytenga or Dori, despite the reopening of trade fairs.

An analysis of the impact of these different factors on livestock breeders according to their occupation, their production method and their age group would provide a more detailed reading of the obstacles to mobility, which this study was unable to do in all regions. In the Cascades, Hauts-Bassins and Boucle du Mouhoun regions, this typology allows for certain trends to be differentiated: traders are more heavily affected by the state of emergency and by the restrictions imposed by COVID-19. The older herders are very affected by the restrictions imposed on transhumance, while younger herders are more at ease in circumventing these rules. The latter are, on the other hand, more affected by arrests and executions. However, the fact that the elders and traders also fear them may be an expression of the communitarian shape taken by these forms of insecurity, where the target now is the members of the Fulani community and not a particular socio-professional group.

This limitation on mobility leads to instances of concentration of animals that increase pressure on resources and generate a risk of tension over access to water and grazing, as well as a saturation of pastoral infrastructures:

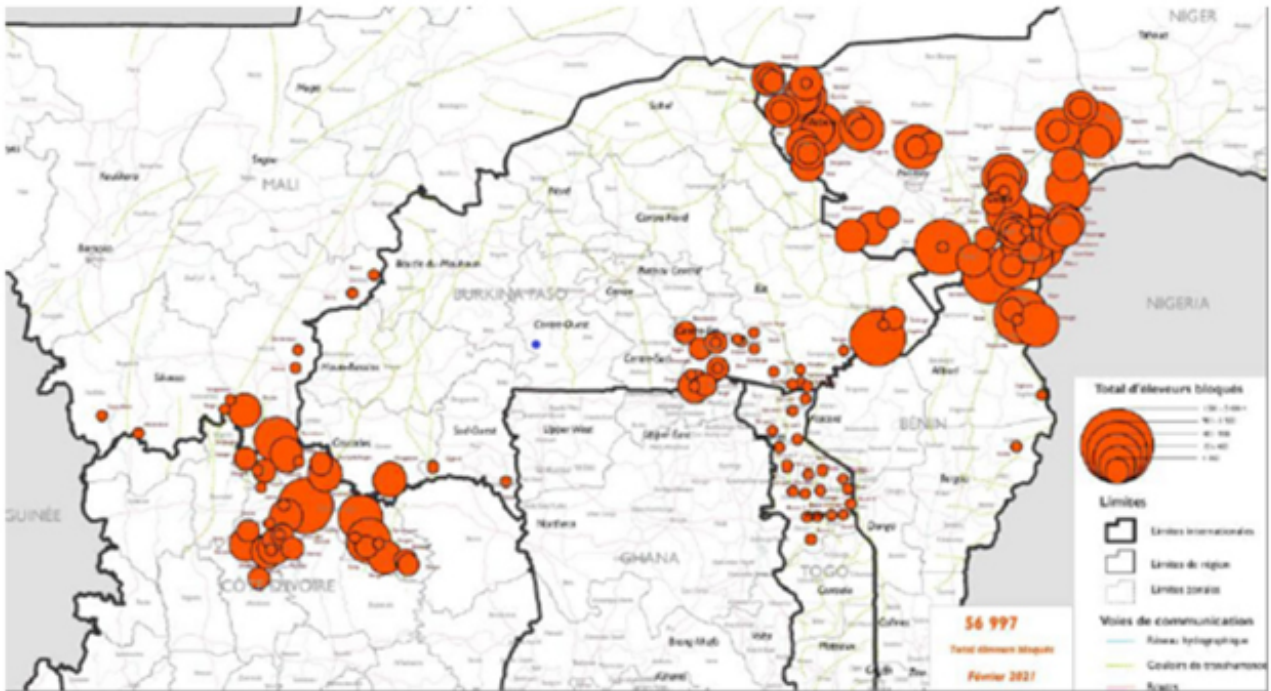
- ◆ **Southwestern Niger** presents a phenomenon of animal concentration in a space primarily dedicated to agriculture, that increases the probability of conflicts with farmers on top of reducing animal productivity due to difficulties in access to biomass feed. First, transhumants coming from Nigeria through Dogondoutchi have refused to go beyond Maymagayinay (Dogon Kiria) because of the multi-faceted insecurity (DSF and jihadists) that prevails in northern Tillabéri and northern Tahoua. Similarly, some transhumant herders from Tibiri (Doutchi) and Gaya (Dosso) go to the Kourdoula (Ballé) area in Nigeria instead of going north. At the same time, military operations and jihadist pressure have forced Nigerian herders to leave the pastoral areas of northern Tillabéri and move further south into

¹¹⁰ RBM/ACF, Bulletin de suivi de l'impact de la COVID19 sur les ménages pastoraux et agro-pastoraux, September-October 2020.

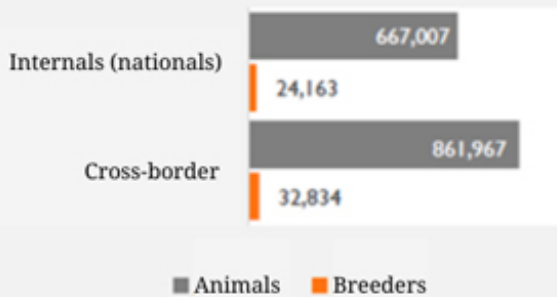
agricultural areas. There is a real risk of concentration of herders as a result of these two coupled dynamics: refusal to go north or descent to the south. Added to this are Nigerian refugees in Maradi and Bangui who have fled the violence in northwestern Nigeria, as well as the prevailing insecurity in Konni, Madaoua, and Maradi, which is forcing herders to move away from the border, blocking for local and transhumant herders certain routes that are usually used for their high fodder value, such as the Baban Rafi area (Maradi). In the communes of Sabon Guida and Galma, the cessation of transhumance in Nigeria pushed many herders to leave the pastoral world. A chief of touareg group resumes the situation: « *because of insecurity, no herds of dromedaries from the touareg areas of Tambay, Galma et Arzarori leave for Nigeria. Due to that, many herders abandoned their occupation, because this transhumance constituted their main revenue source. Better than the contract with the dromedary owners at each descent from the North, the shepherds return to Nigeria, where they have manure contracts in exchange for grain with the field owners. After the 3-month stay, the shepherd finds himself with a stock that far exceeds that of a farmer in that village. Sometimes they sell half of the grain to buy goats and build up their own herds. The remaining quantities are stored*». According to the livestock services, the animal concentration caused an animal overload in 2020: only 700 tons of wheat bran was available to meet a deficit of 1850 tons of dry matter.

- ◆ The Gourma region of Mali is also experiencing a phenomenon of high animal concentration that is partly due to the security context. The Gossi and N'tillit areas are a refuge for many herders fleeing the IS-GS-controlled areas of Gao and Ménaka, but also for herders from Kelbo, Gorgadji or Arbinda (Burkina Faso) who are overexposed to cattle rustling and unable to travel to the North or Centre-North regions as they did until 2019, before the community violence which occurred in this area. For many of them, going to the Gourma where JNIM controls the bush is therefore a lesser evil. Finally, a phenomenon of concentration of livestock in urban areas has been observed in the Burkinabè Sahel, notably in Tankougounadié, Titabe, Djibo, Gorom-Gorom or Markoye. Such concentration leads to difficulties in feeding and watering animals, while maintaining the family is an additional burden as many women are deprived of activities due to insecurity.

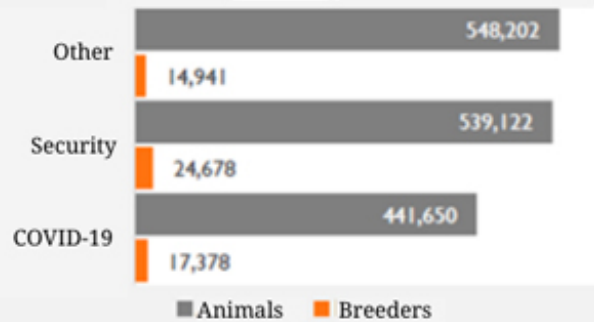
At the beginning of 2021, this phenomenon of animal concentration was far from being resolved, with insecurity playing a major role in the inability of herders to move freely (see Figure 4).



Graphic 1. Type of transhumance (# of animals)



Graphic 2. Reasons for the blockage (# of animals)



2. DISAPPEARANCE OF LIVESTOCK AND HOUSEHOLD INSTABILITY

The multidimensional insecurity registered in the areas under scrutiny has immediate effects on pastoral households, which are already increasingly unstable and partly dislocated. The considerable impact of the loss or theft of livestock and summary executions of herder families has never been studied well. It wasn't possible to accurately count the number of livestock and small ruminants stolen since 2015, but this might be carried out in the future through the various means the POs have in the field. It is however indisputable that this number reaches peaks as high as several hundred thousand in the regions covered by the study. This means that an equal number of households have had their livelihood affected. As regards the arrests or summary executions, the moral load already weighing down the victims' families is compounded by the economical load arising due the disappearance of the family head. One herder questioned in Abala sums it up: *"one of the worst consequences of this conflict, for the herders, is that most of the work-able people are arrested and some even killed. The women and children are not quite capable of dealing with the herds. This situation is enough to cause the economic collapse of pastoral households"*.

All the forced relocations, arrests and summary executions occurring regularly in the insurgency areas generate heavy economic consequences for the families. It generally results in the disappearance of livestock, regardless of whether it is stolen or lost. In fact, livestock is usually lost during the forced relocations of herders, who have lost their shepherd or the means to employ one. According to a herder in Seytenga: *“when an animal is used to the long travels required by transhumance, when the time comes to go, it will go, shepherd or not”*. Theft seems to be the most widespread. It is worth mentioning the disguised thefts in which some state officials are complicit by auctioning off animals that have not been claimed after being found. In fact, in the eastern region or in Soum, herders indicate that it is impossible for them to come and retrieve the animals due to the prevailing insecurity. However, little or nothing is done by the authorities to find the owners.

In central Mali, the Sahel, and eastern Burkina Faso, there have been reports of executions used as means for stealing livestock, to the point where many herders question whether the execution was intended for this specific purpose.

- ◆ In the **Eastern region**, where this issue has been particularly well documented, several examples were recorded in Nagré and Natiaboani (Fada N’Gourma), the areas most at risk for Fulani farmers, due to the presence of VDP. Animals belonging to deceased people have been found in markets, sometimes after having been sold at auction by the Fada town hall. In some cases, the animals are recovered by the families of the deceased, either through the connections of the deceased’s family, or by paying money to traditional and/or formal authorities.
- ◆ In **Central Mali**, similar cases have also been documented. In Soula (Bankass circle), in 2019, 100 heads of cattle were stolen by Dana Ambassagou after they killed the shepherd. In Pondori (Djenné), the arrest or killing of shepherds is also reported to have encouraged the roaming and/or theft of animals.

In these regions, but also elsewhere, cases of theft or loss due to simple arrests are the most common, even in areas with little exposure to the security crisis.

- ◆ **In the Cascades**, arrests of herders are also often accompanied by the “loss” of livestock, which is never recovered, suggesting that they have been stolen and resold.
- ◆ **In south-western Niger**, in Azawak, two young herders from a village in Bagaroua were arrested and their herds disappeared. In June 2020, after a shepherd trying to escape arrest was killed by soldiers near Assagaygay, the 75 animals he was guarding on behalf of Hausa agro-pastoralists disappeared. The family of the deceased shepherd was summoned to the canton chief of Konni because some owners were demanding compensation for their lost animals.
- ◆ **In the Tillabéri region**, in Torodi, Ayorou and Banibangou, similar cases have been reported. A herder from Abala also mentions the families’ economic obligation to give up animals in case of arrest: *“to get a lawyer’s fee, we will have to sell more than ten cows, especially during the lean season”*.

The loss of livestock is obviously not solely related to these circumstances. In general, the loss of animals is often attributed to the behaviour of the herders themselves, who leave their animals unattended or under the supervision of shepherds who are too young to effectively control the herd without losing them. This feeling was often echoed in still stable areas. Here again, it should be noted that insecurity accentuates this tendency: by way of illustration, in the north of Tahoua, herders who had entrusted the management of their livestock to young shepherds recorded significant losses of animals because the latter were obliged to reach new markets in safe areas.

Forced displacement and overexposure to loss and theft of livestock is the cause of an invisible, but very real, precariousness of herders. Forced displacement also encourages the loss of animals and therefore accelerates their decapitalization.

- ◆ In **central Mali**, displaced people from different sites in Mopti town all testified to having fled insecurity, leaving behind animals that they had herded. Some had entrusted their animals to someone before leaving, while others had left without even having the time to do so. Most livestock herders

interviewed in the floodplains consider that the obligation to live in a place far from the animals and their herders plays an important role in the losses.

- ◆ In the **Burkinabè Sahel**, mainly in Oudalan and Soum, the increase in animal disappearances is mainly due to the fear of herders to go into the jungle, even when they know their lost animals are there. They try not to come across jihadists, DSF or VDP, for fear of being accused of terrorism or banditry. This happened, for example, to a shepherd who was arrested by a patrol and taken to Dori before being released.
- ◆ In **south-western Niger**, in the displacement camps of Guidan Roundji (Maradi), many herders have lost all or part of their livestock after attacks by bandits from north-western Nigeria. One of them recalls: *“I barely saved my wife and child during an attack in Elguidi. I still don’t know where my 22 cows are. I learned a few days after the attack that they had been seen in the area. I went back to look for them but found nothing”*. These decapitalised and displaced people live in a very precarious situation. Former Nigerien herders who made their fortune in Nigeria return to their villages completely destitute. *“Some of them lost their entire family in the attacks. For example, a herder who had more than 5 herds of 300 head, petrol stations, transport vehicles, now finds himself in the village with nothing, following the massive theft he suffered in Nigeria”*.
- ◆ In **North Tillabéri**, in the commune of Abala alone, for example, two displacement camps house at least 150 herder families in a highly vulnerable situation, who, having lost a large part of their livestock, now depend on humanitarian aid or on the solidarity of other herders.
- ◆ In the **Burkinabè Sahel**, the real precariousness of herder households has been noted in Dori, Sampelga and Sebba, where herder families that were sheltered now live on aid and sometimes on begging.

The disappearance, theft and cheap sale of livestock have led to the appropriation of livestock by new elites. These are mainly the bearers of arms: DSF, self-defence militias, bandits (in north-western Nigeria) and jihadists. However, many of them, anxious to conceal their crimes, are less interested in keeping stolen animals than in reselling them through trafficking networks. The victims of these thefts are in part the neo-herders of the 2000s, whose livestock are targeted by jihadist groups. But most of them are vulnerable herders, with no political capital or weapons to protect themselves.

3. THE IMPACT OF THE CRISIS ON FAMILIES

As we have seen, insecurity affects not only the herders themselves, but also their families. Women are forced to move to the towns and are deprived of their activity, finding themselves in precarious situations. Herders who can do so must adapt to protect them from danger and need.

- ◆ In **eastern Burkina Faso**, the precariousness of women is a strongly felt reality. Women are mostly left in the cities and rarely manage to find decent jobs. Cases of prostitution and begging have been recorded in Fada N’Gourma and Gnagna. In Nassougou, displaced herders’ wives have come with animals, but find no space to look after them. In Kompienga, the professional reconversion options we mentioned are limited: *“those who are here have the task of holding plates to sell cola and other products, others are employed to sell water and sodas”*. The insecurity they experience has an impact on the psychological health of themselves and their children, whom they look after daily. The herders advise the women to limit their movements (especially at night), to avoid covering their faces, and to be careful with their words and actions so as not to put themselves in danger.
- ◆ In **Gourma-Rharous**, women’s mobility and activities are reduced, while some herders confess to fearing forced marriage. In Intahaka, a herder says: *“Most times, we protect our families by avoiding risky areas, and we send the girls to town to avoid marriage requests from jihadists. The boys often disappear on their own without warning, so that their departure is not disclosed, and once in town they call back”*. In N’tillit, a farmer is categorical: *“the eldest and the youngest, who are at risk of being kidnapped, enlisted or joining the jihadists, left the area about two years ago”*. In areas under jihadist control, women have very little right to work, as it depends on the jihadist groups. In the areas controlled by the IS-GS, they can no longer work, whereas in those controlled by JNIM, they continue certain activities (tent-making, cleaning). However, the end of

tourism and the low number of market visitors deprive them of other sources of income (making butter or leather objects).

- ◆ In **Tillabéri**, it was found that most families are destroyed when forced into re-composition following the disappearance of spouses. Many single-parent families are now headed by women who are widows or whose husbands are in prison. Some remarry out of necessity, and the children suffer, according to some of the testimonials collected.

The precariousness of families was accentuated by the COVID 19 health crisis, one of the impacts of which was the decrease in cross-border intra-family cash transfers, particularly during the lean season, which coincided with the health crisis.

- ◆ In **south-western Niger**, Bororo families, some of whom work or beg in the city in Nigeria, have been hit hard by the COVID-19 economic crisis. Cash transfer flows have decreased, a trend accentuated by the long-standing devaluation of the Naira.
- ◆ In **central Mali**, transfers have also dropped, especially as ECOWAS sanctions imposed on Mali have temporarily blocked electronic transfers between countries. According to a livestock farmer in Tenenkou: *“We have brothers, cousins, uncles, and fathers abroad who used to send us money for our small needs, but since the arrival of the pandemic, we have been forced to sell our animals to survive”*. Elsewhere, this impact seems less visible.
- ◆ In the **Burkinabè Sahel**, while some people in Tin Akoff and Markoye have noted a drop in transfers, elsewhere in the Séno and Oudalan, herders have not seen any change.
- ◆ In the **Tillabéri region**, in Torodi, some forms of solidarity persist. Children based abroad (Togo, Benin, Ghana) are said to have developed a strategy of mobilising tonnes of livestock feed and cereals for their parents in Torodi during the lean season.

4. DECLINE IN ANIMAL PRICES AND INCREASE IN SOME PRODUCTION COSTS

Throughout the study area, insecurity and COVID have affected the pastoral economy of the Sahelian countries: drops in market attendance and cross-border trade, drops in animal prices and, on the contrary, increases in the costs of livestock feed and transport. Herders and traders are paying a very direct price for the existing insecurity, especially as it is through the sale of animals that herders can buy the provisions needed to feed their families, cover their health expenses, and cope with the difficulties encountered during transhumance. The fact that the COVID-19 crisis coincided with the lean season was an additional vulnerability factor for herders. Some who had invested in buying animals for transport no longer had sufficient savings to support their animals and their families and were forced to destock their animals inside the country rather than outside, and therefore at a lower price. For example, a livestock trader based in Bouna was stranded in Burkina after buying his cattle in Léo, Kampti and Mangodara. He sold his animals at 50% of their price to buy bags of oilcake and cleaning products for the remaining oxen.

Burkina Faso, Mali, and Niger are exporters of live animals (cattle, sheep, poultry, and horses) while the coastal countries (Togo, Benin, Ghana, Ivory Coast, and Nigeria) are net importers. However, the meat consumed in coastal countries does not only come from Sahelian countries, since coastal countries are gradually becoming major livestock producers that trade with each other. In addition, frozen meat imported from South America is also very cheap. Prices are characterised by a high degree of spatial diversity within the same region, and even more so at national and ECOWAS levels.

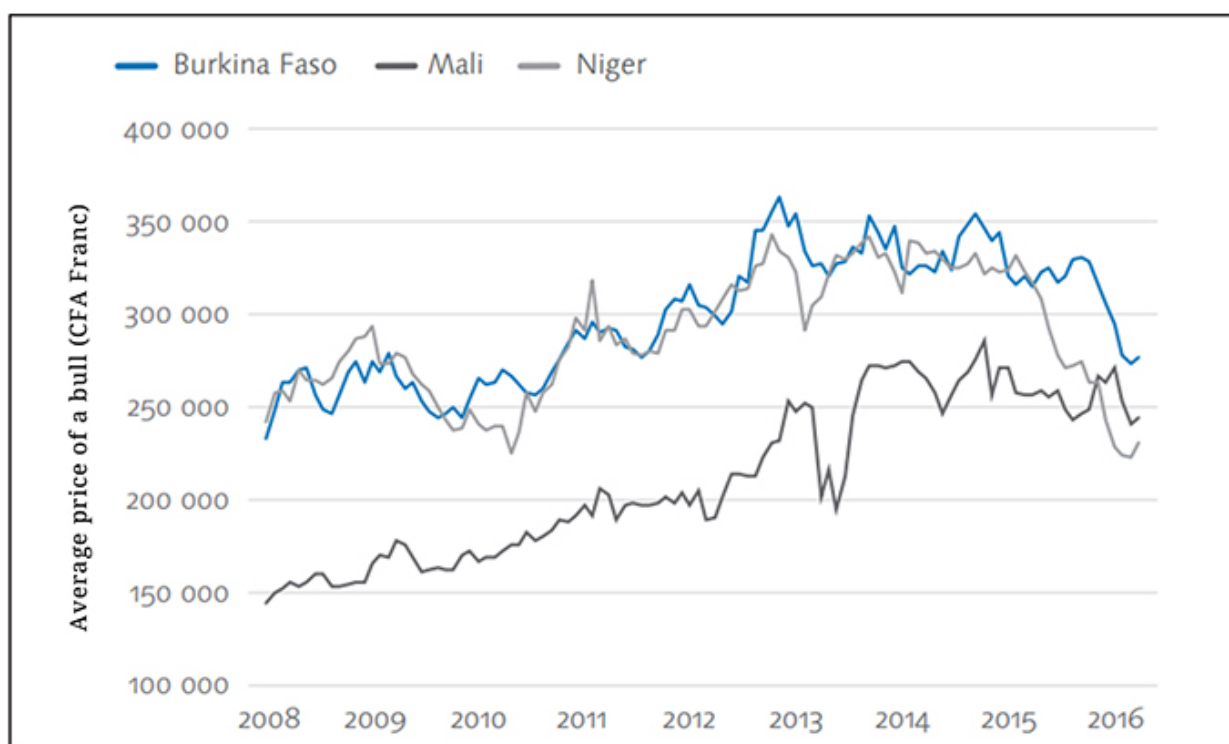


Figure 4: Evolution of the average price of a bull by country for 2008-2016 (FCAF/head) (source: BRACED, 2020)

Market prices and functionality depend on too many parameters that could only be described by a dedicated study on a specific region. Our study traces certain major trends that are due both to the health crisis – which is occasional, but violent – and to the security crisis – whose impact on the pastoral economy is, on the contrary, is lasting and progressive. An accurate pricing trend analysis requires methodological precautions that this study is unable to comply with, given that it goes far beyond the sole issue of economic impact. Depending on the breed, health and weight of the animal, the selling season, the need for destocking, the intensity of supply and demand, which partly depend on the geographical (and security) accessibility of markets, prices will change considerably. It is therefore difficult to compare prices from one year to the next, but also and above all to analyse the factors that govern their evolution.

The seasonal variation in prices shows that in the three Sahelian countries, prices rise constantly from January to June in Burkina Faso, in July for Mali, and between April and August for Niger. Thus, the data collected in the field highlights the sharp drop in animal prices recorded in the first half of 2020 in most of the study areas. Discerning the causes of this drop is still difficult – is it the impact of the health crisis (closure of markets, closure of borders, restriction of trade flows) or of the security crisis (sale of stolen animals at low prices, market accessibility issues, etc.)? The hypothesis formulated here is that a downward trend has been recorded in the conflict areas, but that the sharp decline recorded in 2020 is more the result of COVID-19, one of the main effects of which was a definite drop in market attendance and significant rates of underselling. This has been heavily felt in Ivory Coast, where border closure and lower animal supplies caused meat prices to fall from CFAF 3,000 to around CFAF 5,500, before falling again after the reopening of the border, clearly showing the dependence of the Ivorian meat market on the Sahelian supply chains. For example, a livestock market manager in Bouna points out that the first price for a bull during the health crisis was recorded at 850,000 CFA francs.

If we base our calculations on the price of bulls in different markets in the different departments of the **South-West** (Madarounfa, Guidan Rounджи, Madaoua, Konni, Bermo, Bagaroua), the price would have fallen by an average of 32% between 2019 and 2020. Describing the causes of this decline is no simple task

because insecurity goes hand in hand with the closure of the Nigerian border and the impact of COVID-19. The price range in 2020 is between CFAF 80,000 and CFAF 160,000, depending on the nature and purpose of the market.¹¹¹ The maximum price in 2020 has fallen to a level not seen since 2008. By way of comparison, the average price of a bull on the Dakoro market was CFAF 80,000 in the first half of 2020, whereas in 2019 it was CFAF 160,000 and in 2016 – CFAF 220,000.¹¹² Even without the COVID's impact, prices have been found to take on a downward trend, which can be attributed to a drop in market attendance due to the security status, but also, for the part bordering Nigeria, to the ongoing devaluation of the Naira.

The trend shows a similar behaviour in the **Sahel and Eastern** regions of **Burkina Faso**. On the Gorom-Gorom market, the average price of a bull was CFAF 100,000¹¹³ in June 2020, compared to CFAF 200,000 in March of the same year. Since the security situation in this area did not undergo any particular deterioration at this time of year, we can assume the culprit to be COVID-19, although this may be due to the animals' weight being lower in June than in March. Compared to the time when Gorom-Gorom was less affected by insecurity, the price has fallen by 20%. Between 2011 and 2016, the price had effectively stabilised at around CFAF 250,000¹¹⁴. Here again, a downward trend – this time a priori linked to insecurity within the area – is therefore observed. If the same methodology is applied to Djibo, the drop is even more visible: sold at CFAF 75,000 in July 2020, the bull costs CFAF 200,000 in March 2020, whereas between 2013 and 2016, the price fluctuated between CFAF 300,000 and CFAF 350,000. Therefore, the price drop has well exceeded 30%¹¹⁵. The decline in market attendance and the addition of stolen livestock sold at low prices both contribute to this downward trend. In **eastern Burkina Faso**, in Fada N'Gourma, a bull was sold for CFAF 150,000 in July 2020, compared to CFAF 200,000 at the beginning of 2020 and CFAF 350,000 on average between 2015 and 2016. The same observation can therefore be made between the short-term impact of Covid-19 and the longer-term security impact.

In **Central Mali and Sikasso**, on the other hand, the available data seems to question the generality of these trends. Prices have not changed substantially since 2015, when the violence in Central Mali began, despite localised and temporary drops in some markets. The high level of insecurity in this area, as well as the existence of a highly organised network for the resale of stolen livestock, do not seem to have had any influence on the price of cattle or camels. This peculiarity alone is worth a detailed analysis regarding not only the factors impacting livestock prices, but also the reliability of official prices. Regarding the price of goats and their sales volume, the price drop can be explained by the desire to destock small ruminants to limit losses through theft/pillage by keeping the large ruminants, in particular the breeding nuclei. A more than 30% drop in prices automatically reduces the herders' income, particularly for displaced households¹¹⁶. For other animals, according to several herders, livestock traders are responsible for price stability. *“They are the ones who set the prices, and they keep them high because this is how they hide the fact that a great number of their livestock is stolen,”* says a source in Mopti. A herder we met in Sikasso supports the same hypothesis: *“In 2019, some of our livestock traders were going to buy the animals stolen with the Dozos in the villages of the San and Tominian cercle, usually transporting them to Burkina Faso. They had great profits and our animals' value dropped very low. The other traders wouldn't buy them anymore because they weren't making enough profit.”*

This downward trend in animal prices contrasts with the increase in production costs observed in almost all the study areas: the cost of transport and, to a lesser extent, the price of livestock feed, the former necessarily impacting the latter.

While the price of livestock has fallen, the price of transport has often increased, again under the dual effect of the security crisis and of COVID 19. In most of the insecure regions, the recorded prices indicate an increase of around 100% between before the crisis¹¹⁷ and the beginning of 2020, before the health crisis.

◆ In **Fafa (Ansongo)**, the cost of transporting a head of cattle to the Warabia market, the busiest in Gao, has risen from CFAF 5,000 in 2011 to CFAF 10,000 in July 2020.

¹¹¹ Source: technical services and traders of the localities concerned.

¹¹² BRACED, 2020.

¹¹³ Source: Traders in the area.

¹¹⁴ BRACED, 2020.

¹¹⁵ BRACED, 2020.

¹¹⁶ Ibid.

¹¹⁷ The pre-crisis reference date depends on the area. The reference year for Northern Mali and the Tillabéri region is 2011, for example, 2014 for Central Mali, 2018 for South-West Niger.

- ◆ In **south-western Niger**, the increase was modest and mainly due to the increase in the cost of smuggled fuel imported from Nigeria. However, in the areas bordering Nigeria, the increase approaches 100%. According to the mayor of a commune in Konni, *“from Bazaga or Konni to Illéla (Nigeria), animals used to be transported at CFAF 250 for small ruminants and CFAF 1000 for large ruminants. Prices have increased by 100% for a distance of less than 25km.”*
- ◆ In **central Mali**, the price of loading animals from Fatoma (Mopti) to Abidjan (Ivory Coast) has risen from CFAF 400,000 in 2014 to CFAF 700,000 in 2020.
- ◆ In **Tillabéri**, the increase is 150%. The cost of transport between Torodi and Niamey per head of cattle has risen from CFAF 1,000 to CFAF 2,500, and between Ayorou and Niamey from CFAF 4,000 to CFAF 10,000.
- ◆ In the **Burkinabè Sahel**, prices have doubled, but the data collected do not allow us to verify how much of the increase is due to insecurity or to the health crisis.

In areas less exposed to insecurity, the health crisis was the main factor affecting transport costs.

- ◆ In the **Grand Ouest**, transport costs have increased. From **Bobo-Dioulasso**, the cost of transporting a head of cattle to Ivory Coast has increased by 25%, while transporters’ allowances for trucking have risen from CFAF 19,000 francs to nearly CFAF 80,000 per trip. In the **Hauts-Bassins**, transport costs from the Boucle du Mouhoun and central Mali have increased by 250-300%, depending on the animal.
- ◆ In **Sikasso**, the likely increase in transport costs due to COVID-19 was not felt because it was reportedly offset by the lifting of checkpoints due to the threat of a strike by the road transport union. For example, to leave the town of Kourou on market day, a transporter must pay CFAF 8,000 per truck, or CFAF 5,000 in Koutiala.

It is difficult to establish whether the increase in the cost of livestock feed is linked to the lack of security or to the health crisis. Firstly, in some areas such as the Grand Ouest, the regions of Gao and Ménaka, the southwest of Niger and the Sahel of Burkina Faso, no abnormal price increase was observed compared to other years, the increase being essentially seasonal with a peak in prices at the beginning of the lean season. In Sikasso, this year’s increase is said to be the result of a very poor cotton harvest and the disruption of external supplies. Thus, local producers found themselves in an oligopolistic position, which allowed them to increase prices. Early supply disruptions have been recorded in several regions, proof that demand was greater than supply, and that prices should have been particularly high. It can be assumed that this upward trend was mitigated by the intervention of humanitarian partners and national authorities through subsidised sales at moderate prices. This was observed in the Gao and Ménaka regions.

5. MARKET FUNCTIONALITY AND ATTENDANCE IN INSECURE AREAS

- ◆ Market functionality depends not only on the security of their surrounding areas, but also on the prevailing security in supplying neighbouring regions and states. Therefore, it can be said that there are numerous and complex factors impacting market attendance and sales statistics.

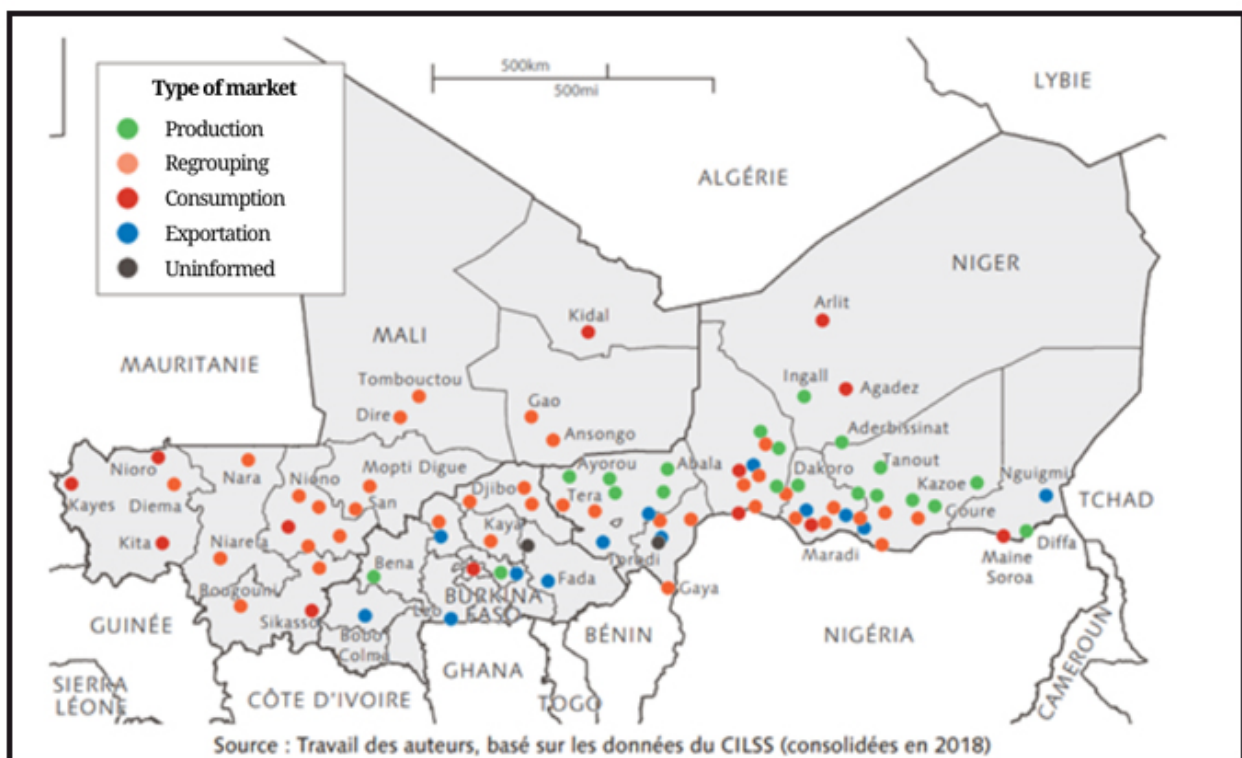
In areas that depend to a greater or lesser extent on livestock exports, when cross-border mobility is curtailed, the impact is felt in terms of market attendance, poor sales, and animal prices.

- ◆ In **northern Togo**, in 2019, the markets of Koundjouari, Mango and Borgou experienced a drop in attendance and sales that led to a fall in livestock prices. This was mainly due to the difficulties of Burkinabè buyers who were afraid to come from Pama and Kompienga (Burkina Faso).
- ◆ In **central Mali**, the impact of COVID has significantly reduced exports. In the floodplains, the livestock markets of Nampala, Sokolo, Dioura, Diguiciré, Malémana and Tenenkou have seen a drop in traffic. Mauritanian and Senegalese traders buy livestock for re-breeding, slaughter, or export. In the exposed floodplains, the main source markets, which are partly dependent on Ivory Coast, Benin, and

Burkina Faso, have been affected by the border closure: these are the markets of Bankass, Douentza, Koro, Fatoma, Konna and Sofara.

- ◆ In the **Burkinabè Sahel**, livestock herders recognise the heavy impact of the Niger border closure. Local markets depend largely on cross-border trade: those of Falagountou, Sampelga and Seytenga depend on Nigerian buyers, those of Dori and Gorgadji on Nigerian, Ivorian, and Ghanaian buyers. COVID abruptly interrupted the functioning of these markets, which were then forced to fall back on local consumers. This was a major factor for the price drop.

Market attendance and sales volumes are extremely volatile from year to year against the current insecurity background. In the exposed floodplains of central Mali, for example, depending on the levels of community-based violence in the areas surrounding Douentza, Koro or Bankass, market attendance has fluctuated from one year to the next from the moment violence erupted here in 2015. Our working hypothesis is that when some of the markets become inaccessible, some of the sales are shifted to more distant but also more secure markets, with the additional costs that this entails.



Map 3: Main markets by category in the study area (Source: BRACED, 2020)

Market attendance is also very much dependent on the security situation around the markets. In eastern Burkina Faso and central Mali, what pastoralists fear are the DSF and self-defence groups, more than the jihadists, making them flee the markets after the DSF is said to have originated a wave of killings and arrests in these two regions.

- ◆ In **Eastern Burkina**, livestock herders claim that insecurity has caused the complete closure of several markets, such as those in Nagré, Namoungou, Natiaboani, Pentchangou, Peega, etc. Elsewhere, the decline in market attendance is substantial. From 2018 to 2020, the Fada-N'gourma livestock market lost over CFAF 1 billion. Before 2018, this market would sell 1,500 head out of 2,000 presented per week. In August 2020, the figures were 200 head sold out of 300 presented. According to the herders we interviewed, who fear the DSF and the VDP, they mostly avoid any trips to sell or buy animals, for fear of being arrested or even executed. Traffic has also dropped heavily in Potiamanga and Nassougou. It is one of the factors influencing the price drop we have recorded.

- ◆ **In central Mali**, the same fear of the DSF plays a key role in the abandonment of certain markets, according to the herders we interviewed. In the Inner Niger Delta, between 2015 and 2020, market attendance in Tenenkou and Dioura is said to have fallen by 45% and the sales rate by 51%. Herders decided to abandon the Toguèrè-Coumbé livestock market after military camps appeared there and in Dioura, where 10 Fulani herders were reportedly killed by the DSF. In Konna and Fatoma, mass arrests in 2019-2020 at fairs in these localities have led to a drop in attendance.
- ◆ In **Tillabéri**, too, fear of arrest led 60% of the herders we interviewed to avoid the markets.

In other regions, it is mainly banditry – now the work of organised armed groups – that generates insecurity around markets.

- ◆ **In the Gao and Ménaka regions**, insecurity has had a major impact on the functioning of markets on the Ansongo-Labbézanga, Ansongo-Gao, Djebock-Gao, N'tilit-Gao, Gossi-Gao, Bourem-Gao, Tinaouker-Gao, and Ménaka-Andéramboucane trade routes. Many herders have been robbed on their way back from the markets on these routes – particularly as the festive season approached – causing a drop in traffic and sales. The perpetrators are linked to the various armed groups that signed the 2015 Peace Agreement, in particular the GATIA, which is frequently cited for this.
- ◆ **In south-western Niger**, the resurgence of banditry in Nigeria has led to market abandonment. In the Maradi region, it is now impossible for the inhabitants of Gabi to attend the markets located on the Nigerian side of the border. In Chadakori, the markets of Gargué and Batchaka have been abandoned due to the absence of livestock traders from Nigeria. In the Tahoua region and in Doutchi, the livestock markets of Bagagi, Bagaroua, Tebaremt, Inabagargar, Aneloum, Chayassou, Ezza, Assagaygay have been abandoned by herders as well as by large livestock traders, to the point where livestock is no longer sold there at all. In Bermo and Bagagi, traders must be accompanied by the DSF in each market to return to their villages.

The impact of the jihadist presence on market functionality is rather ambivalent. The situation in the Burkinabè Sahel reflects this contrast. On the one hand, the secondary markets around Déou, Oursi, Tin-Akoff – located close to the Malian border and in the area of jihadist influence – remain functional and perhaps participate, through the taxes levied, in the financing of these armed groups. Gourma also remains a commercial outlet. However, jihadist groups have already imposed blockades that undermine livestock trade. In Tin-Akoff, the blockade imposed by the IS-GS (who destroyed the relay antennas there) has forced buyers to retreat to the markets of Markoye or Gorom-Gorom. The same is true for Djibo, which was blockaded for several months by JNIM in early 2020, preventing all trucks from reaching the city from Ouagadougou. The market was completely suffocated. The other secondary markets around Djibo have been abandoned by buyers since 2016, for fear of being targeted by the DSF. As a farmer from Baraboulé summed up the blockade imposed by JNIM at the beginning of 2020: *“we had been living under a blockade long before.”*

Finally, the curfew has had an impact in the Tillabéri and Sahel regions of Burkina Faso, as a herder in Seytenga sums up: *“with the state of emergency, the curfew and the restrictions on movement, buyers cannot stay in the market for long”*. In Tillabéri, the impact of the emergency state is felt strongly, as many of the official markets that have been closed have been replaced by informal markets (or jungle markets) to which herders have difficulty gaining access because of the impossibility of travelling by motorbike. Some of them prefer to go to Malian territory, at the risk of having to deal with the IS-GS. According to a representative of a livestock service in Torodi, *“the drop in market attendance is the one factor that has most affected the economy of livestock farmers. The state of emergency has seriously affected livestock markets. About 70% to 80% of livestock traders have stopped coming to our market.”*

A photograph of a group of people on a dirt road, overlaid with a semi-transparent blue filter. In the center, a woman in a white headscarf and necklace looks towards the camera. To her right, a pack animal (possibly a mule or horse) is heavily laden with supplies. Other people and pack animals are visible in the background. The scene is set in a rural, open landscape with trees in the distance.

PART THREE

Surviving and thinking
about the future

IV. SURVIVING THE CRISIS

In a pastoral environment, where “risk and uncertainty dominate life”, constraints and risks are not assimilated to any specific event but punctuate the daily life of herders.¹¹⁸ The multiple threats to which they are exposed – and which vary from one area to another – are the greatest factors in clearly defining the scales of risk and uncertainty. They must survive the crisis, either by coping or by developing adaptation strategies, by seeking a difficult, if not impossible, neutrality, or by being forced to seek to defend themselves individually or through armed groups.

1. ADAPTATION AND DAILY COPING STRATEGIES

CORRUPTING THE AUTHORITIES AND ARMS CARRIERS

Corruption is the herders’ most common coping strategy. It often proves to be the only remedy for the lack of political representation, used to restore fairness compared to those who would have more influence with the authorities. The use of corruption is nothing new and long precedes the current security crisis. It reflects in a different light the issue of racketeering raised earlier in the report. Rackets imply dispossession without compensation, whereas bribery implies a concrete advantage for the herder, consisting of access to off-limits resources, in return for the interest of another party with authority. The herder is pushed by his activity, by his habits and by the lack of local intermediaries, into seeking to use corruption, irrespective of the security or health context. This is particularly evident in Kéné Dougou, where the situation remains unchanged:

- ◆ **In the Sikasso region**, corruption is proving to be a profitability condition for livestock breeding, as one herder explains: “They threaten us by saying that they will unload the cattle and take them to the customs yard to keep them. But this will cause damage, the animals will lose weight, and that will affect the prices. So, we pay their price”. A transporter adds: “We make it difficult for the truckers. Sometimes we miss fairs. But the time factor plays a role in the profitability of the animal product.”
- ◆ **In the north of Ivory Coast**, the corruption of environmental agents allows them to enter prohibited areas such as restricted forests, a strategy that does not always pay off, given that other environmental agents who are not complicit might simultaneously arrest them. To cross the border into Ivory Coast, it also appears that herders are forced to bribe the control services who do not recognise the International Transhumance Certificate. Corruption is also recorded in attempts to bribe technical services or the DSF, so that field damages are not brought before an administrative authority or the courts, a prospect that the herders find humiliating and very costly in terms of time and therefore money.

In the **Great West of Burkina Faso**, the use of bribery is acknowledged by almost all herders, particularly the bribery of water and forestry agents for access to restricted forests. Farmers accuse herders (especially large-scale herders) of bribing village chiefs or the DSF.

¹¹⁸ Véronique Ancey, Denis Pesche, Benoît Daviron, « Résilience et développement : complément, substitut ou palliatif ? Le cas du pastoralisme au Sahel », (“Resilience and development: complement, substitute, or palliative? The case of pastoralism in the Sahel”), in *Revue internationale des études du développement*, 2017, N° 231, pp 57- 89.

- ◆ In the **Cascades**, access to restricted forests is paid for in cash, and there is even a “quarterly fee” paid to foresters for grazing in the restricted forests of Sidéradouougou and Boulo. In Banfora, some of the herders caught by foresters pruning trees contributed CFAF 150,000 to pay a young forester to help them, while the other herders had taken steps to appease the agents. Here, corruption was preferred to the conflict resolution methods provided for by law.
- ◆ In the **Boucle de Mouhoun**, corruption is systematically used to allow herders to settle for several months in restricted forests during the rainy season: the restricted forests of Tissé (Mouhoun) and to a lesser extent those of Siby and Mou. Corruption is said to feed the entire hierarchical chain. The big breeders are even entrusted with the animals of civil servants, thus enjoying their protection.
- ◆ This situation also prevails elsewhere. In the regions of **Maradi and Tahoua**, corruption allows the Oudas to enjoy an influence with Hausa village chiefs that is not related to their political influence, since the Oudas themselves have no customary representation. They are openly accused by farmers of “colluding” with village chiefs.

Paradoxically, corruption’s saving virtue is that it brings together actors who would otherwise communicate less and less, binding them around converging interests. This reality, which is not necessarily politically correct or even acceptable, deserves to be studied and analysed further. On the contrary, should corruption by any chance simply disappear in the South-West, so that access was no longer allowed to restricted forests and agents systematically fined herders and removed their livestock, this would most likely fuel a feeling of revolt. Today, herders seem to need corruption to the point where some regret its absence in the insecure areas.

In the insurgency areas, corruption has largely disappeared in rural areas exposed to jihadist insurgencies where the state has withdrawn. It persists, however, where the state is still present, in the main villages of the communes where many herders live, particularly displaced herders.

- ◆ In the **Gourma region of Mali**, where the Malian state is no longer present, corruption has stopped. A herder in Gossi explains: “In the past, for example, if you didn’t have your ID, you had to pay 2,000 CFA francs to pass a control, but with this crisis that’s over.”
- ◆ In the **Sahel region of Burkina Faso**, in the Seno province, where the state is still present, herders systematically resort to bribing state agents to move freely, and paradoxically the anti-terrorist context has aggravated this phenomenon. According to a leader in Gorgadji: “you have to be prepared to give something to everyone or you risk being labelled a terrorist and getting killed or, at best, going to prison”. Paying not to be stigmatised is a particularly worrying novelty. In the Oudalan region, herders retreating to Gorom-Gorom to escape the insecurity make the same observation. However, corruption had largely disappeared in rural areas where neither DSF nor VDP were active, such as Oursi and Déou.
- ◆ In the **Inner Niger Delta**, while corruption has disappeared from the areas controlled by jihadists, in the towns it is said to persist. The partiality of state and judiciary agents would explain why “farmers always pay the agents to get their way, otherwise the state will never play to their advantage”. The farmers denounce this and therefore consider that the authorities regularly harm them.
- ◆ In the **east of Burkina Faso**, in the Tapoa, a herder testifies: “Before we used to give money to the foresters to let us pass through, but now with the insecurity we don’t see them anymore and we don’t have to pay anything”. Herders maintain that the jihadists don’t take anything from the roads they control, such as Natiaboani-Pama.

A (relatively) new dynamic worth noting is that corruption from the herders affects not only the authorities, but sometimes also bandits or vigilante groups:

- ◆ In **Nigeria’s Katsina State**, many herders have chosen to “fund” local vigilante groups so as not to be targeted in return.
- ◆ In **northern Benin**, some herders claim to pay bandits for peace and freedom of movement. These practices are widespread and local authorities are also said to engage in these practices.
- ◆ In **south-western Niger**, both in Maradi and in Tahoua, large-scale herders are accused of buying out the bandits operating on the border.

- ◆ In **eastern Burkina Faso**, in the provinces of Gourma and Gnagna, self-defence groups collect “rights of way” on the routes they control, sometimes alongside the DSF. A herder from Bogandé is explicit: *“even if you have all the documents for transhumance, you have to pay the Koghwegos 100 CFA francs per head, and the DSF also take their share along the way”*. In areas beyond their control, many herders admit that they no longer pay to travel on the roads or to enter the forests.
- ◆ In **Mali’s Gourma region**, herders believe that some armed groups – particularly rebel groups – engage in racketeering: “with them, it’s not corruption, it’s more like they take what they want, they choose what livestock they want themselves”.

TRADITIONAL ADAPTATION STRATEGIES IN THE FACE OF INSECURITY

Between the insurgency and stable zones, the herders mention relatively similar and fairly old adaptation strategies, each strategy obviously depending on local specificities, according to the agro-ecological conditions, market opportunities, and the nature of the threats they face. These different adaptation strategies have been presented in the form of a table, and it should be noted that although some strategies have only been mentioned in certain regions, this does not mean that they do not exist elsewhere. The table shows that the first adaptation strategy, whether in stable or insurgency areas, is for herders to change their mobility, which is generally shorter. The other most common strategies are destocking animals, retraining within or outside the livestock sector, and sometimes within the family itself. Some strategies seem more specific to stable and insurgency areas. In stable areas, one constant is for herders - no doubt fearful of the consequences of growing stigma - to seek to further improve their relations with host communities, including in transhumant areas. In insurgency areas, too, herders are changing their behaviour and becoming more vigilant in what they say and do, as well as increasing communication between them in the context of mobility. In insurgency areas, in addition to the natural displacement of families (women, children), the division of herds to reduce their exposure to theft is a widespread practice.

Adaptation strategies	Affected areas
Reduction in pastoral mobility and/or range of movement, changes in transhumance routes and/or grazing areas.	All areas
Relocation of families to areas deemed safe (urban areas, areas traditionally less hostile to livestock farming, etc.)	All insurgency areas
Destocking of non-productive animals	Boucle du Mouhoun, Cascades, Hauts-Bassins, Northern Ivory Coast, Inner Niger Delta, Liptako Gourma, Burkinabè Sahel
Diversification of species	Tillabéri, Gourma malien, Sahel Burkinabè
Extension of length of transhumance to settlement further south	Boucle du Mouhoun, Burkinabè Sahel (Soum), Burkinabè East
Professional conversion to intensive livestock farming	Hauts-Bassins (milk supply around Bobo-Dioulasso), Burkinabè Sahel (fattening ¹¹⁹), Eastern Burkinabè
Professional diversification away from livestock, strengthening of seasonal exodus	Northern Ivory Coast (investment in real estate or purchase of land through destocking), Sikasso

¹¹⁹ Fattening consists of paying for animals for a given period of time, putting them in stalls to fatten them up and selling them gradually, taking the market into account.

	(barter economy of milk - feed with dairies, practice of dual-purpose crops such as cowpea - fodder and human food); Southwest Niger
Division of labour within a single family	Southwest Niger, northern Ivory Coast, Sikasso (dispersion of the family between Mali, Ivory Coast and Burkina Faso)
Building up stocks of supplementary feed for the dry season (purchase of millet stalks, bean tops)	Southwest Niger, northern Benin, Sikasso, Inner Niger Delta, Gourma of Mali
Increased attention to improving relations with host communities, and search for tutors (to facilitate their integration or graze crop residues for example)	Southwest Niger, northern Ivory Coast, Boucle du Mouhoun, Cascades, Hauts-Bassins, northern Benin, eastern Burkina Faso (including host countries for transhumant cattle)
Particular caution in words and actions	Eastern Burkina, Malian Gourma
Splitting of herds during mobility	Boucle du Mouhoun, Cascades, Hauts-Bassins, Southwest Niger
Splitting up of herds in stations.	All insurgency zones, Southwest Niger
Employment of herders	Southwest Niger, Inner Niger Delta
Reduction in number of animals per herder	Northern Benin
Moving of animals in areas under jihadist control	Moving of animals in areas under jihadist control
Free grazing of animals without shepherd	Burkinabè Sahel, Central Mali exposed land zone

Table 6: Adaptation strategies of livestock farmers identified by study area

Although some adaptation strategies were only mentioned in one region, one can assume that they are not unique to these regions. For example, in south-western Niger, particularly in the Maradi region, which is prone to cattle rustling, several herders explained that they organise themselves to secure their mobility, namely by organising transhumance in small groups of herders in order to be less vulnerable. In all likelihood, this is also done elsewhere. It was, however, mentioned in this area, due role played in the organisation of transhumance by the Garso and Hardo, thanks to the support of local pastoralist organisations. In Sikasso, herders also explained that structuring themselves into herders' cooperatives and/or associations was a way of adapting to the context of increased stigmatisation. For example, in 2018-2019, when livestock traders protested against the theft of livestock by hunters in central Mali, the herders decided to close the livestock markets and were thus heard. Here again, the dynamics of associating herders is not specific to Sikasso, but it is not spontaneously considered as a strategy by all herders.

GETTING BY IN THE ABSENCE OF A STRATEGY IN INSURGENCY AREAS

Even if the adaptation strategies identified are largely common to both insurgency and stable zones, in the former it is the way in which they are thought out and implemented that arouses major reservations on the part of the herders interviewed. In areas exposed to high levels of insecurity, whether caused by jihadists, self-defence groups or the DSF, the term 'adaptation strategy' no longer seems appropriate and has been challenged by many who say they are merely getting by. This nuance is important, as it reflects the destitution

of farmers who are looking for day-by-day solutions that are only marginally effective. They all have one thing in common: they limit their mobility at the risk of putting their livelihoods to the test. Very often, traditional know-how is no longer relevant.

- ◆ In **Gourma-Rharous**, the only strategy that seems to exist on the part of the herders is to 'get by'. A herder in Inadjatafane explains: *'we have no strategic vision, we live from day to day, we use the grazing areas around us and if there are none left, we buy food supplements for the cattle, cattle feed and bran'*. In another locality in Gourma, in addition to cattle feed, a farmer explains that he uses an interesting technique, which consists of digging the earth to a depth of 1m and having the animals lick it. Traditionally reserved for the animals during the winter and the three months after the winter (July to December), this practice makes it easier for the animals to gain weight.
- ◆ In **eastern Burkina Faso**, the majority of herders say that they are trying to flee to neighbouring countries (Togo, Ghana, etc.) and are far from imagining any form of 'adaptation strategy'. Daily survival is the rule. A farmer from Kompienga says it all: *'we continue our activity with great difficulty, it is a game of hide-and-seek with all the players, where we are robbed and where there is often damage'*. In Gnagna, a farmer explains that caution is the best strategy: *'we don't have a particular strategy, but we make do. But we still limit our movements and control all our actions and words'*.

Destocking seems to be practised in all insurgency areas. It is commonly referred to as 'strategic' and refers to a traditional livestock practice, but seems to be mainly the result of the exposure of livestock keepers to insecurity in these areas:

- ◆ In the **Burkinabè Sahel**, as in the **Malian Gourma**, the decision to destock seems to result mainly from insecurity. Most herders in these areas consider that keeping discreet herds of 10 to 20 animals is the best way to protect themselves against theft and/or zakat collection. Another reason for destocking is the economic impact of this insecurity, particularly on households. Selling livestock at low prices enables farmers to support their families, or to buy feed for their animals. In Dori and Gorgadji, as much as 80-90% of the livestock can be sold. In Oudalan, livestock farmers acknowledge that the fall in market prices has led to twice as many animals being sold as usual in the lean season in order to meet these costs.
- ◆ In the **Ménaka and Gao** regions, destocking has been widely practised as a means of protecting themselves from cattle theft and zakat. One farmer reckons that one should *'sell up to 50% of the herd and give the money to a relative in town who can put it in a bank'*. Another farmer from Ansongo is more reserved about the effectiveness of this "strategy": *'The jihadists know everything; they know through their indicators how many heads you have. If you sell your livestock, they will claim part of the money from the sale'*.
- ◆ In the **Inner Niger Delta**, on the other hand, strategic destocking in Tenenkou is thought to be the result of climatic variations over the past two years, which have put pressure on pastures and watering points, leading to a deterioration in the condition of the livestock and its market value. The decision to sell would therefore be independent of the market situation and insecurity.

The diversification of species, again an ancestral practice with an economic purpose, seems to be a strategy adopted by some herders primarily to protect themselves from cattle theft:

- ◆ In **Gourma-Rharous**, a herder from Inadjatafane argues that this makes them less attractive to jihadists: *'Many of us invest in sheep and goats, because it is easier for thieves to steal ten or twenty cows than their equivalent in goats or sheep. That would be a lot of sheep and goats to drive and it could attract attention'*. He is joined in this by another herder in Intahaka: *'We are mainly diversifying the species because thieves are more attracted to cattle than to small ruminants'*.
- ◆ In Tillabéri, breed diversification has long been practised to protect against cattle theft. The Tolébé and Gorgabé Fulanis, seeking to protect themselves from Daouhassak raids, have gradually invested in 'bororo' cows, trained to refuse to be taken by people they do not know. They are said to have enhanced this specificity, making these animals harder to handle than before. Nowadays, when these cows are on the alert, they no longer let the calves suckle and refuse to be milked, becoming de facto unproductive. Thieves are deterred because they have to take the cows as well as their owners, which is what the Dausahaks did in the past.

Nevertheless, diversification has its limits. Agro-ecological zones under jihadist control offer very few diversification options compared to, for example, the Sudano-Sahelian zones. In both the Burkinabè Sahel and the Malian Gourma, which share the same agro-ecological conditions, opinions converge on the fact that very few breeds are adapted to their difficult agro-ecological conditions.

The prevailing uncertainty about the effectiveness of 'adaptation strategies' leads to certain traditional rules being questioned or diverging according to the empirical experiences of the herders:

- ◆ The question of how to engage with jihadist groups seems to divide herders. A large number of pastoralists argue that staying in the bush with the jihadis exposes them to great risk. According to one herder in Mali's Gourma region, *'you can stay and become a slave to these people, but at the risk of seeing your wife or daughter raped or your son lured away to join these people and become their courier, all the while paying zakat'*. On the other hand, others explain that they try to get to know members of jihadist groups so as not to arouse their distrust. Finally, some herders try to stay away from jihadist groups while avoiding areas where the DSF or self-defence groups operate, where they risk being seen as informers. This leaves a very limited space for mobility, which illustrates the logic of getting by, which is imposed on them.
- ◆ The logic of regrouping - normally favoured in the context of mobility - has become a necessity even in camps. Many believe that it is necessary to stay close to the majority of people and not to isolate oneself from one's family. Isolated pastoralists are more suspicious, exposed to executions and even racketeering by bandits or jihadist groups.
- ◆ The use of additional herders also fails to be a solution in itself. In the Burkinabè Sahel, some herders say that they let their animals graze without a shepherd and that to protect them from the lure of jihadist groups, ownership of the herds is given to women who are not attacked by jihadists. In the Central Mali exposed floodplains, the free grazing of animals is also mentioned by some. In contrast, elsewhere, herders report recruiting more herders (Inner Niger Delta) or reducing the number of animals per herder (Northern Benin).

Ultimately, this permanent resourcefulness shows that all choices involve increasing risks. Mobility, like destocking, is no longer conceived in an economic logic, but is suffered in the face of insecurity. In areas exposed to jihadist violence, such as that of the VDP and the DSF, herders are *'sandwiched'* in the words of a herder in the Soum. *'In the north there are the jihadis, in the south the VDP and in the towns the DSF: where can we be safe?'* Moving to the city is far from being a solution for all herders. In south-western Niger, the grouping of herds during mobility encourages rambling and the loss of animals, as was reported in the Maradi region. A herder from Bermo testifies to this risk: *'My animals were scattered among the other herds, and the herders left with them without realising when the groups were dispersed. But the animals leave the herd as soon as they see that they are strangers. Sometimes they are found, but not always'*. In the west of Tahoua, herders also seek security in this way, but herders have reported cases of animals being lost after they have strayed and passed through the villages. Farmers sometimes tie them up in their concession to hide them until the transhumant herders leave, or they take them to the village pound.

2. POSTORAL ORGANISATIONS AND TECHNICAL SERVICES

This study reveals a decrease in the support provided by technical services in most of the areas affected by insecurity. The veterinary services have seen their mobility restricted in many areas. They therefore sometimes experience serious difficulties in vaccinating and treating animals. The distribution of livestock feed has also been affected. The support of PO networks (RBM, APESS) and that of certain NGOs (ICRC in particular) has been invaluable in ensuring minimal coverage. However, the insecurity has changed the perception that PO members have of their organisations.

Regarding the availability of technical services:

- ◆ In **eastern Burkina Faso**, in the province of Gourma, livestock services are functional in the main towns, but hardly function at all in the affected rural areas. In this province, the number of vaccinated livestock has drastically decreased in 2020: in Kantchari, the figure has dropped from 40,000 to 27,000.

In Nassougou and Tanwalbougou, which are more affected by insecurity, the numbers dropped from 6,500 and 6,000 respectively to zero. Services are no longer functioning in Nassougou and Boungou.

- ◆ **In the Tillabéri region**, the vaccination coverage rate has dropped from 90% in 2018-2019 to 45% in 2019-2020. For several years now, the state has not been able to distribute cattle feed. The strategy of the livestock services has been to attract livestock farmers away from Torodi, to safer areas. This is summarised by a local representative of the livestock services: *'There is a proliferation of vaccination parks, but they are never used for fear of jihadists. Our strategy has been to ask livestock farmers in the red zone to go back down to the Torodi area to have their animals vaccinated. This strategy was successful thanks to the availability of cattle feed, veterinary products and CITs, which are essential for cross-border transhumance'*.
- ◆ In the **Gao/Ménaka regions**, livestock services are running at a standstill. Most of the staff have withdrawn to the district or regional capitals, where they supervise the distribution of livestock feed to vulnerable households in association with village organisations. Vaccinations are carried out, as always, by a health agent established in the area of intervention.
- ◆ In **central Mali**, vaccination figures have also been falling for several years. In Tenenkou, although some areas are no longer covered by the local livestock service, the support of POs and NGOs (e.g., ICRC) makes it possible to maintain minimal coverage in some communes. In the exposed floodplains, according to the livestock services, the mortality rate increased between 2018 and 2019, from 15 to 20% for calves, from 5 to 10% for young cattle and from 3 to 5% for adults¹²⁰. Livestock services have involved private vaccinators and auxiliaries to adapt to the insecurity.
- ◆ In the **Burkinabè Sahel**, livestock services are only functional in certain chief towns. In Seno and Yagha, access to care or vaccination services is limited to Dori after the Mansila service closed in 2018, forcing livestock farmers to travel long distances, particularly for those near the borders with Mali and Niger. In Soum and Oudalan, the situation is even more alarming. In Oudalan, the agents are confined to the town of Gorom-Gorom, with a limited presence of health workers in some of the main towns, while in Soum, the livestock services have disappeared altogether: only the ICRC intervenes in the area of animal health.

The areas less heavily impacted by insecurity are also affected to a lesser degree:

- ◆ **In the Great West of Burkina Faso**, livestock services are less available. The rural areas around Banfora, Niangologo and Sidéradougou in the Cascades, the communes of Bomborokuy, Djibasso and Barani (Kossi province) and some communes in Sourou are no longer visited by livestock services for fear of being attacked. They now work through intermediaries directly based in the communes to intervene (vaccination and treatment).
- ◆ **In south-western Niger**, the movements of livestock agents have also been reduced. In Bagaroua, the livestock manager acknowledges that *'between the insecurity and the state of emergency in the border areas, today it is impossible for me to go to Aboulala, which is 15km from Bagaroua'*. The problem is compounded by the fact that field agents carry the income generated by the services they provide with them, exposing them to risk. Many of them therefore no longer go to the bush in the Nigerian border areas where banditry is rife: a livestock agent was almost kidnapped by bandits in Dogon Tabki (Dan Kassari). According to the regional livestock service, the health situation is worrying, particularly because livestock farmers coming from Nigeria, where animal health is deteriorating, contaminate Nigerien herds on their way back north.

The unavailability of livestock services increases the distance that already traditionally separates these services from livestock keepers, whether because of the high costs of vaccination or the mistrust of state livestock services that was mentioned in most areas¹²¹. In the Sikasso region, farmers do not administer any of the treatments until the disease is confirmed, and often prefer to use private veterinarians rather than state agents. The unavailability of livestock services in remote areas forces farmers to find alternatives, even

¹²⁰ The mortality rate is defined for an entire herd as the ratio of the number of animals that died during the year to the average number of animals in the herd.

¹²¹ These costs vary between states. For example, in Niger, the technical livestock services provide two free state vaccines per year: PCB (contagious bovine pleuropneumonia) and PPR (peste des petits ruminants). The other vaccines are charged in addition to the service to the animal owners.

self-medicating with fraudulently purchased drugs, as was reported in the Eastern region. As far as the POs are concerned, they are generally appreciated by the respondents, even if their role is considered insufficient, particularly their ability to influence the authorities to better defend the rights of livestock farmers. Their representativeness is often questioned, as they are said to represent certain categories of herders such as large-scale herders or sedentary herders. Sometimes, on the contrary, it is the fact that large-scale herders are not or do not want to get involved that is questioned. The absence of these influential actors would undermine the political weight of POs. This issue reflects the difficulty of representing the livestock sector, whose actors have very different profiles. Criticism has sometimes been levelled at POs that are gradually becoming project implementation structures to the benefit of the management teams and a small family circle around them, and to the detriment of the farmers. Some corruptive or clientelistic abuses have been reported.

A particular hiatus seems to emerge with regard to the positioning of POs in the field of livestock farming, that of finding the balance point between contradictory positions and dynamics. The need to maintain good relations with the authorities in order to be constructive or simply not to be dissolved can lead some PO leaders to find themselves aligned with the authorities, losing sight of the aspirations and urgencies expressed by the farmers. This risk is compounded by the risk of institutionalisation, encouraged by international aid, which pushes PO leaders to behave as neutral actors in the implementation of projects, again with the risk of not offending the political authorities and their partners so as not to be deprived of the rents from this aid. Finally, POs are struggling to renew themselves and adapt to a particularly young base, in the image of Sahelian society. Some POs are ageing and are facing a phenomenon of entrenchment with the risk of losing contact with a base that is increasingly militant and concerned about defending its rights. This difficult balance to strike can sometimes be seen in the discrepancy between the way PO leaders see their usefulness and the way their members perceive it: For example, in the Hauts-Bassins, livestock farmers deplore the lack of usefulness of POs in securing pastoral land, while in Orodara, PO leaders emphasise the agreements negotiated between communes to secure the movement of animals and limit the abuses of ruthless agents, believing that they now have the attentive ear of the administration (certain prefects), technicians (technical livestock services) and certain elected officials (mayors and councillors). Working alongside the authorities, without upsetting them or rushing them so as not to compromise a fragile trust, can give members the impression that they are not militant enough.

Insecurity has paradoxical effects on the relationship between POs and farmers. In some areas, POs appear to be the last resort in the face of the disappearance of the state and its services, and their usefulness is only made more visible. Elsewhere, criticism or some kind of resignation was expressed, indicating that the POs can no longer do anything for them. In fact, the continuous progression of insecure areas affects their operational capacities. On the one hand, pastoralists who remain in rural areas have less and less ability to move freely and reach the towns, which may be enough to arouse the suspicion of jihadists in the bush. On the other hand, POs are also becoming suspicious of armed groups. Self-defence groups - and increasingly the states - perceive some of them as accomplices of the jihadists, while the latter in turn are suspicious of these 'white-funded' organisations, as has been documented in the field. The latter has been observed in the regions of Tillabéri or Gourma. A PO leader in Zamfara (North-West Nigeria) testifies in the same sense: *'Of course some herders do not consider us as leaders anymore, especially with the agreements we have negotiated with the government and which are rejected by these bandits. They prefer to represent themselves. My house was attacked four times and I had to flee the area. If they still considered me a pastoral leader, this would not have happened'*. Between these two poles of criticism, the desire to get closer to one of them will reinforce the criticism coming from the other. POs are like the farmers they represent: they are seeking neutrality in a context of polarisation that exposes them to a lot of criticism. And this, while the farmers expect more from these organisations, including in terms of security. In eastern Burkina, for example, the wish was explicitly expressed that the POs should play an advocacy role with the authorities and even become directly involved whenever a herder is arrested by the DSF. In the Burkinabè Sahel, the opinion of the farmers about the POs is even more clear-cut, especially in Seno and Soum. In Oudalan, an association leader sums up the general mood: *'Today, events are beyond us and we are powerless in the face of certain dramatic situations that affect the area's livestock farmers'*.

	Findings on POs	Expectations of POs
Central Mali (flooded area)	The POs are unable to help the farmers and are almost non-existent in the localities	
Eastern Burkina Faso	Last hope where no one cares about herders anymore Useful role in establishing land conciliation commissions	Secure pastoral land tenure Intervene at the beginning of the season before planting to resolve the issue of cattle tracks early Play an advocacy role with traditional chiefs and the authorities Mobilise as soon as a person is arrested by the DSF to prevent them from disappearing
Burkina Faso Sahel	Feeling of being abandoned by the POs "as soon as the situation becomes difficult POs intervention limited to urban communes, which "takes them away from farmers' realities". The PO's capacities are severely affected by the lack of security	Need for POs to intervene in the context of cross-border mobility. Need for POs to be more active in defending the rights of pastoralists in the face of violence and in supporting pastoralists to find stolen livestock. Need for POs to 'put herders back at the centre' of these organisations.
Northern Benin	Highly critical findings and multiple accusations, against one PO in particular Some POs privatise projects that do not or hardly benefit the farmers on the receiving end Do not care about the difficulties linked to transhumance Block relations between the state and the herders	
Boucle du Mouhoun	No confidence from large-scale herders who favour corruption Do not care enough about pastoral mobility Lack of coordination between them Weak structuring at village level	Provide better support to farmers in structuring themselves at the grassroots level to have more representative farmers' organisations Capitalise on good management practices for common grazing areas Support serious studies on the capacity of classified forests in order to identify alternatives for the use of aerial fodder
Hauts Bassins regions	Confidence, especially among traders and butchers, who are recognised as being useful in lobbying the authorities. Lack of involvement of large livestock farmers. Useless for defending pastoral land and denouncing abuses by foresters	
Cascades Region	Generally recognised usefulness Lack of involvement of large livestock farmers (Banfora, Sidéradougou) for whom 'it is a waste of time	

	OHADA texts more useful to agricultural than pastoral POs Under-representation of livestock farmers in the bush (large and small) who are not very interested because of the constraints (meetings, travel)	
Ménaka and Gao	Allowing the distribution of livestock feed Accusation of corruption of PO leaders Last link between them and cities	Feed distribution Animal health
Northern Ivory Coast	Useful for establishing prevention frameworks	Need to be better equipped to provide assessments and adapt to the real needs of farmers Need to be revitalised to 'better represent the interests of pastoralists Must do more advocacy with the authorities in order to secure pastoral land.
Tillabéri	POs have lost their leverage with pastoralists and are struggling to intervene in rural areas	POs need to play a more militant role with the authorities to restore herders' rights.
North West Nigeria	Perception that POs are looking after and defending farmers in urban areas. Loss of trust with pastoralists in rural areas Inability to act against banditry	POs need to involve farmers who feel neither listened to nor represented at the grassroots level in rural areas
Southwest Niger	In Doutchi, Bagaroua and Konni, there is a feeling of not being supported by POs that only intervene at the level of the chief towns and departments. In Maradi, despite the efforts made by AREN, the herders still feel excluded from the local implementation of development projects.	POs need to be more in touch with their constituencies to better understand and respond to their problems. POs need to have a say in the local decision-making process to help herders to be better represented.
Malian Gourma	Feeling that POs cannot do anything for them in the current context. Very negative perception of PO leaders accused of "remaining in the city", of opportunism or of "stealing humanitarian aid".	No specific expectations expressed. Some expect nothing from POs, others say they remain "obviously open to any help (e.g. livestock feed)", some are openly threatening PO staff.

Table 7: Summary of farmers' perceptions of POs in the study areas

3. THE DIFFICULT, IF NOT IMPOSSIBLE, SEARCH FOR NEUTRALITY

In many Sahelian regions where armed groups operate, but where self-defence groups and/or the DSF are also active, the majority of the population seeks a neutrality that is not easy to maintain. This is particularly the case for rural populations who cohabit de facto with these armed groups, and especially for herders whose mobility leads them to move around even more in areas where these groups operate. Their presence raises questions for all the armed actors: the armed groups try to recruit them, while the DSF and the VDP suspect them of collusion with these groups. They find themselves 'between a rock and a hard place', the most common expression used in the Sahel to describe their position.

For the vast majority of the cases recorded in areas under jihadist influence, staying in the bush implies 'submission', a 'passive collaboration', simply because jihadists and herders share the same bush:

- ◆ **In eastern Burkina Faso**, out of 292 respondents, only 37 consider it possible to be neutral today. Herders have the choice between fleeing and 'passive collaboration', making neutrality almost impossible. The majority of pastoralists in Gourma province have decided to flee rather than submit. In the pastoral areas of Kabonga or Nassougou, individuals (not only herders) are generally forced to collaborate in order to survive. In Komondjari, *'herders are forced to submit to the dictates of terrorists in order to stay in the bush with their animals'*. In the Komienga, another herder confirms: *'you can be neutral, but not when you are in the bush'*. While the jihadists allow transhumant herders access to forests and grazing areas, many herders do not wish to place themselves under their protection, for fear of becoming a target of the DSF or VDP.
- ◆ **In the Tillabéri region**, 80% of the 35 herders interviewed thought it was not possible to be neutral. In Agaye, one of them sums up the situation in these terms: *'either you are with the DSF, in which case you stay in town with the DSF, or you collaborate with the jihadists and stay in the bush'*. This point of view is shared by an elder for whom *'no one can be neutral in this context. Even if deep down you are neutral, you cannot express it in concrete terms, because everything depends on the geographical position of the herder'*. For some, including a herder in Abala, some herders have been pushed into the arms of the jihadists: *'the DSF have pushed some herders to take refuge with the jihadists to save their lives. But there are herders who were not biased'*.
- ◆ **In Liptako Gourma, Mali (Ménaka, Gao) and the Burkinabè Sahel (Oudalan and Soum)**, the vast majority of herders also subscribe to this idea of impossible neutrality: submission and passive collaboration are required. A herder in Gossi sums up this situation as follows: *'Either we join, pay zakat or leave. These are the only options available'*. A herder from Inadjatafane added: *'We cannot go to the big cities, because we will not be able to survive, and faced with Daesh, thieves and the army that massacres us, we will necessarily choose the option of cohabiting with JNIM, which allows us to carry out our activity as herders with fewer problems. They only impose zakat and a few restrictive rules, and protect us from Daesh and the cattle rustlers. The main thing is not to work with the DSF and the state and you will have peace with these people'*. In Yagha and especially Seno, where the jihadist presence is still limited, some people think it is possible to be neutral.
- ◆ **In central Mali**, 75% of the herders surveyed in the Inner Delta and more than 90% of those in the exposed floodplains consider their position to be untenable between the DSF, the self-defence groups and the jihadist groups. Everywhere, the observation is the same: in order to be able to continue their activities, the herders are forced to collaborate passively with the jihadist groups who are the masters of the area. In some areas, such as Dialloubé, Ouro-Modi, Konna Fatoma and as far as Douentza, it is the jihadists who dominate the rural areas. According to a local elected official in Dialloubé (Mopti), *'if we want to keep our livestock, we have no choice but to follow what they tell us and join for the sake of joining'*.

This challenge of remaining neutral is also found in contexts where jihadists are not operating, but where community polarisation is strong and aligned with armed groups:

- ◆ **In north-western Nigeria**, remaining neutral seems to mean leaving the area, either by taking refuge in Maradi or Bangui, or by leaving the rural areas to join Nigerian cities. The alternative for those who remain is to join the bandits. In Katsina State, many herders would have chosen to contribute to the

Hausa self-defence groups in order not to be suspected of being linked to the local bandits - a choice which, while forced, still leaves them exposed to the bandits. In Sokoto and Zamfara states, pastoralists who have chosen to remain in the rural areas are accused of collusion with bandits and are subject to attacks by vigilante groups. This pushes them to join these groups in search of protection.

It remains to be seen what 'passive collaboration' means. It often forms the basis for the presumption of belonging to these groups, which leads to the stigmatisation and summary executions of these herders according to a logic that is gaining ground among national staff: 'anyone who is in jihadist-controlled areas is considered a jihadist'.

- ◆ In all the above-mentioned areas, passive collaboration means strictly complying with the jihadist rules. This is the condition required to be able to move relatively freely in the areas under their control. These rules vary from one area to another depending on the group, and herders have to adapt to changes in these rules when the area comes under the control of another group. At the very least, this includes: not collaborating with the DSF, praying according to their beliefs, cutting off trousers, letting beards grow, not smoking or chewing tobacco, not making women work, not stealing, not breeding certain animals, paying zakat, not cutting down trees, not moving around in certain specific areas, etc. For example, in the Eastern region, the territories under IS-GS control prohibit women from working in the fields, while JNIM allows it under certain conditions; similarly, the breeding of certain animals is allowed by JNIM, but prohibited by IS-GS.
- ◆ The payment of zakat is by no means optional and is an obligation that many, if not most, herders seek to escape from, sometimes at the cost of their lives. However, paying zakat does not mean that herders join these groups. In 2020, in the north of Dogondoutchi (Niger), herders returning from transhumance to Nigeria sought to escape the zakat by stationing themselves in grazing areas south of Sanam. The jihadists then raided the areas in question to demand the payment of zakat. Since 2019, several herders and officials have been executed for refusing to pay zakat, as was the case in a village in Assagaygay.
- ◆ -The adoption by herders of jihadist physical, dress and behavioural codes encourages their assimilation by the DSF. This is particularly evident in the prohibition on herders to collaborate with the DSF, which is often seen by the latter as a form of complicity with the jihadists. However, this is not the case. Non-collaboration stems as much from the herders' distrust of, or even rejection of, the DSF as from a precautionary principle on the part of the herders based on their own experiences. There is no area of jihadist insurgency where informants have not been put at risk by the authorities' lack of vigilance:
- ◆ In Southwest Niger, the majority of the herders we met refuse to collaborate with the authorities. In Douchi, an association leader described a meeting held in the summer of 2020 with the administrative authorities, where a village chief clearly explained that they could not provide them with information on jihadist groups, as they had no protection behind them.
- ◆ In Liptako Gourma, the numerous kidnappings and executions of traditional leaders and informants - most of whom come from pastoralist communities - show that the mere fact of holding a meeting with the authorities where they call on the population to collaborate is enough to put them in danger. With the fighting between the IS-GS and JNIM, these abductions have even increased on the basis of presumed allegiance to one or the other group, or to signatory armed groups. In the summer of 2020, nomads affiliated to these groups were abducted in Haroume (10km from Tessit), as a result of which the inhabitants of the area abandoned their site to find temporary shelter in Tessit, abandoning almost all their livestock.

These testimonies - which are almost unanimous - show that herders who wish to maintain their mobility have no choice but to submit to these groups. This passive collaboration does not, however, guarantee total mobility, sometimes obliging herders and farmers alike to negotiate access and use rights in areas that remain off-limits to traffic:

- ◆ In the **Burkinabè Sahel**, in Oudalan and Soum, the majority of herders agree that negotiating with them is particularly difficult and risky. But in areas where interactions between farmers and jihadists are almost inevitable, negotiation is imposed by circumstances for access to pasture - involving freedom of movement in the area - and permission to cultivate or make a field.

- ◆ In **Gourma-Rharous**, with a few exceptions, pastoralists say they keep contact with these groups to a minimum. They do not intentionally approach these groups to negotiate, negotiations are rather the result of unplanned interactions. According to a herder from Inadjatafane, *'we negotiate our movements with those who are there (JNIM), but not with them directly. We head for an area and if they give us access, we go there, otherwise we look elsewhere. If we spend 2-3 days in the same area, the jihadis come and ask us indirectly for money or a little something to pay for fuel or whatever'*. These interactions can also be family-based and then serve as the basis for negotiating access rights to a pastoral area. As one herder in N'tillit put it, *'if you have a relative who is in the IS-GS you can graze your animals even where that group is'*.

Collaboration can obviously sometimes be more than passive, depending on the individual inclination of herders to support the jihadist cause for all the reasons mentioned in this study, but also because some have no choice but to join them. In Gossi, Gourma, a herder concedes that he is unable to maintain his neutrality because it is questioned by jihadist groups. He has to choose between fleeing or joining these groups as a precaution: *'Personally, if it goes on like this and these people are not chased away from here, I will have no choice but to join them. At the moment I'm afraid they'll suspect me, because I've been in the market for two months. However, the comings and goings of a person on a regular basis attract attention and I could easily be labelled as someone who goes to give information'*.

The search for real neutrality therefore seems particularly complex, but not impossible. In the Gourma region of Mali, a herder sums up the conditions for maintaining neutrality, they are so restrictive that they constitute an adaptation strategy in themselves:

'One must go to an area that has some stability and stay there, take advantage of the pastures before they dry out, it doesn't cost much except paying for feed. With this strategy we only have to buy feed for 3 months out of 12. As for the security aspect, we just take care of our own business, we don't do much coming and going so as not to attract the attention of jihadists. Also, you should not interact with either group, unless they come to the camp to find you. Nor should you seek help from them, whatever the situation, as otherwise they will consider that you owe them. Moreover, you should not pass near their positions so as not to become a collateral victim when they clash with each other or in case of air strikes. Supplies should be bought at the market and you should have at least one month's worth of food for household needs, otherwise they will think that your trips to the market are just pretexts and that you are in fact an informer for the state or the DSF. Do not carry a smartphone either, but a simple phone that does not take photos or videos, in case you are in an area with a network... With this kind of attitude, you

are more likely to be perceived as a herder who is indifferent to what they do and even accepts their ideology'.

This last example provides several lessons for decision-makers:

- ◆ In some particularly exposed areas, such as Gourma, herders are under such pressure that they should be asked to do as little as possible: any 'suspicious' interaction with the urban environment is likely to put them in danger, whether it is a meeting with a local association, a consultation or awareness-raising meeting with a state representative or a foreign partner who is suspicious in the eyes of the armed groups. The difficulties of mobility are no longer only linked to geographical distance, but also to the fear - well-founded and objective - of the herders in the face of the paranoia of the local armed groups. Telephone and social networks are tools that can be used to limit this type of interaction, provided that the necessary precautions are taken.
- ◆ Mobility patterns, and beyond that, the daily lives of pastoralists, are so disrupted that measures to reduce the risks of being exposed to weapon bearers must be integrated into their 'adaptation strategies'. In the Gourma, the situation is paradoxically simpler than elsewhere: they only have to deal with jihadist groups, which explains why, more than elsewhere, herders seem to have devised proper adaptation strategies. Where they have to deal with jihadists, DSF and self-defence groups, survival and getting by prevail.
- ◆ Contrary to popular belief, herders try to limit interactions with jihadis as much as possible. If they sometimes prefer to move in zones occupied by the jihadists rather than those occupied by the DSF or self-defence groups, this is not necessarily proof of any complicity: it is because in the case of the former, if they respect a simple survival guide, they will be safe from violence and extortion. In 2018, during a study on the situation in the Burkina Faso Sahel, a nomadic national from this region had this very telling comparison: *'the jihadists will generally warn you once before kidnapping or eliminating you. With the DSF, they eliminate you without warning'*.

Is passively abiding by jihadist rules in places where jihadists are in control sufficient reason for arrest or elimination? The same question was asked earlier about livestock farmers who frequent markets used by jihadists - does this justify their arrest and/or elimination, often en masse? These two questions, which are specific to livestock farming, can in fact be generalised to all categories of population who, for economic or family reasons, maintain minimal links with these groups: the SIM card seller or the bread seller, for example, from whom these groups sometimes come to obtain supplies and who is simply trying to maintain a level of activity in a fairly deteriorated economic context. The herders are faced with the choice of either 'fleeing' to the city and selling or abandoning their livestock, or else submitting to preserve a degree of mobility that is essential to their activity as herders. Given the number of summary executions of civilians recorded since 2018 - and in particular of herders - national authorities seem to think that these forms of passive collaboration justify considering them as full-fledged terrorists, on the mere suspicion that they share their ideology or that they may serve as indicators for these groups. Sahelian and West African authorities should question the added value of such an approach, which consists of eliminating individuals whose close or distant relatives are certain of their innocence. This probably creates more resentment and recruitment than it actually contributes to the fight against terrorism.

4. SELF-DEFENCE: NO LONGER AN OPTION BECOME

In the Sahelian and Sahelo-Sudanese zones, almost all self-defence groups are increasingly the prerogative of sedentary communities, as previously mentioned. Parallel to this, the increasing stigmatisation of pastoralists has deprived them of any recourse to arms, placing them de facto in a vulnerable position vis-à-vis certain sedentary groups authorised to arm themselves. Almost all of them express the need to find armed protection.

In the **western Niger-Nigeria border area**, herders take up arms primarily to protect their livestock and enhance their social status:

- ◆ In **Southwest Niger**, an example recorded in Bangui (Madaoua) reflects the idea of pastoral resilience through the use of arms. In the Bangui valley, some Fulani bandit leaders come armed to the Bangui valley to forcefully buy alfalfa, millet or onion fields from farmers in order to profit from the crop residues. They even agree to the prices asked by the farmers, who get their money's worth, but if they refuse, their fields are invaded with their herds without paying. According to an official of the agricultural services, *'the fact that they want to separate farmers from their fields early on is a way of expressing their supremacy over them'*.
- ◆ In **north-western Nigeria**, most herders would agree that it is impossible to engage in herding without being armed, but they would also agree that this is not a sustainable solution, as it amounts to criminalising herding and herders. A member of a bandit group in Zamfara explains: *'In rural areas, only people with guns can keep a hundred cattle, if you don't have an AK47, you pay some groups for protection, sell your cattle or move to urban areas. Anyone who wants to herd cattle in the near future has to hold a gun, which is against the law. So we have criminalised it ourselves because as soon as the security understands that you have a gun, they will start arresting you as bandits even if you just want to protect your animals'*.

In many areas where herders are in the minority, the vast majority reject any logic supporting armed training, which would be counterproductive for them. Yet, they recognise that they must be able to respond to armed aggression:

- ◆ In the **Sikasso region**, where the herders are allochthonous, many agree that arming themselves would cause them problems with the sedentary population. Their settlement is highly dependent on the village chieftainships, with whom they seek above all to maintain good relations. A transhumant herder also shares this sentiment: *'It would inevitably lead to hostile reactions from the Dozos, and let us not forget that even though we have been here for half a century, we are still foreigners'*. The herders in Sikasso continue to give priority to seeking acceptance by the host communities: *'What is happening to us is serious with the multiple evictions. However, we manage to stand up to them by ensuring that the herds are well controlled in order to avoid damage. If the animals are well supervised, there is always the possibility of negotiating your stay. Currently, my two herds are around Lofigué. Despite constant calls to leave, I have asked the herders to stay. However, all the other herders left fearing the villagers' anger. I responded to the villagers by telling them that this was my third consecutive year in the same area without doing any damage. Why do they want to chase me away when I have nowhere to go? Behind the scenes, it is said that the village just wants to take advantage of my parking areas, since the presence of my herds has fertilized the soil. Everyone is betting that next year they will chase me away. In the meantime, I will also go back with my herds'*. Although the jihadists have already succeeded in recruiting herders in the areas of Yorosso and Koutiala, jihadists are recruiting from all communities in this area. As an example, among the 206 JNIM members released in October 2020, we find members of the katibat operating in this area, the majority of whom do not belong to nomadic communities.

Nevertheless, in most of these areas, herders are obliged to defend themselves in case of conflict with other users or to protect themselves against particular forms of rural banditry that target them specifically.

- ◆ In **Sikasso**, some confess that they reserve the right to resort to arms, but on an individual and punctual basis: *'if we are threatened'*.
- ◆ In **northern Benin**, in Alibori, Malanville, Atacora, Tanguieta, Borgou and Tchaourou, livestock herders admit that they seek to arm themselves for their security and the protection of their livestock because of the many thefts and abductions. They can find traditional hunting rifles from local blacksmiths, for example. In Malanville, a herder explains this need by the fact that farmers openly have weapons and the authorities tolerate it.

In areas where jihadist groups rule the bush, individual herders refuse to arm themselves, either for fear of the jihadists or for fear of the DSF.

- ◆ In **central Mali**, where a large majority of herders feel they cannot arm themselves, both reasons prevail. The Macina katibat has repeatedly refused until 2019 to allow its fighters to respond to community violence and organise themselves into militias around this agenda. However, under pressure from its fighting base to respond to attacks by Dana Ambassagou and the Dozos in the Inner Delta, the katibat has softened its stance and tolerated forms of self-defence in the villages. In the cercle of Koro in particular, groups of herders have structured themselves locally to form self-defence groups that are informal enough not to be visible to the DSF. Indeed, the main fear expressed by herders in this area is that embodied by the DSF, as one herder in Bankass summarised: *'the first Fulani who picks up a weapon will be eliminated and everyone will be convinced that he is a jihadist'*. The more formal self-defence initiatives in central Mali are mainly political ventures (see box).

SELF-DEFENCE EXPERIENCES AMONG NOMADIC COMMUNITIES IN THE SAHEL

There have been some exceptions in the Sahel-Saharan region where self-defence groups from nomadic communities have been able to organise themselves. States have authorised or even encouraged them for instrumental purposes in order to counter other groups. In Mali, since the 1990s, the policy of 'divide and rule' has prevailed in the management of Tuareg rebellions, where noble groups or former vassals are supported in order to better weaken the rebel groups. A Fulani armed group (Ganda Izo) has also been created by the government to counter these movements. In Niger, Arab militias were supported in the 1990s to counter Touareg and Toubou rebellions in the Tassara area, but also in Diffa. More recently, Fulani self-defence groups have been created and authorised in Niger, in Tillabéri in the early 2000s and in Diffa, very briefly in 2016, before the state relented.

In central Mali since 2016, similar attempts to create self-defence groups to support political agendas have emerged without much success. Former militiamen or political entrepreneurs such as Hama Founé or Sekou Boly have formed 'self-defence groups' whose unofficial agenda seems to be more about benefiting from the rents of the Disarmament-Demobilisation-Reinsertion (DDR) process than about defending their community.

In conclusion, nomads are only allowed to organise themselves into self-defence groups when it serves a commercial or counter-insurgency agenda, against rebel or terrorist groups.

- ◆ In the **Tillabéri region**, herders find themselves once again *'between a rock and a hard place'*. They know that the jihadists will not let them arm themselves, for they would then immediately be suspected of doing so to oppose them. The same logic prevails with the DSF, for whom any herder carrying a weapon without the endorsement or approval of the state is de facto suspected of belonging to the jihadists.
- ◆ In the **eastern region**, in the Gourma as well as in the Tapoa, none of the herders consider the possibility of arming themselves, except by joining existing groups (Koglweogos) or by trying to create a VDP group, as was the case in one commune where the request to create a group was never followed up. Many herders confess that the situation of injustice and the many threats they face push them to take up arms, but faced with the combined threat of jihadists, VDPs and DSF, this is simply impossible for them. According to an elected official in the region, *'if we do this, we are sure to be killed by one of these groups who will see us allied with the others'*.

- ◆ In **Gourma-Rharous**, herders are also unable to arm themselves individually for fear of the jihadists. A herder in Gossi explains: *'We don't dare to do that anymore. Before it was possible, like when we used to do it against thieves, but now, if you arm yourself it will be against whom? JNIM? Impossible, you will be killed the same day you are approached to join the group'*. Another in Intahaka agrees: *'we used to arm ourselves when the conflict was only about the rebellion, but since these people who are stronger than us came, we just want to hide and we don't want trouble'*.

V. AN UNCERTAIN FUTURE

Conflicts between farmers and herders, the decapitalization of herders, their feeling of being stigmatized and victims of violence all raise questions about the future of pastoralist livestock farming. Far from being a simple mode of production, for nomadic populations livestock farming is a way of life and the basis of their culture. Thinking about change therefore requires these populations to rethink their lives, their culture, their education and training model and that of their children. During the course of our study, one of the questions we asked the herders was precisely how they envision their future and that of herding in general. The vast majority of them said they were worried, and some did not hesitate to talk about the death of livestock farming. Reasons for hope come from their willingness to adapt, particularly with a view to less extensive, sometimes even sedentary, livestock farming. However, a number of farmers say they are resolutely attached to transhumant livestock rearing, and there is hardly any question for the majority of respondents of having to choose between one or the other mode of production, even if the situation forces them to do so. Moreover, their willingness to change is conditional on their being supported by the authorities, the POs and their partners. A livestock production model cannot be decreed, but is based on preconditions that favour the desired changes. The last question, which is crucial for the future of livestock breeding in the Sahel, is that of the aspirations of young people with regard to livestock breeding in the context of the "generational divide" that affects the Sahel. Livestock breeding is a reflection of Sahelian society, confronted with a generational gap between the aspirations of the elders and those of their children, who are often very different and far removed from the world of livestock breeding. Far from necessarily being a threat to livestock farming, these new aspirations - turned towards the city, trade, a more sedentary lifestyle - can be an opportunity to promote changes within the livestock farming world. This thirst for change can also be satisfied by joining armed groups, particularly jihadist groups, which would allow them to overthrow the patriarchal model of society that hinders social mobility and to free themselves from the rules of a mode of governance that is often considered unjust. By taking up arms, they take power.

1. HERDERS' PERCEPTION OF THEIR FUTURE AND THE FUTURE OF LIVESTOCK FARMING

The perception that Sahelian livestock farmers have of the future varies from one area to another according to the constraints and threats that weigh on their activity. Unsurprisingly, the greater the insecurity, the more livestock farmers question their future.

- ◆ **In areas where insecurity is prevalent**, pastoralists are particularly worried, but the dominant option is not so much to leave pastoralism as to diversify risks by investing in other modes of production.

In the regions of Gao, Ménaka and Gourma-Rharous, the future of pastoralism is seen as bleak and hypothetical by all communities. In Ansongo, most herders are very worried and show no optimism. In Ménaka, herders share the same pessimism, believing in particular *that 'any movement of animals over long distances involves risks'*. In Gourma, opinions are divided, even if the majority of herders say they are resigned: *'our activity, if we continue at this rate, will eventually disappear'*, says a herder from Gossi, *'we will not be able to survive'*. A second one in the same vein: *'If we go on like this for two more years, we will leave our business and leave our farming areas for good. Some of us will end up becoming bandits, others will go to the city and do business, or even end up as jihadists'*. Yet some herders put things into perspective and have more confidence in the future: in Inadjatafane, a herder believes that *'herding will remain and all these problems will disappear: we will stop making things difficult for*

ourselves, we will obey whoever comes to dominate us, and eventually he will leave, but we will not'. Another agrees: 'This is not our first time. In 1991 the Malian army did worse than the jihadists, but we survived it'. In Ménaka, herders from the Arab community say that they are ready to consider more sedentary forms of livestock rearing, but that they are waiting for the conditions for watering, feeding and treating the animals to be created first.

In the **Burkinabè Sahel**, pessimism prevails, but livestock farmers continue to believe in livestock farming. In **Oudalan**, 65% remain confident in the future of livestock farming, which most people live off, with the exception of Gorom-Gorom and Markoye, which are more affected by insecurity, and where livestock farmers note that livestock farming is disappearing. In **Soum**, only 34% consider that livestock farming has a future, and only on the condition that they adapt or secure the area. In **Seno province**, where 62.5% of livestock keepers say they are confident about the future of livestock keeping in the Sahel, the populations of Bani, Sempelga and Seytenga are much more confident about the future than those of Dori and Gorgadji. In **Yagha**, livestock farmers are more worried in Mansila than in Tankougounadié and Titabé where the situation is not as bad. In view of the current security situation, many herders have expressed the need to review and readapt their activities if they want to continue to exist. Many rely on semi-transhumant herding, without long journeys and in a limited space. For others, the children must be trained in other areas of activity such as masonry, carpentry, mechanics and welding, so as not to be left without prospects. Finally, some advise the creation of farms dedicated to animal husbandry, which would allow the herders to support their families.

"The situation has changed, because before you had to have a large herd and you were respected, but today the larger your herd, the more vulnerable you are or the target of thugs, the VDP, the DSF and the jihadists."

A herder in Gorgadji (Seno)

In **central Mali**, opinions are divided. People in the flooded area are more optimistic than those in the exposed land area. This may be partly due to the fact that violence is less pronounced in the flooded area, and that herders are paradoxically protected by the arrival of the Macina katibat. Most of them do not see their future outside livestock farming, even if some have left the area to go to regions offering more economic opportunities or to countries in the sub-region (Mauritania, Senegal, Ivory Coast). In the exposed land area, both agro-pastoralists and livestock farmers are worried about the future. While most show a desire to continue in livestock farming, a certain number are unable to project themselves and imagine what their future will be like. The trend that emerges is the need to reconstitute stolen livestock and to increase cattle, sheep and goat fattening activities.

In **eastern Burkina Faso**, the farmers interviewed are not confident about the future of livestock farming, but there are nuances depending on the province. In Fada, it is even believed that if nothing is done in the near future, livestock farming could disappear and that many farmers will turn to commercial activities. In Gourma province, livestock farmers in Fada and Potiamanga fear the imminent disappearance of livestock farming, are very negative about the future of transhumant livestock farming and are therefore seeking to adapt. In Fada, the diversification of their activities is in agriculture and trade. In Potiamanga, many people settle down and leave part of their herd in transhumance. In Nassougou, internally displaced women express the wish to settle down but say they are powerless because of the insecurity. Some are unable to project themselves because of the precariousness of their current status: *'We are not even at home, we cannot think about the future'*. In the Tapoa, where most livestock farming is transhumant, the majority do not intend to give up this mode of production: *'It has a future and it is a system that suits us, because it is adapted to our conditions, but it is currently facing more difficulties because of insecurity'*. Several farmers say they want to "find their place" even "with the reluctance of the authorities". One of them goes further: *'we intend to organise ourselves into a union of herders with more solidarity, hoping to change things'*.

In **north-western Nigeria**, the majority of herders feel that livestock rearing is under threat, but they do not want to abandon it. A traditional leader in Sokoto puts it this way: *'Even in the worst part of Sokoto, which is hit by banditry, such as Isah and Sabon Birni, the young herdsmen stick to herding, including seven of my children in Wamakko'*. Some even justify taking up arms by the need to protect their area and their capital, namely the animals. While many justify it, others worry about the future, like this herder in Sokoto: *'Livestock farming is not what it used to be and it can never be what it used to be. What a herder feared in the past was wild animals, but today our biggest threat is in the form of humans, and in fact our fellow herders who take up arms'*.

- ◆ **In areas less exposed to insecurity**, prospects for the future are generally more positive, even if there is still a lot of concern. They are more related to the evolution of the natural environment, since the security factor remains secondary. In these areas, where herders are more or less sedentary, transhumant herding is perceived by many herders as doomed to disappear, even if the transhumants interviewed say they are determined to keep this mode of production:

In the Sikasso region, 65% of herders believe that livestock farming has a future and rely on their ability to adapt to overcome the growing difficulties. 'We will go with our cattle wherever there is welfare,' says the leader of a cooperative. Some believe that the future of transhumant livestock farming lies in the hands of the ECOWAS sub-regional authorities, who must ensure the free movement and living conditions of transhumant herders. 'Herds are also goods, just like any other product that passes freely between states', explained a leader of Danderesso. Several herders criticised ECOWAS for doing nothing about the ban on transhumance in Nigeria and Benin, and believe that monitoring and sanction mechanisms should be put in place against border agents or non-compliant states. Transhumant herders expect more from the state and consider that decision-makers should take the issue of livestock farming seriously, as they do with agriculture, for example with the Malian Company for the Development of Textiles (CMDT), which trains, supervises and supports cotton producers. Other transhumant herders have settled down and move their herds between their permanent camp and the seasonal stabling areas, while their parents have lactating cows (bendi or ndjaaki in Foulfouldé) at their disposal in the camp. Some small and medium-sized herders continue to move with their families, especially from February to August in the Kléla area.

In the three regions of **western Burkina Faso**, herders agree that transhumant herding is coming to an end. "We know that this type of livestock farming will disappear, but we don't yet know when," says a herder in the Cascades region, where 60% of herders share this sentiment. **In the Hauts-Bassins and Boucle du Mouhoun regions**, some consider that the future of transhumant and semi-transhumant livestock farming lies in the splitting up of the herd because herders are now surrounded by fields, particularly in the Kossi region, where, at this rate, according to some, even farmers will no longer have space to graze their plough oxen. In the Hauts-Bassins, some people are optimistic based on the new relationships forged with farmers in the communes of Banzon, Koumbia and Karangasso-Vigué, where they have obtained new guarding contracts with farmers in return for the use of crop residues. These forms of solidarity provide some confidence in the future of the sector.

Consideration about the future of livestock and herders must take into account the low level of schooling and vocational training among young pastoralists. This reality echoes the lack of adaptation of schooling and vocational training services in all Sahelian countries, the only innovative initiatives being the work of pilot or experimental development projects that are not currently anchored in any administrative perspective that takes into account the specificities of the pastoral world. The case of the PREPP (Regional Programme for the Education/Training of Pastoral Populations in Cross-Border Areas) deserves particular mention¹²². This educational exclusion maintains the idea of pastoral populations living on the fringes of the system, whereas it is partly this system that is exclusionary.

¹²² See on this subject FAO/IRAM, "Jeunes pastteurs en ville au Burkina Faso", 2020.

2. YOUTH AT ODDS WITH LIVESTOCK FARMING AND ELDERLY?

YOUTH AND LIVESTOCK: AN UNCERTAIN FUTURE

The main trend emerging from the opinions expressed is that of a youth moving away from livestock farming, out of spite, because of the insecurity and/or the many hassles that this activity now symbolises. This departure from livestock farming is often - but not always - against the advice of parents and is reflected in a certain distrust of parental authority, which some see as an intergenerational divide, which is only partially verified in this study. The abandonment of livestock farming is often neither complete nor definitive and, for many young people, this sector still remains the only possible horizon. It is much more the result of a desire to diversify risks and sources of income. Moreover, this move does not necessarily call into question family solidarity, as parents' herds sometimes finance their projects and vice versa. This testimony from a herder in Bermo (Maradi) illustrates this reality: *'In my family, four people have left for Nigeria and Agadez. They work on onion farms, on gold mining sites, in tea sales and in herding. They own animals in the family herd and send between 80,000 and 150,000 CFA francs each year to buy and maintain them. The income from these activities is a means of securing families and herds, as it helps to limit sales for cash needs during the lean season'*.

There is a general trend towards individualisation and emancipation of young herders from the traditional activity of transhumance and from their parents' trajectory. They are moving away from their families and rural areas to cities, which at least offer new work prospects, but which also contribute to a certain intergenerational divide. Nevertheless, when leaving rural areas, young people do not systematically detach themselves from livestock activities and are sometimes engaged in sedentary livestock activities, as in western Burkina Faso around Bobo-Dioulasso. A study on Burkina Faso and Chad shows that the income from the exodus is essentially reinvested in livestock farming via transfers to the family¹²³. For others, this urban migration is only temporary, until the situation improves and they can resume livestock activities. Sometimes, they move away by taking less legal routes. Still, these young people do not completely break their ties with their village of origin. They often continue to support their families financially (and therefore livestock rearing, which is their main activity) and even act as a bridge between the countryside and urban areas, as observed around Sikasso and in western Burkina Faso.

In both insurgency and stable areas, the trend is fairly uniform. It reflects the fact that the desire to leave livestock farming is not only linked to the security situation, but also to the pastoral crisis. The difficulties it causes on a daily basis mean that young people no longer plan to work in this sector. In conflict zones, this exit appears to be more radical than in stable zones, where herders are more likely to think about changing the herding model, which is again due to the agro-ecological differences between these zones. The other major difference between these zones is that in conflict zones, the exit from livestock farming is sometimes achieved by joining armed groups, which remains marginal in stable zones, with the exception of banditry. This section focuses mainly on the perception of the future of those who have not taken up arms.

◆ **In Central Mali, in the Inner Delta,** young herders have a different perception of things than their elders, as most are thinking of leaving the profession for other, more lucrative activities. The security situation contributes a lot to this state of mind, as this herder from a village in Tenenkou says: 'I want to leave this profession because I am afraid for my life. Many of my fellow herders have been arrested and murdered by the military not because they joined radical groups, but rather because they are Fulani and herders'. Many young Fulani herders are now involved in the "bricole" trade (selling glasses, handkerchiefs, nail clippers, etc.), and sometimes in electronic products. This departure from livestock farming does not always worry the elders, it sometimes reassures them. In view of the context, some are delighted, or even encourage their children to leave. For example, in Karéri, a woman sent her only son to Bamako to drive other people's animals, ready to give up the management of his cattle to protect him. He returned once peace was achieved in the area in 2019. However, not all young people agree with leaving the cattle business. One of them said: *'All I can do in life is the job of a shepherd and I hope to pass*

¹²³ FAO/IRAM, « Jeunes pasteurs en ville : Accompagner l'insertion économique et sociale des jeunes pasteurs », 2020.

it on to my children and grandchildren, it is the only job I know and I will not leave it for anything in the world. With the insecurity in the area, it is very hard, but I will overcome this crisis'. The exit from livestock farming is often only partial. Herders often end up reinvesting in the same sector, within the family capital or by building up a new herd. Moreover, conversion also takes place within the livestock sector, by switching to the livestock trade, the sale of veterinary products or the trade of tiogal herder (live export), that of cattle herder on ranches/farms in the towns and suburbs or that of herder of other people's herds as far as Ivory Coast. This internal reconversion is explained by the fact that herder is the only profession they know how to practice.

- ◆ In **eastern Burkina Faso**, young people agree with their parents that transhumant herding is threatened with extinction, which would have a serious impact on the pastoralist community - particularly the Fulani - as it is the best-known system and the one most suited to their socio-economic conditions. It is quite clear that young people wish to remain in pastoralism, but by modernising part of their herd, and diversifying into agriculture as many already do. They ask for support from the authorities to move towards more intensive forms of farming. For a majority, dairy intensification with the stabling of suckler cows and milk collection is a prospect for securing their livestock feed, but also for increasing their income and the added value of their animal production.
- ◆ In all provinces of the **Burkinabè Sahel**, young people are losing interest in animal husbandry, which is associated with problems. In most communes, young people express the wish to go to town and engage in commercial or gold panning activities, depending on the area, not to mention those who join armed groups as fighters. As an old sage from Falagountou notes, *'young people no longer want to stay in the bush, let alone sacrifice themselves for the animals as their parents and great grandparents did'*. That said, in Bani and Seytenga in particular, some people only know about livestock farming, and they end up gradually taking it up as an alternative. Women are particularly worried about this 'desertion' of young people, as they are attached to livestock farming and are therefore increasingly left to their own devices, despite the occasional support of their daughters.
- ◆ In **Gourma-Rharous**, a large proportion of the young people interviewed conditioned the future of livestock farming on security, arguing that they could return to this activity, but only if security is restored. The current horizon for young people is less in livestock farming than in gold panning, given the discovery of gold in the area in 2019. A young herder from Inadjatafane sees pastoralism as an activity to be carried out 'in retirement' after having saved all his life by buying cattle: *'unlike our elders who use it as a means of subsistence, we will only be able to buy cattle and set up a business when we no longer have the strength to work. And by then perhaps there will be security in our areas'*. The trajectory of another young herder sums up the current trend: *'I gave up everything, I sold my animals without keeping anything, not even a goat. I opened a shop with part of the money and I financed my younger brother's gold panning business with the rest, and it's going well - now we only fear the small bandits'*.

"We don't want pastoralism anymore because it is useless. Our parents and grandparents did it for centuries, and for what? They are still the most backward, the most stigmatised and the most underestimated people, and when there is a war, they are the ones who suffer most. So what is the point of staying in this business?"

A youth in Gossi.

- ◆ In **north-western Nigeria**, the majority of young people are divided between those who have taken up arms, those who make a living from herding under the protection of the former and those who refuse to take up arms. The young herders are the fighting core of the bandit and vigilante groups, both to defend livestock in their eyes, but also paradoxically to aggravate the pastoral crisis or turn away from

it by turning to crime. A notable from Zamfara sums up the situation as follows: *'Young Fulani are no longer interested in livestock rearing, they leave the herds with the elderly at home and form militias when they have finished, they will return home with their herds'*. A perception survey of 96 young people reveals that 65% are said to have joined armed groups for economic reasons (partly due to the decapitalization of their families) and 34% to seek justice. Many young people who did not join these groups left the region to go to the cities and work, mainly in trade.

- ◆ In the **north of Togo**, young people are uncertain about the future and many have already switched occupations. Those who give up are in the minority, but this trend will increase in view of the difficulties faced by herders. They also mention the mistreatment suffered by herders, particularly Fulani, leading young people to sell their livestock and abandon livestock rearing in favour of other activities such as trade. The young people are optimistic about ranching and dairy intensification with the stabling of suckler cows and milk collection. These activities could represent prospects for securing their livestock feed. The expectations formulated by the youth are the creation of pastoral spaces and the creation of pastoral hydraulic infrastructures.
- ◆ In **northern Benin**, the vast majority of herders (small, medium and large) are unanimous in saying that transhumant and semi-transhumant livestock farming have an uncertain future for future generations. On the other hand, they see 'modern', sedentary livestock farming as a prospect to be promoted. Ranching and the stabling of dairy cows are viewed positively. The expatriation of herders, some of whom are sedentary, is increasing over time. Some of them marry native women in order to settle down or to be freer in their movements so as to be able to cross borders fraudulently, without paying customs duties: this is a way of forming cross-border family networks. Moreover, the elders see many young people turning away from livestock farming in favour of other activities such as trade, but also banditry (theft, robbery, kidnapping). Young people are concerned about the deterioration of the historical links of interdependence between farmers and herders and expect state leaders to provide more protection and support for livestock, particularly in the context of the implementation of agricultural projects that increase their marginalisation.
- ◆ In the **Great West of Burkina Faso**, the feelings of young people are quite similar to those of their elders. They believe less and less in transhumance. In the **Cascades region**, land insecurity has been compounded by physical insecurity due to the stigmatisation of herders and traders, especially Fulani. Breaking away from transhumant livestock farming is seen here as a condition for living peacefully locally. In the **Hauts-Bassins**, young herders consider that the end of mobile herding began about ten years ago with the arrival of agricultural migrants in the Karangasso-Vigué and Bama areas. Here too, the move away from this type of farming seems to be the result of resignation in the face of the 'unfair payment of fines', in connection with damage to the fields or tree pruning. In the **Boucle du Mouhoun**, even in livestock farming areas such as Barani, young people seem to have accepted the idea of abandoning mobile livestock farming.

In these three regions, the trajectories of youths are imposed by circumstances, such as the dilapidation of family inheritance, the loss of animals or the disappearance of pastoral land. These trajectories take three main directions. Some project themselves into 'modernised' livestock farming, materialised by the interest in farms, fattening activities, smaller herds and only a part of which goes on transhumance. Others, who are increasingly numerous, are switching to agro-pastoralism, following the example of certain young herders from Niangologo who have gone to sell their livestock in Ivory Coast to devote themselves to tree farming. In Madiasso, some herders have successfully converted to cotton production, while at the same time continuing mobile herding, but over short distances (100 km) and with few animals. In the Boucle du Mouhoun, various cereal crops, including sesame, attract herders. Finally, some young people leave the agro-pastoral world to take up trade, gold panning or related jobs such as grinding, metal cleaning, negotiation or brokerage. Initially a simple income supplement, this activity is gradually becoming a main activity, distancing herders from livestock farming.

- ◆ In **Southwest Niger**, young people believe pastoral livestock farming is at risk of disappearing if the consequences of the two crises presented in this study are not tackled by the authorities. According to a young transhumant herder we met in the pastoral zone of Bermo, *'the young are the first targets. Today, we cannot even go to certain rangelands in the south of Maradi, let alone to Nigeria. Access to the market is synonymous with frustration. We are called bandits, jihadists and thieves. Many young people have stopped going to the market and*

to Hausa villages for fear of being called bandits. We try not to respond to the provocations of the Hausa who call us bandits. They don't see the other communities including the Hausa who are also involved in banditry. We let the old people go to the market, because they are less accused of participating in banditry than the young people'.

- ◆ Many young people have already abandoned livestock farming for other economic activities in urban centres in Niger, Nigeria and other countries in the sub-region. This departure is often misunderstood by parents, who sometimes present it as an adaptation strategy when faced with crises, whereas, in fact, it increasingly seems to be more of a long-term reconversion for young people. Taking up arms appears more and more to be a preferred path.
- ◆ **In the Sikasso region**, young people's opinions are divided. Some do not see any obstacle to continuing pastoralism, but others think that pastoralism is in its twilight years with the cumulative crises and the stigmatisation of the Fulani. The majority of the young people interviewed think that they will remain in livestock farming, as they cannot envisage their future any other way. *'Throughout my family's history, we have only prospered in this field. My future and that of my family is linked to cattle,'* explains one of them. These pastoralists put the crises into perspective and believe in their resilience: *'All societies go through difficulties and it is our turn. This period will pass and the herders will have a great future ahead of them'.* As elsewhere, young people are increasingly becoming agro-pastoralists, livestock traders or shopkeepers. Among those who have successfully converted, many attract their brothers, cousins and neighbours from the village, who then desert the rural areas, sometimes never to return. This generalisation of agro-pastoralism is seen as beneficial to social cohesion in the area. A herder explains: *'If a herder dares to destroy a farmer's field, the farmer may in turn lead his animals into the herder's field'.* Shepherds and farmers are members of the same associations and cooperatives (cotton, milk, meat producers, etc.), which helps to pacify their relations. However, this view is far from dominant and many herders still feel that they are considered 'non-natives', and this could be exacerbated by the growing insecurity in the Sikasso region.

A 'GENERATIONAL DIVIDE' AMONG HERDERS?

The Sahel is facing a social mobility crisis in which young people - who account for 50% of the population - are largely excluded from access to employment in a saturated and very narrow formal market. Livestock farming is no exception to this reality, raising the question of an intergenerational divide: young people often accuse their elders of being responsible for this situation and are inclined to follow divergent trajectories, sometimes breaking with parental authority. This problem - which is not linked to the security crisis, but which the latter may have amplified - was addressed in the Sahel. The fact that some young people in the Sahel are taking up arms may partly illustrate such a divide, but if the taking up of arms reflects an individual empowerment of herders, it is not necessarily against their parents. Although the expression 'generational divide' is used by some respondents and many share this idea, the study highlights above all a crisis of authority and a desire for social and economic emancipation, without necessarily breaking off relations with their elders.

Generally speaking, the urban migration of pastoral youth could contribute to a better defence of pastoral interests, as these youth have access to the urban education system and to the networks of power and circles of influence concentrated in the cities. The profusion of pastoral civil society organisations formed by urbanised young people and working to improve the defence of pastoral interests is evidence of this reality¹²⁴. This connected youth also constitutes an intermediary link for the pastoral populations who have remained in rural areas. An elderly herder from Danderesso explains that the presence of the younger generation in urban centres facilitates access to health care for rural people. An example is the mother of a transhumant who was transported from Samorogouan (Burkina Faso) to Bamako to treat her breast cancer, facilitated by the presence of a nephew of this woman in Kati who runs a shop there.

- ◆ **In the Gao region**, the intergenerational break seems to be a reality that some herders attribute to Western influence, with the attraction of the consumer society and the search for easy money. This would contribute to turning young people away from livestock rearing, which is perceived as less rewarding and more difficult because of insecurity (theft of livestock) and drought. Elders interviewed in Tessit deplore the fact that young people seek to sell livestock to invest in trade or entrepreneurship.

¹²⁴ This observation has been made for Burkina Faso in particular. See FAO/WFP, op. cit.

The attraction to armed groups since 2012 and, more recently, the discovery of gold panning sites have accentuated the migration out of livestock and with it, the rural exodus as young people rarely or never return to the bush. A herder from N'tillit considers this trajectory to be irremediable: *'Whatever happens, we are working to continue our activity, but one thing is certain: future generations in the Gourma will abandon it. The young people are already attracted to the towns, if on top of that they can no longer be safe here, then they will have one more reason to hate the Gourma'*.

- ◆ In **Mali's Gourma**, the elders consider that young people have largely deserted livestock farming, whether to join armed groups, bandits, traffickers or jihadists, or to move to the cities. For some, like one herder in Gossi, there is no way back: *'I don't think things will improve for a decade, because young people who have tasted easy money with banditry will never be herders, herding is not for someone who wants the easy way out, it is an activity that requires a lot of patience'*.
- ◆ In the **Burkinabè Sahel**, there is indeed a gap between the generations that has been created or is gradually taking hold. This can be seen in the differences in the management of the herd, a common asset on which all family members want their share and seek first and foremost to sell the animals to leave the livestock farming. Getting away from the bush and escaping cattle theft is a growing concern for young people. In Soum and Oudalan, the armed groups represent a new model that is more attractive than livestock rearing, as an elder from the commune of Diguel recalls: *'All those who have joined the armed groups are young people, we must not forget that'*. In the Oudalan, the fact that the children of herders abandon their herds to join jihadist groups is seen in the same way, as these acts are carried out without the knowledge of parents who often do not espouse the ideology or practices of these groups. In the Soum, an elder in the commune of Baraboulé believes that their authority over their children has long since been lost: *'the excessive freedom granted to children has led to them joining armed groups, with the consequences that we already know'*. Here again, emancipation does not necessarily mean breaking away: young people who go into trade or gold panning often help their families by providing financial support to those who remain in the cattle industry.
- ◆ In the **Great West of Burkina Faso**, this "generational divide" is quite noticeable. In the **Cascades** region, the break-up of families, the sale of animals or investments by children without consultation with the heads of the farms are examples of this. The health situation since 2020 has also led to conversions: two young shepherds we met in Bobo who used to transport livestock from Ferkessédougou and Doropo were deprived of income during the period of confinement and converted to activities linked to the trade in small ruminants. The same is true in the **Hauts-Bassins**, where the elders say they are losing control over the youth. Transhumance and marriage used to guarantee a certain link, where modernity would reinforce the distance: many young people want, for example, to go to school, to join the civil service and then keep the livestock as a kind of savings by hiring other herders to look after them. In the **Boucle de Mouhoun**, the old heads of family farms also say that they have lost their authority over young people, for example because the herders have fled from the areas of agricultural migration or are breaking the rules against settling in the classified forests and resorting to corruption. Again, these forms of emancipation and empowerment do not systematically indicate a 'break' with elders.
- ◆ In **Sikasso**, the manifestations of this emancipation or rupture are the same. An old herder from Kadiolo compares the time of his youth, when *'parents decided and they did what they wanted, whereas today it is different: we decide with our children but they do what they want with the collective decision. Sometimes they make their own choice and we can only agree to it at the risk of seeing them rebel'*. A farmer we talked to had the same view about young Fulani herders who are now financially independent because they have their own herd or a large number of cattle in the family herd. According to him, *'they are difficult to control because they gain autonomy very early on. It is now impossible for parents to blackmail them to keep them because they have no control over them'*. As elsewhere, the example of the individual sale of cattle comes up: *'no child obeys his father anymore when it comes to the sale of cattle'*, says a herder. For the parents, the cattle must be sold to meet the family's needs, whereas the young people now want to satisfy multiple individual needs. These trajectories remain very precarious and a return to livestock farming is sometimes necessary: a young man who sold a few head of cattle to set up a shop in town without his father's consent returned empty-handed two years later and now accompanies the animals on transhumance in the RCI.
- ◆ In the **north of Ivory Coast**, the divide is not perceived as new. However, the refusal to drive herds, the negligence in their management, and the conflicts surrounding the exploitation of the herd are

increasing according to most elders. Young herders who have converted argue that selling motorbikes, opening shops or gold panning are more profitable and less risky than livestock activities. For many of the heads of households we spoke to, today's young people *'don't want to make any effort'* to keep their herds; whereas the young people feel that they can no longer do what used to be done because they no longer see livestock farming in a positive light. The need to maintain good relations with the host communities forces them to move away from transhumant herding, which they feel contributes to their stigmatisation. Some of the young people we spoke to in Sidéradouguou and Niangologo were thinking of moving to the outskirts of Banfora to set up dairy farms.

- ◆ **In the north of Benin, emancipation and empowerment dynamics similar to those in other areas emerged from the study.** The pastoral crisis and the youth's attraction to the towns mean that the elders are losing their authority over the young. This is demonstrated by young people's refusal to drive their herds into grazing areas or by their opposition to early and/or forced marriages, and, more generally, according to the elders, by their abandonment of customs and traditions.

3. FUTURE LIVESTOCK REARING PRACTICES

The majority of herders seem to be concerned about changing their production methods. In the Sahelian zone, transhumant herding remains the norm, but a large number of herders wish to limit their mobility and move closer to the towns in order to move towards "semi-transhumant" herding. However, there is considerable resistance to more intensive forms of livestock rearing for both agro-ecological and security reasons. In the different areas of the Liptako Gourma, several herders fear that even partial sedentarisation of their herds will overexpose them to attacks and theft. According to a herder in Soum, 'when you are constantly on the move, you are more protected'. A herder from Tessit agrees: *'With stabling you will be fixed in one place, so they will come and get supplies easily. If you continue to be nomadic, they may be afraid to expose themselves by trying to get to you, even if the shepherd will continue to fool you and steal your livestock by telling you that jihadists and petty thieves have robbed him. On the other hand, the reorientation of transhumance tracks is not as easy, because the tracks are built around water points and grazing areas and all these areas are known to these people'*. In the wetter areas, the majority of those interviewed were keen to move towards a 'modern' form of livestock farming. Some agro-pastoralists who have invested in dairies appropriate these terms and willingly call themselves 'modern' as opposed to transhumant herders, who are presented as an archaic form of farming.

- ◆ **In eastern Burkina**, opinions are very divided depending on the area. In Gourma province, the people interviewed - particularly in Potiamanga and Nassougou - were unanimous in saying that sedentary livestock rearing is a prospect, which for some is almost a relief. But other herders in Fada N'Gourma are mostly against it. In the Tapoa, intensive livestock farming and ranching are mostly rejected, but even if the transhumant herders say they are willing - and some have even started - intensification projects to complement transhumant livestock farming by dividing the herds into two: a sedentary herd composed of suckler cows and their calves (productive core) and a transhumant herd (reproductive core), led or not with other herds by shepherds, composed of dry cows and males.
- ◆ **In the Burkinabè Sahel**, the herders interviewed generally view intensive livestock farming as a possible alternative, although some in the areas bordering Mali, in the north of the Soum and Oudalan (Markoye, Gorom-Gorom), believe that herders can continue to move, provided that there is more security for people and animals. However, even farmers who are interested and open to moving towards more intensive livestock farming remain wary. In Seytenga, one of them wonders: *'The herders need guidance, but we just wonder if there is enough space in our communes to accommodate this type of livestock farming, given that our pastoral areas are already being eaten away every year'*. Fears of land speculation, anarchic occupation of pastoral areas by new herders who are not from the area, and the unsuitability of the animals for this type of breeding create many reservations. All expect the state and its partners to provide sufficient support to move in this direction.
- ◆ **In central Mali**, opinions are rather mixed. In the Inner Delta, in the locality of Tenenkou, sedentary livestock farming is viewed with suspicion - particularly by small-scale livestock farmers - because it is considered to be far too expensive. In the exposed floodplains zone, a majority of livestock keepers would like to move towards intensive livestock rearing, but they all expect to receive some support, without which they will not be able to move to this type of production: fodder crops need to be protected; the supply chains need to be developed; livestock feed and animal health need to be secured.

- ◆ In the **Gao region**, most livestock farmers feel that moving animals over long distances involves risks that many are still willing to take. Sedentary livestock keeping is seen as an alternative, but most say that the agro-ecological, economic and security conditions are not in place. The herders seem to be quite divided on this issue: some of the Daoussahak herders interviewed think that even if they are sedentary, they will manage to continue herding. Others consider that transhumant livestock farming is the most suitable production method in the face of climate change.
- ◆ In **Gourma-Rharous**, there is no consensus on how to proceed, because each mode of production is exposed to insecurity. Some consider that insecurity threatens transhumant livestock farming more than others: *'Semi-transhumant livestock farming will be able to survive this situation of insecurity because there is not much distance to cover and it can easily be practised, while transhumant livestock farming will not survive unless armed terrorist groups and brigands disappear completely'*. However, sedentarisation raises many reservations: *'to practise it you need to have the means to do so, because if the animals do not transhume it is impossible for them to survive. You have to have the means to buy cattle feed'*. In Gossi and Intahaka, several farmers have resolved to do so, but feel that the current situation is not sustainable: *'I have been using this strategy for four years, but it is difficult and less productive, because I do not have enough money,'* they said. *'This is what we do since we are prevented from venturing too far - it is almost sedentary. Otherwise, sedentarisation itself is not feasible, except for the owners of thousands of head who can always buy cattle feed'*.
- ◆ In **Tillabéri**, livestock farmers are divided between those who want to move closer to the cities and move towards intensive models, and those who believe that this mode of production is not suitable. One herder said: *'With this phenomenon of climate change, transhumance is the most widely used resilient technique. But the persecution of young herders by the DSF has ruined the households of pastoralists to the point where the activity risks collapsing if no measures are taken '*.

In more humid areas, the willingness of pastoralists to move towards a more intensive mode of production - very often in combination with sending some animals on transhumance - may coincide with the inclination of Sahelian and West African states to openly support intensive livestock production. In Nigeria, Togo and Ghana, policies are openly moving towards forms of ranching, while Benin is blocking transhumance and is also preparing to set up experimental sedentary villages. Ivory Coast has also opted to reduce the movement of livestock (especially live animals for trade) through its law on pastoral mobility. This clear inclination of the authorities towards a more intensive form of livestock rearing can be both an opportunity and a risk for livestock rearing: an opportunity first of all because this orientation seems to meet the interest of a large number of livestock farmers, but also a risk because it should not be at the expense of transhumant livestock rearing.

Public policies on livestock should not be unidirectional but (National Plan for Sustainable Land Management) should reflect the complementarity of the different livestock systems. This should be done by preserving transhumant livestock farming, which is the most adapted to the Saharan and Sahelian agro-ecological systems, characterised by aridity. Not all livestock farmers in these areas are ready to move towards more intensive livestock farming, and those who are, are waiting for support from the authorities. Based on recent research on the benefits of transhumance, it is in the interest of the states themselves to preserve transhumance. First of all, in terms of food security, studies in Benin and West Africa have shown that intensive livestock production alone cannot meet food security needs. In fact, extensive livestock farming is more productive than intensive livestock farming in the Sahel¹²⁵. Furthermore, it is worth noting that this type of livestock farming does not have the ecological impact that is often claimed, and that it is even less damaging to natural ecosystems than intensive livestock farming¹²⁶. Essentially intensive livestock farming would lead to saturation of space and would not be viable, which is why many sedentary "new herders" send their animals on transhumance. Finally, transhumant livestock farming must be considered as a way of life in its own right and wanting to put an end to it would only aggravate the security dynamics presented in this study. And yet, the danger is precisely that this prioritisation of intensive livestock farming will be to the detriment of efforts to support transhumant livestock farming. In the case of Burkina Faso, this inclination is already very clear: the Schéma National d'Aménagement Durable du Territoire (National

¹²⁵ « L'élevage pastoral au Sahel et en Afrique de l'Ouest », Inter-Réseaux, 2014.

¹²⁶ Mohamed Habibou Assouma, Philippe Lecomte, Christian Corniaux, Pierre Hiernaux, Alexandre Ickowicz, Jonathan Vayssières, « Territoires d'élevage pastoral au Sahel : un bilan carbone avec un potentiel inattendu d'atténuation du changement climatique », CIRAD, Perspective, Novembre 2019.

Plan for Sustainable Land Management) and the 2015 Loi d'Orientation Agrosylvopastorale (Agro-Sylvo-Pastoral Orientation Law) openly show a preference for this mode of production, and in the field, livestock farmers note that pastoral projects supported by the Fonds de Développement de l'Élevage (Livestock Development Fund) (FODEL) primarily benefit modern farms.

As for the farmers open to moving towards intensive livestock farming, almost all of them are considering moving towards the milk sector, which is by far the most promising in terms of the needs of the market, and which a public incentive policy - taxing imports of powdered milk, for example - would help to increase tenfold. In the Sahel and the east of Burkina Faso, and in the south-west of Niger, livestock farmers are already engaged in this process. In the Sahel of Burkina Faso, dairies are springing up in the communes of Markoye, Bani, Sampelga and Seytenga. According to a farmer from Bani, all these good practices are made possible *'thanks to the support of close relatives in urban centres, who have taken in some of our children, but also thanks to the money transfers we have received'*. In Bangui (Tahoua), a farmer has set up a dairy without any help and sells his entire production in the commune. In these study areas, apprehensions about the cost and overexposure to theft remain high, especially among small-scale farmers, as we have seen. Furthermore, most Sahelians who are considering this prospect would do so but without completely abandoning transhumance, which again justifies not sacrificing this mode of production. A good practice already identified in eastern Burkina Faso, in the department of Tillabéri or in western Burkina Faso consists of supplying milk to dairies with a very partial stalling of the herd and better feeding of the dairymen (semi-intensification), while the rest of the herd (core breeding herd) goes on transhumance. These perceptions confirm certain recent diagnoses¹²⁷.

Particular attention should be paid to Kéné Dougou, where the development of the dairy sector has great potential. In Burkina Faso, for example, it is interesting to note how livestock farmers are increasingly investing in dairy production to diversify their activities and thus reduce the risks arising from insecurity. The area has historically produced milk under the impetus of the state-owned dairies, which has created a dynamic that is now being carried forward by the farmers.

- ◆ In the **Cascades**, in Banfora, nearly twenty farmers are already involved in this activity. These dairies collect local milk to pasteurise it and make yoghurt, butter and even soap from it. One of them has helped set up a network of milk collectors within a 50 km radius of the city for over five years. Payments are made monthly and the dairy delivers cattle-cake to the farmers. The farmers deliver the milk and benefit from the services of vets for care, but also for the detection of brucellosis and tuberculosis in particular. APESS, supported by CORAF and the Rural Development Institute of Bobo (University of Bobo), supports a more elaborate organisation of actors in the milk value chain, the "local milk innovation platform". It allows stakeholders in the sector to consult each other on the price of milk, but also to exchange ideas on innovations to be adopted to better process and distribute local milk and its derivatives while guaranteeing an income stream. The lack of security of land tenure undermines the optimism of young farmers, who fear the proliferation of cashew tree fields.
- ◆ In the **Hauts-Bassins**, dairy intensification is a prospect. Around Bobo-Dioulasso, this intensification, which is already widely practised, allows for the fattening of animals, their sale and the delivery of milk to the city's dairies. In Bama, the milk collection centre set up by the state through PAPSA offers opportunities to herders (both small and large) to maintain a core of females (with complementary feed) that can bring in an income of 100,000 CFA francs per herder per month. In the village of Yéguéresso, near Bobo-Dioulasso, there are about 20 small-scale farmers who each supply more than 20 litres of milk per day to the Bobo-Dioulasso dairies.

The milk sector seems to interest all categories of farmers. Large-scale farmers (those with at least 50 head of cattle, more than half of which are females) are increasingly thinking of switching to intensive dairy farming. However, smallholders see an opportunity if there is a supply chain (a dairy or a collection centre). Some of them have not abandoned mobile livestock rearing and continue to tend their farmers' animals as herders.

- ◆ In the **Boucle du Mouhoun** region, dairy intensification with the stabling of suckler cows and milk collection also makes it possible to secure part of the livestock feed. The milk collection unit in

¹²⁷ "For the majority of pastoralists, a radical modification of extensive livestock systems does not seem to have much added value. Indeed, they consider that the intensification of animal production can be envisaged within the framework of mobile livestock systems, if perennial channels for access to zootechnical and veterinary inputs are put in place". Summary note on the texts regulating transhumance in the PRODIATA intervention zone, 2019.

Magnemasso improves access to markets for animal products and livestock feed. This collection unit also allows herders to address more complex issues such as conflict management (among themselves, with farmers and with foresters). In Dédougou, the establishment of a milk collection centre in the commune in 2019 is helping to galvanise herders' interest in fattening and dairy activities. More than thirty farmers have already signed up for this project. Nevertheless, the increasing land speculation on the outskirts of medium-sized towns is worrying the herders who do not feel their rights are secure. Other channels of intensive production are also being seen. Around the medium-sized towns in the Kossi and Mouhoun regions, mini-farms with between 5 and 15 head of cattle are multiplying, where herders are trying to set up animal fattening units. This system is less developed than in the Hauts-Bassins, but these practices are connected to the meat market, as in Dédougou, where an operator processes it.

- ◆ **In the Sikasso region**, traditional herders seem less involved in intensive livestock farming. The transhumant herders are almost all reluctant to move towards intensive farming, and are even very reluctant to sell their milk at local collection centres. It would seem that the desire to enter the milk sector is mainly due to agro-pastoralists, such as retired civil servants and civil servants who are sons of herders. However, the economic potential is strong and some of the conversion paths identified bear witness to this. A young dairy farmer (a former transhumant) from Yorosso stated that he earned at least 125,000 francs per month from milk, enabling him to feed his animals well and to make a profit without having to destock or buy cattle feed in the rainy season. The profits are reinvested in the purchase of plots of land that are gradually being developed. The head of the Yorosso dairy cooperative also testifies to the transformation of his activity: *'The PAFa project trained us in milking, in setting up a farm school and in allocating a dairy cow (Suraka Misi, a Touareg breed). We apply what we have learned on our cattle and it is profitable. We have a bank account at the BNDA. PRAPS has provided us with fridges for collecting and packaging milk. Our training focused on tougouli (cattle mating), kolossoli (insemination), misi balo tiogo (cattle feeding), nono biri tiogo (hygienic milking) and the processing of milk into cheese, fèné, yoghurt and skewers'*.
- ◆ **In the north of Ivory Coast**, according to herder leaders, obtaining land with secure private ownership titles could help to facilitate herding activity. To make better use of their activity, some (medium and large) herders - including Fulani - are already starting to buy grazing land. Others are storing fodder or stocking up on animal feed to cope with shortages.

The dynamics essential for the development of the dairy sector have been identified in Kéné Dougou, which should be taken into account, aside from the specific and favourable agro-ecological conditions:

- ◆ **Herders must have access to land ownership through the purchase of land, an essential condition for the development of this sector.** Livestock farmers who have acquired land around Banfora to set up dairy farms are concerned about tenure insecurity and say that they are not protected against the risk of eviction, as some have only obtained provisional certificates of transfer of rights and not proper titles. Others fear that they will be the victims of urban development projects. More widely in Kéné Dougou, many livestock farmers are very reluctant to claim land rights at the risk of having their loan or grant contracts withdrawn. The same observation was made around Niamey for the five collection centres that supply the dairy companies. This situation is an obstacle to the development of intensive breeding.
- ◆ **Herders have expressed the need to have their livestock feed requirements met.** The trend towards increased storage of hay and fodder crops is noted in Kéné Dougou. In Koutiala, on the other hand, fodder cultivation is not without concern for the few farm owners. Some use a motor pump, but due to the lack of water, many farmers can only grow fodder during the winter months.
- ◆ **This micro-industry relies heavily on women collecting milk:** some of them distribute the milk to dairies, while others set up mini-dairies themselves. However, the development of this sector could eventually be undermined by the decline in social interaction based on ethnic stigmatisation. In the Cascades region, for example, women said they were afraid to go and sell milk on foot, especially in Niangologo, and demanded to be accompanied by their husbands.

VI. DEFINING AN EXIT STRATEGY TO THE CRISES

This study has highlighted that a minority of herders are fueling the security crisis for a variety of reasons stemming from the pastoralism crisis. Most herders are above all victims of this double crisis. Hence, an exit strategy must stop the mutual reinforcement of the security and pastoralist crises. It is premature to identify specific recommendations at this stage. However, this study suggests strategic importance of working towards an outcome in which mobile pastoralists are full-fledged citizens. The key is that an exit strategy be developed in an inclusive process, that is above all owned by the herders themselves. They must be the main actors and not mere spectators. This process must fully involve the state authorities from the most local level (local authorities) to the highest level (Heads of state) so that the commitments made are binding on all and have the best chance of being implemented. The consultations would benefit from being initially developed in the central Sahel, to align perceptions and the axes of reform, with a view to expanding discussions to the coastal countries of West Africa in a second phase.

1. THINK ABOUT HOW TO DO THINGS BEFORE DOING THEM

The vast majority of recommendations from the field studies deal with securing pastoral land in very general and not very operational terms: "guaranteeing the security of pastoral areas threatened with disappearance in the face of the states' inability to stop the increase in the agricultural front"; "guaranteeing equitable access to agro-sylvopastoral natural resources and guaranteeing respect for areas with different vocations"; "redesigning grazing areas, transhumance tracks, watering points, passage corridors and parking areas together"; " promote better freedom of movement for herders and animals between the different ECOWAS countries and develop good communications between the countries of departure and destination of transhumance "; " renovate and create new pastoral infrastructures ", " free up cattle tracks to access water points " or " ensure the application of land and pastoral texts in force ", etc. All or almost all solutions aimed at guaranteeing access to resources for herders were mentioned. The fact that, in a context of extreme insecurity, the herders focus on these needs in particular means that they consider it a priority to remedy the crisis of pastoralism - structural - rather than the security crisis - cyclical - that they are experiencing at the same time.

Some of these recommendations have been made for several decades and have already been tried and tested but have not curbed the crisis of pastoralism. In the end, they amount to asking that the laws on rural land tenure simply be applied by the states and sub-regional organisations. This is tantamount to saying that the problem has been identified for a long time, and that the solutions to remedy it have also been identified, but that the situation remains unchanged. Quite the contrary. With pastoral land under increasing threat, as we have analysed in this study, these long-standing recommendations are becoming ever more urgent. However indispensable they may be, they remain inoperative as long as attention is not paid to how they are to be implemented and what means are needed to achieve this. As is often the case with conflict-sensitive approaches, it is not so much the what to do as the how to do it that matters. All the recommendations made above always stumble on the 'how to do'. There is very little if any consideration of this.

The implementation of recommendations on pastoral issues is closely linked to the local political economy, i.e. the interests of stakeholders, the identification of spoilers, the local power relations - including electoral ones -, the weight of herders and their representativeness in decision-making bodies and civil

society organisations, the functionality and inclusiveness of local institutions in charge of the management of resources, and the good reputation of the individuals who hold positions of responsibility locally. Many good practices often depend on the personality of the actors in charge of certain sectors, be it a judge, a director of administration, a mayor, etc. Knowledge of this local political economy makes it possible to deal with it better and to mitigate or correct its drawbacks. The first prerequisite for the implementation of these recommendations is therefore the understanding of local political economies, at the level of each region, and even beyond, of each locality where intervention takes place.

To illustrate this, let us take an example from the Burkina Faso Sahel: how can the pastoral resources of a commune be secured, where the mayor owes his election to the majority farmers in his constituency, and whose brother leads a self-defence group which serves to protect and even extend the land rights of the farmers in a pastoral enclave? This example - which is far from exceptional in the Central Sahel - illustrates the need for solutions tailored to context.

This conflict-sensitive methodology is supposed to be systematically applied by donors and project implementers. However, it is often limited to a standardised procedure whose purpose is more to show - and write - that a minimum of precaution has been considered, rather than to conduct a dedicated study to untangle the web of conflicting interests that could undermine the implementation of the project. When it should, on the contrary, be central to the way in which public policies are conceived and implemented:

- ◆ **The political economy analysis of the land sector should be central to the formulation of public policies related to it.** It requires consultation with all stakeholders and focused studies to ensure that stakeholders' interests - both overt and covert - are considered, met and aligned. Where interests are not mutually compatible and a policy is likely to exacerbate existing differences, divides or even conflicts, the policy should be amended or its implementation postponed until such time as these issues are resolved. The same methodology should prevail in the planning of all development projects. This "Do no harm" approach should serve as a guide for partners' intervention in conflict-prone areas. It requires, at a very basic level, that all stakeholders and their interests be mapped and that efforts be made to bring them together, failing which all projects would be initiated on grounds which fail to meet the requirement of inclusiveness. Beyond 'Do no harm', a conflict-sensitive approach should value activities that strengthen social cohesion in contexts where tensions are high, as is currently the case in the central Sahel.
- ◆ **In the implementation phase,** similar attention must be paid to the need for these policies and projects to benefit all users without political or community orientation. To guard against this, in addition to the specific care that must be taken with the personnel selected, the choice of targeting methods (with POs having developed tools to guarantee their inclusiveness, for example), the need to define an adapted project governance framework is essential, whether to systematise controls and audits (by including a social cohesion/conflict sensitivity dimension), or in a more permanent manner by strengthening the accountability of actors at local level. The establishment of complaints or challenge committees would greatly contribute to this. It is also essential to institutionalise inclusive community monitoring mechanisms to ensure that project implementation or public decision-making does not benefit one party or particular interests. The Community Action Frameworks set up by USAID in Niger and Burkina Faso, and which were sustained in Burkina after the end of the PDEV II programme, are for example spaces dedicated to this function. They could be relaunched, established where they do not yet exist and, above all, sustained by the allocation of endogenous funding.

2. ADDRESS THE LONG-TERM STRUCTURAL CAUSES OF THE PASTORALIST CRISIS

The pastoralist crisis cannot be considered in isolation from the current insecurity. Decision-makers must understand that resolving this crisis would reduce the breeding ground for violence. The challenge of these strategic axes is not so much to identify the structural causes of the crisis in pastoralism - such as the nibbling of pastoral tracks - but rather to identify its underlying causes.

THINK ABOUT THE FOUNDATIONS FOR SECURING PASTORAL LAND TENURE

The resolution of the pastoral crisis - and thereby part of the current security crisis - will require the securing of pastoral land. This security is based less on the construction of pastoral infrastructure as such than on the acceptance by all actors of the process that led to the choice of infrastructure in a particular locality. This process is based on a number of principles based on local consultation as an embryo of local agreements which, when combined, can result in regional land use plans. This approach requires that the local level takes precedence over top-down approaches where herders are at best consulted, but never involved in the change.

A flexible, concerted and inclusive approach should guide this process. The legal recognition of certain areas for pastoral purposes, the mapping of resources, the demarcation of space and the construction of infrastructure should only be the result of social agreements.

DEFINING A SUFFICIENTLY FLEXIBLE FORMAL FRAMEWORK

Securing pastoral land tenure requires, firstly, sufficient flexibility to adapt to an intrinsically changing pastoral reality. Excessive formalisation could lead to a loss of 'vagueness', which is the flexible nature of the system of rules for access to natural resources, in other words, an 'organised flexibility' that can be adapted to the variability and constant and extreme uncertainty of the environment¹²⁸. Excessively structured appropriation on large rangelands is not suited to pastoral mobility, but it can be where resources are confined to more easily controllable areas such as *bourgoutières*¹²⁹. As suggested by many livestock specialists, the solution could be to define rules that are sufficiently clear, understood and shared by all, but at the same time that offer sufficient flexibility to allow local authorities - at the communal, inter-communal and regional levels - to define local development plans based on a truly inclusive and participatory approach.

To abandon any form of legal framework for pastoral rights would be to unleash the already expansionist temptations of those who seek to appropriate the use rights of pastoral areas. The formalisation of use rights, recognised by land commissions or through local land charters, is now permitted in all three countries. Moving towards the recognition of these rights could be a definite step forward, but only under certain conditions. The political economy of land tenure must change, as we shall see later, otherwise these mechanisms will continue to reflect the structural inequalities that characterise access to natural resources in the Central Sahel. Secondly, this requires sustainable financial support as well as constant political and diplomatic investment to enable the establishment and functioning of these bodies. Finally, it requires organisational modalities which guarantee their inclusiveness and the neutrality of the decision-making processes which govern them. From this point of view, there are major concerns about the current arrangements: in Burkina Faso, the Village Land Commissions (CFV), which are often responsible for ensuring compliance with local land charters, are often politicised or affected by community bias, while they are seen as very costly¹³⁰, just as the COFOCOMs in Niger, which are run by mayors, are sometimes accused of 'caving in' to their predominantly agricultural constituencies.

NEGOTIATING SOCIAL AGREEMENTS AS A BASIS FOR SECURITY

Such an approach inevitably requires an inclusive local dialogue that should be the basis for social agreements on the conditions of access and sharing of resources. Interesting initiatives carried out by communities with the support of pastoral associations should be reproduced, including initiatives carried out by international NGOs in conflict zones (see above). These experiences systematise and progressively

¹²⁸ Patrick D'Aquino, Seydou Camara, Sidy Mohamed Seck, « Formaliser ou sécuriser les droits locaux sur la terre ? » (Formalising or securing local rights to land), *Études rurales* 199, 2017.

¹²⁹ Brigitte Thébaud, *Le foncier dans le Sahel pastoral* (Land tenure in the pastoral Sahel), 1994, EHESS

¹³⁰ "In Burkina Faso, this proliferation of commissions undermines the proper functioning of decentralised land management. It generates operating costs that are beyond the reach of local financial capacities", World Bank, 'Revue du secteur foncier du Burkina Faso', 2019.

impose as a norm what many specialists in pastoralism advocate: the negotiation of social agreements prior to the implementation of these agreements through acts of demarcation (marking out, etc.).

The inclusiveness of consultation spaces must not be reduced to a simple tick box exercise by the partners. It must be the *raison d'être* of these processes, otherwise they will necessarily be contested later by actors who were not involved. This is particularly the case for transhumant herders, whose dates of presence are rarely taken into account in communal or regional agendas, and whom few projects are ready to bring to the negotiating table, sometimes several hundred kilometres away. The urgency imposed by development partners should by no means be given priority here.

These agreements also need to be dynamic, i.e. they need to be monitored, evaluated and updated in the light of demographic changes and the occurrence of shocks (climatic, security) that accentuate the spatial and temporal variability of natural resources. They must also be made more widely available so that as many actors as possible are informed and involved. The effectiveness of the sanction mechanisms provided for in the event of infringement of the established rules is also essential: what type of infringement? what type of sanction? who sanctions (and therefore who is legitimate and in a position to sanction)? Finally, it is essential that these dialogue processes do not depend on projects whose funding remains uncertain, but that endogenous and sustainable funding solutions enable these agreements to be monitored effectively and continuously.

These social agreements are gradually becoming the norm since the early 2000s when they first appeared, through the Puits de la Paix or the Projet de Sécurisation des Systèmes Pastoraux (the Peace Wells or the Pastoral Systems Security Project) (PSSP) in Niger for example. Several examples identified during the study indicate encouraging recent actions in this area despite insecurity:

- ◆ **In the Cascades region**, tensions between herders and farmers have existed in Kankoumadeni (Tiéfora) for a decade following the mobilisation of Dozos by some elected officials to physically attack herders and the creation of a cattle pound, especially for animals going to the orchards. Nowadays, both in Tiéfora and Banfora, the new mayors elected in the 2016 elections have carried out awareness-raising activities to prevent this conflict from resurfacing. In Tiéfora, the mayor has enabled the adoption of a pastoral agreement on cattle grazing (with the support of the Communication Network on Pastoralism - RECOPA) with other communes, although this does not prevent the Dozos from continuing their exactions. In Banfora, at the end of 2019, the mayor of Banfora worked towards the establishment of a charter on the management of pastoral resources in the village of Bodadiougou, which hosts transhumant herders, with the support of the NGO GRET in the Go In project financed by the European Union. These actions are positive, even if they are too recent and localised to show any lasting impact.
- ◆ **In the Maradi region**, social agreements - based on community dialogue - have also helped to secure pastoral areas. As a RBM review states, *'this approach is based on a gamble consisting of carrying out social work as a prerequisite for any allocation of space (demarcation and marking out)'*. The same approach carried out by RECOPA in the Eastern region has reportedly had some success: social agreements are implemented by demarcation and protected by management committees. In the Burkina Faso Sahel, A2N has worked towards the formal recognition of the pastoral vocation and the classification of the Ceekol-Nagge area in the Burkina Faso Sahel.

THE NEED FOR A CONCERTED TERRITORIAL APPROACH

These local consultation initiatives can lead to the creation of a new dynamic leading to local development plans designed on a regional scale. This regional level is essential if the dynamics of inter-community dynamics with regard to pastoral mobility are to be taken into account. The decentralised level is certainly the most suitable for this, if only because the decentralisation of land tenure is a common in the three states. However, decentralisation is far from being a miracle solution. Local authorities not only reproduce the horizontal inequalities that may exist at the central level, but they sometimes even accentuate the forms of exclusion of which herders may be victims, particularly in communes where sedentary populations are in the majority. The best way to prevent herders from losing out in local land-use planning schemes is probably to increase the number of social agreements at the grassroots level and build a planning scheme on the basis of these achievements. This is not the case today since social agreements are generally

excluded from local planning schemes. This 'decentralisation from below' may ensure that the interests of herders are better taken into account.

In all three countries, land laws have provided for territorial planning to organise the use of land at the level of each region, but they are still rarely applied. In Mali, under the 2001 Pastoral Charter and the 2006 Agricultural Land Law, local authorities must design land use plans that delimit and develop pastoral areas and must integrate transhumance into these plans. Initiatives that were underway before the 2011 crisis have been stopped¹³¹. In Burkina Faso, since Law 034-2012, the regions have legal prerogatives to design Regional Land Use and Sustainable Development Plans (SRADDT), although there is little feedback on experiences in the East or Sahel regions. In Niger, the Schémas d'Aménagement Foncier (The pastoral development plan - SAF), provided for in the Rural Code since 1993, are not new, but their adoption is, as in Dosso (see box), Tahoua or Maradi.

THE EXAMPLE OF THE DOSSO FAS

The Dosso FAS, designed with the support of Swiss cooperation, is often mentioned as a good practice, including by regional authorities. However, it seems that the initial phases of diagnosis and identification of pastoral resources did not meet the expectations of some pastoral organisations. One of them deplores the fact that many grazing areas were not referenced, which is suspected to be voluntary and intended to guarantee farmers' access to certain areas. As the FAS enters its implementation phase in 2021, many disputes have already arisen over access to certain areas. Critics of the FAS believe that this limitation is mainly due to the poor representation of herder interests in local FAS committees and in the choice of people who guided the cartographers in the field. This example highlights the importance of the inclusiveness of even the most temporary users, including the large transhumant herders, as a cornerstone of FAS processes. The representative of another pastoralist organisation felt that the inclusion of herder representatives was real, but that it was symbolically translated into their presence without being prepared, trained, technically equipped, or having the time to consult with the members of their organisation at the grassroots. "The form of their contribution is more important than the substance, and that's the problem," he says. The conditions of their participation did not allow for the emergence of a contradictory debate during both the negotiation and the implementation phases of the FAS. Here again, the "how to do" takes precedence over the "what to do". A review exercise on the different experiences of POs in the various Sahelian countries with land management would be beneficial in optimising the methodology.

A final limitation of these initiatives is that they are often supported by foreign partners and sometimes end up depending on them, to the point of being called into question once the partners have withdrawn. This raises the question of the durability of the agreements, which should, for example, depend less on the authorities in place (in which case they will be rediscussed each time there is a change of framework or elected officials) than on the involvement of the actors themselves, namely the users concerned by these mechanisms. In order to ensure that these good practices do not disappear at the end of the projects, they must be reviewed and reproduced in other regions or countries.

¹³¹ See the ICD and AVSF capitalisation report, 'Le schéma d'aménagement pastoral: un outil de reconnaissance et de sécurisation du foncier pastoral dans le Delta Intérieur du Niger (Mopti, Tombouctou)' (The pastoral development plan: a tool for recognising and securing pastoral land tenure in the Inner Niger Delta (Mopti, Timbuktu), March 2010.

DEVELOPING A TRULY HOLISTIC APPROACH TO RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

These processes of securing pastoral land tenure must be based on a holistic approach that takes into account all competing uses of natural resources. As a recent review of the implementation of the land tenure policy in Niger shows, the priority is still to determine the status, the rules of use and the purpose of the land before the state develops it¹³². This observation applies generally to the Sahel. Among other issues, it raises the question of the adaptation of conservationist policies or ineffective laws due to the prevalence of corruption or local power relations that bias their application.

However, within the framework of this study, we have also identified axes around which to rethink a way of conserving wildlife and floral resources while satisfying the primary needs of certain users.

For the past 15 years in **the Hauts-Bassins region, near Bobo-Dioulasso**, a 'pilot' attempt has been maintained due to a lack of follow-up by the authorities, namely that access to the Dindéresso forest is authorised for animals for part of the year. The regulation of entry and exit to the forest allows the animal load to be limited and thus the resources to be preserved. The approach and principles that guided this experiment could be reproduced elsewhere in Burkina Faso or in the sub-region, obviously adapting it to local conditions.

It is necessary to revise the conditions for developing grazing areas. In addition to the fact that the decision to develop grazing areas does not always respect the criteria set out in the regulations, as in Niger (where the decision must be based on a need expressed by the herders themselves), the rigidity that surrounds their development causes a great deal of resentment amongst herders. As with protected areas, access to grazing areas under development opens the door to corrupt or exclusionary practices that could be avoided if the conditions of access were revised. Recourse to corruption is unfair in that it works to the disadvantage of the smallest herders who do not have the means to do so. In Niger, it emerged from some discussions with herders and state representatives that access to parts of the areas that are not being developed could be authorised, and possibly accompanied by the payment of a tax that would help finance part of the maintenance costs.

Strict adherence to this methodology for securing pastoral land would probably not be enough to ensure that the interests of herders are protected. Security also relies heavily on the ability of herders to make their voices heard locally, which requires better representation of their interests, but also a better political - and therefore institutional - anchoring at the local level. As is summarised in a study on pastoral development schemes in the Inner Niger Delta: *'The right of access of pastoralists to land and resources depends more on their ability to defend their interests than on the will expressed by the state. The choices made by elected officials in charge of land use planning depend more on political circumstances than on the logic of harmonious and coherent development of the commune's territory. [...] Pastoralists do not today constitute a force for political pressure and a force for proposals that would significantly influence the decisions of politicians and elected officials'*¹³³.

REBALANCING THE POLITICAL ECONOMY OF LAND TENURE FOR THE BENEFIT OF HERDERS

The political economy of land should not disadvantage herders. As the local political arena is where part of the land issue is played out, being represented there is a condition for nomadic communities to be able to modify the local political economy that is strongly unfavourable to them. This requires better political representation and greater participation of nomadic populations in local decision-making. The territorialisation strategy involves - if not the control of a rural commune - at least better representation in communal councils. This is the way to obtain management rights over pastoral resources. This political influence can also be gained through new customary representations, but also through a stronger

¹³² Abouba Saïdou, « Processus du Code Rural du Niger : Diagnostic, enjeux, défis et perspectives nouvelles » (Niger's Rural Code Process: Diagnosis, issues, challenges and new perspectives), 2018.

¹³³ ICD and AVSF, 2010

mobilisation of POs in charge of defending the interests of herders. These different levels of power are closely intertwined and work together to defend the communities' land interests¹³⁴.

Numerous cases, identified during the course of our study, demonstrate that investment in the political arena has enabled certain herder communities or social groups to assert their power in the management of resources.

- ◆ **Controlling access to resources through the ballot box.** As local authorities have wider powers in terms of managing resources, the mayor's office is an important decision-making forum. In **Niger**, the case of Banguï (Madaoua) illustrates how the control of a town hall influences the way in which resources are managed: sometimes to the benefit of one social group, sometimes to another. In **Mali**, the case of the Jowro in the Inner Niger Delta is an illustrative example where 'grass masters', particularly in Youwarou, have adapted to decentralisation by becoming mayors of communes in order to retain their power over the bourgoutières¹³⁵. The Rimaïbe and Bellah communities were able to win through the ballot box the power that tradition denied them as descendants of slaves. In the Timbuktu region, in the Oudalan, in Sebba, in Barani or in certain communes of the Soum, these communities have won the posts of mayor or deputy. It should be stressed that this quest for power through the ballot box can also accentuate divisions with other social groups and be a source of conflict, precisely because they either perpetuate inequalities in the management of resources (as in the case of the Jowro), or they rebalance the rules of access to them. Here again, the question of the inclusiveness of local decision-making spaces is unavoidable.
- ◆ **Political influence can also be gained through better community representation, via the creation of chieftaincies.** In **Niger**, this has been well documented by Abdoulaye Mohamadou in the Dakoro area (Maradi) where Fulani and Tuareg group leaders use their political resources to establish the land rights of their people. In Konni, the Fulani group leader is a valuable resource for Fulani herders to protect their mobility in the area. However, although the Fulani group leader in Konni covers four departments (Konni, Malbaza, Illéla, Bagaroua), at the village level, not all Fulani villages have a chiefdom recognised by the Ministry of the Interior, so they are often headed by the Hausa village chief. This mechanically limits their local political weight - and by extension that of the herders belonging to this community. In the early 2000s in Niger, the Fulani community was able to benefit from the creation of chieftaincies in the Abalak and Bermo areas, helping to emancipate it from the control of other communities. This requires political courage on the part of the ruling elites - who are often from a sedentary background - anxious to avoid the emergence of new, potentially autonomous authorities. However, this is probably the price to pay in order to break the current pattern of politics by force. In the Barani area of **Burkina Faso**, the Fulani canton chief has long opposed the mayor's plans to subdivide land on the grounds that this would jeopardise the Fulani community's land.
- ◆ The POs should also play a leading role in influencing the decision-making process when it is not in favour of livestock rearing. One of the most common criticisms against them is that they do not carry out enough advocacy activities and do not oppose political decisions or administrative actions that could harm herders. From this point of view, POs must develop more advocacy initiatives in their activities, both at the national and local levels. The support of technical and financial partners in this respect seems quite essential in order to increase the degree of political influence of these organisations.

Finally, it should be noted that not all the herders we spoke to in the course of the study necessarily share the desire to be more politically influential. In areas where herders are in the minority, some consider that seeking greater political and institutional representation could create more problems for them vis-à-vis communities that consider themselves 'indigenous'. They prefer to improve their relations with these communities by being more vigilant in what they say and do, and by seeking to optimise the interdependence with these actors on whom they depend for the health of their activities. Further reflection should identify how to strengthen these interdependencies.

¹³⁴ Abdoulaye Mohamadou, « Foncier, pouvoirs locaux et décentralisation dans le département de Dakoro (Niger) » (Land tenure, local powers and decentralisation in the department of Dakoro (Niger)), Bulletin de l'APAD, 31-32, 2010, pp 105-135

¹³⁵ UQAM, 2018.

DEFEND HERDERS TO PREVENT THEM FROM TAKING UP ARMS

Conflicts between users of natural resources are often poorly resolved because local conciliation mechanisms and judicial systems are dysfunctional. Herders are under-represented and abused. Addressing this requires strengthening herders' access to legal and judicial defence, strengthening the role of POs in advocacy and influencing, and making conciliation mechanisms more inclusive.

STRENGTHENING HERDERS' ACCESS TO JUSTICE

Herders are generally deprived of recourse when they feel they have been wronged, and as we have seen, they tend to shun state justice for fear of losing too much money or being publicly singled out. With the exception of the 'big herders', the majority do not generally have the political support to defend themselves. POs must therefore take on the role of defending the rights of herders, alongside Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) already specialised in legal and judicial assistance. These interventions supplement a largely dysfunctional judicial system, but they should not obscure the importance of also working alongside the formal and traditional justice system.

Several complementary actions need to be initiated in this respect.

Networks of paralegals should be trained and assisted to provide local advice to herders in cases of alleged injustice. Unlike lawyers, paralegal networks come from the communities they support and are voluntary networks. These structures, which are highly developed in Mali (particularly in central Mali), are still barely developed in Niger, Burkina Faso and elsewhere. This is an area that needs to be investigated and in which international partners have an important role to play. Paralegal networks make it possible to avoid the judicialization of cases by simply asserting the rights of the herders, and thus negotiate amicably the non-payment of field damage, obtain release due to lack of evidence in the case of pre-trial detention, etc. The main challenge for POs is the availability of their members to respond to requests from various localities, and that of networking between these members specialised in paralegal work and the herders with whom they are not necessarily in contact. This requires the setting up of alert systems via focal points enabling POs to be reactive.

At a higher level, pastoral organisations should be supported to play a role in defending pastoral rights. This can be done by training magistrates or notaries on the laws and regulations relating to pastoral land, or by surrounding themselves with specialised lawyers who can, for example, oppose the illegal purchase of pastoral land, or oppose notices of registration on pastoral land during the publicity period (3 months), or cases of illegal impoundment, as AREN is already doing in Niger. Since 2014, AREN has challenged in court 8 cases of illegal sales of community or pastoral land. This legal assistance contributes to strengthening the basis of secure pastoral land tenure in SAFs or pastoral areas, but to be effective and have an impact, it needs to be scaled up to state level on the basis of pastoral legal assistance networks. In northern Togo, some conflicts were mentioned where the courts restored the rights of the victimised herders after being seized by a herders' association, WBK. The arrest of a farmer who killed a herder's cow in 2018 in the village of Boubindi (Kpendjari) had triggered a violent mobilisation of farmers who in response set fire to the herders' homes. The herders were compensated and the farmer and his accomplices were arrested.

POs can also approach magistrates' unions, local human rights organisations and national human rights institutions (NHRIs) already involved in the defence of human rights, particularly through advocacy work that POs cannot always undertake alone or directly. They could be useful intermediaries for the voice of herders to these audible and listened-to organisations. In addition, these organisations must also be given more support by international partners, either politically or financially, in order to limit the feeling of impunity that may prevail among the authorities, the military and politicians, particularly in the current context of the fight against terrorism. The role played by the CNDH in the Inatès massacre in 2020, for example, but also that of the Mouvement burkinabè des droits de l'homme et des peuples (MBDHP) or the Collectif contre l'impunité et la stigmatisation des communautés (CISC) in Burkina Faso after the Kain and Yirgou massacres in 2019, illustrate the contribution of these structures to increasing pressure on the authorities so that investigations into cases of execution of civilians are not only opened, but also dealt with.

MAKING OFFICIAL CONFLICT RESOLUTION MECHANISMS MORE INCLUSIVE

Conciliation commissions are the main model for conflict resolution. The modalities of their establishment have long been questionable, however, recalling that the 'how to do' is more important than the 'what to do'. They hardly exist in insurgency zones, but they remain essential in areas that are still stable.

Livestock farmers, whose representation in these commissions is specified in the laws and regulations, are often de facto excluded from them. The study showed that the mechanisms for recording damage were often deficient and open to abuse, in that they did not always include livestock representatives. Ways must be found to systematise the involvement of livestock services and/or representatives of pastoral organisations. In order to do this, a real awareness-raising campaign should be conducted among livestock farmers to inform them of the importance of using a pastoral organisation to defend their rights in the event of a conflict where the livestock services are not present. The study revealed that these structures are often unknown to farmers. In addition, pastoral organisations should increase their efforts to provide legal assistance to herders by setting up networks of focal points responsible for relaying conflict situations to the POs so that they can intervene quickly.

Where such structures do not yet exist - particularly in the insurgency zones of Burkina Faso and Mali - pastoralist organisations must be proactive in enforcing compliance with the texts when they are created, ensuring that their composition is truly inclusive. This will be of particular importance in the context of the gradual redeployment of state services in these areas. Creating these structures where they do not yet exist is less urgent than ensuring that their inclusiveness is guaranteed.

On a larger scale, it is necessary to create the conditions for these structures to have the means to carry out their mission, without making them dependent on international projects. In this respect, international partners must stop creating ad hoc structures to fulfil the mission of these official structures. When a partner intervenes in a locality and a "dialogue on resource management" component is integrated into the project, it must work to support the setting up of these official commissions or to revise their functioning if they are dysfunctional. In the long term, thought should be given to how these commissions can be financed to ensure their long-term survival.

STRENGTHENING THE FARMERS' ACCOUNTABILITY

- ◆ **Capitalising on experiences of self-monitoring.** Livestock herders can also cause a sense of injustice when, for example, damage is done to fields or animals are stolen from a farmer or agri-herder. In several regions, this study has documented the application of a 'self-control' mechanism, carried out either by pastoralist organisations in the north of Ivory Coast (Tchologo, Boukani) and in the south-west of Burkina Faso, or by a Rouga in the east (Kompienga) of Burkina Faso and in some communes in Togo. The principle is that in the event of damage to fields - or sometimes also in the event of theft of livestock - where the perpetrator has not been identified, the person in charge of this mechanism is responsible for evaluating the losses caused and for getting all the livestock herders present in the area of the damage to contribute to the compensation for the loss caused. After payment, the herders seek out the individual involved, who will reimburse the money that has been paid. This efficient mechanism would reduce the temptation to attack herding communities. It should be better documented in a focused study.
- ◆ **Strengthening the community accountability of the Rougas.** The Rougas are victims of a trend that is leading to their proliferation. In some cases, they are self-proclaimed, including in the neighbourhoods of urban communes. The traditional function of Rouga in Niger, intrinsically linked to Fulani culture, is different from the more institutionalised function that exists in Burkina Faso¹³⁶. The Rougas in Burkina Faso have the advantage of being open to other communities - which can build solidarity between communities and contribute to social cohesion - but their institutionalisation ties them to the authorities and they suffer from a lack of accountability to the pastoral communities. Community accountability is, however, the basis of the social organisation that underpins the Rougas.

¹³⁶ Traditionally, the Rougas' role was to both to represent and defend herders, and to punish those who commit offences. However, this traditional role is increasingly being lost.

Greater power for the herders to control the actions of the Rougas would make them more accountable, whether through a democratic election process or an impediment procedure (such as a herders' assembly accompanied by the distribution of colas, according to traditional methods). The same effort to strengthen community accountability should be made in other nomadic communities where mechanisms similar to the Rougas exist.

- ◆ **Generalising the role of the Rouga where they do not yet exist within the Fulani community and where the herders express the need for them.** In certain regions where Rougas do not traditionally exist, their creation is not taboo and certain stakeholders we met have shown great interest. It would therefore be a good idea to consider, in conjunction with the pastoral associations, organising a meeting of herders in certain Sahelian regions with a view to defining the basis for creating Rougas. Where they do not exist, it is easier to ensure that the way they are appointed and the conditions under which they carry out their tasks meet the objective of community accountability. In any case, Rougas should only be developed where they are desired by the greatest number of people, and without this being perceived by other communities as a potential threat. Their creation should therefore be done in a transparent manner with representatives of other communities.

3. MANAGE THE IMPACT OF THE SECURITY CRISIS ON THE PASTORAL CRISIS

The security crisis has reinforced the stigma that herders have long been subject to. The conflation of herders with jihadists has become widespread, aggravating relations between herders and the DSF, and opening the way to numerous acts of violence against civilians, including by community self-defence groups. These confusions are linked to a lack of awareness of the constraints to which herders are overexposed in comparison with other rural populations. Confidence can only be re-established through a better mutual understanding between these actors, through a change in behaviour and through strong acts that serve as an example and make a positive impression.

MOBILISING PASTORAL ORGANISATIONS TO IMPROVE SOCIAL COHESION

The field of dialogue is already well developed by certain associations and NGOs specialising in this area, but mainly from a community perspective. Numerous dialogue initiatives have been identified in Liptako Gourma and Central Mali, for example. POs could also contribute in this area, with less emphasis on the tribal/ethnic dimension than on the 'consensual management of space and resources' aspect. It appears that the issue of access to resources is central, and sometimes decisive, in the causes of conflicts. Promoting dialogue in this area with greater PO involvement would make it possible to prevent and resolve some of these conflicts. This issue is of particular importance given that there are more than 2 million displaced people in the Central Sahel and that the future return of these people could rekindle competition for access to resources. Several initiatives in Burkina Faso, the Boucle du Mouhoun and Soum in particular, suggest that peaceful cohabitation can be achieved through inclusive dialogue.

POs should be involved in promoting dialogue and strengthening social cohesion on a number of levels:

- ◆ facilitating dialogue between transhumant herders and host communities. POs should work to facilitate relations between transhumant herders and their host communities, which we have seen have been degraded by growing insecurity in the Central Sahel. This implies giving more responsibility to the local leaders of POs and increasing their networks in many localities to have an impact. A good practice identified in the South West region of Burkina Faso could inspire POs. The president of the herders of Kampti (South-West Burkina) made sure that displaced herders from the Sahel would not be left to their own devices but would be welcomed by the sedentary population. He worked to introduce these herders to village chiefs and landowners so that they could maintain a minimum level of activity, i.e. find a host, settle down with their animals and conclude manure contracts, or even cultivate crops.

POs need to act as intermediaries between transhumant herders, village chiefs, traditional authorities and landlords in a more systematic way. Almost all the herders questioned have had to call on one of these actors in the settlement of a dispute with farmers. For example, in Sikasso, young

transhumant herders mentioned the intervention of their landlord to resolve an emerging conflict with Dozos whose land they were crossing in 2019. A transhumant herder in Koutiala said that he had benefited several times from the intervention of his landlord, a member of a village council, which had enabled him to benefit from reductions in fines, forgiveness, and avoidance of arrest by the gendarmerie.

The corollary of this empowerment of local pastoral leaders is that they also have a legally recognised title that guarantees them a minimum of protection from the authorities, self-defence groups or armed forces. Several leaders of herders who played the same role as Kampti have been eliminated in recent years in Burkina Faso, depriving the herders of an intermediary who would enable them to be welcomed by the sedentary populations.

- ◆ **Restoring solidarity between pastoralists and farmers.** The complementarity between them seems very much in question. This has already been demonstrated with the decrease in agrarian specialisation, and the growing mistrust between those actors which makes things even worse. POs could work with farmers' organisations to find ways of recreating complementarity between users. Some herders in Maradi and Tahoua have, for example, suggested that they should encourage the development of barter systems between fodder (alfalfa) supplied by farmers and animals supplied by herders. In areas where open conflicts exist between these users, pastoral and farmers' organisations could initiate joint awareness-raising missions.
- ◆ **promote dialogue between transhumant and sedentary herders.** Here again, the study highlighted growing tensions resulting in part from the current insecurity. POs have a key role to play in improving relations between these actors in the Central Sahel. In the coastal countries of West Africa, the problem is even more complex, since the tutors are also transhumant farmers who have experienced difficulties in settling down, and therefore sometimes view the arrival of new transhumants with suspicion. These considerations should be further explored and enriched by taking advantage of experience in localities where these complementary relationships still exist, as was documented during the study in several localities in the Great West of Burkina Faso, for example.
 - ◆ In the **Cascades region**, in some villages near Niangologo, these relationships are still expressed through manure contracts or the entrustment of animals where farmers, although they own cattle themselves, do not engage in herding. This phenomenon gives rise to a form of complementarity between agricultural and pastoral activities. The young people we met in Koro, Bama and Bobo think that these links should be strengthened, but the big herders should show solidarity with the small ones, and the loan of draught animals from the herders to the farmers should continue. Indeed, some farmers have withdrawn the cows they entrusted to the herders to create their own dairy farms, often by hiring young Fulani herders.
 - ◆ In the **Boucle du Mouhoun** region, the interdependence between agriculture and herding still exists in some localities, with herders looking after the farmers' livestock. This is the case, for example, in the village of Tierkou where most farmers entrust their plough oxen to the Fulani between January and April and sometimes until May. In return, they are able to graze their own cattle on the fields after the harvest, as is the case elsewhere.

Paradoxically, a reason for hope arises from the current chaos, from which solidarity could emerge with the help of POs. There are areas where the security crisis has affected the livelihoods of all communities without exception. Among the communities involved in the armed conflicts, many actors do not recognise themselves in the prevailing warlike and communitarian logic and are seeking to escape from it in favour of agreements based on shared access to resources and reciprocity. Within the framework of the dialogue processes conducted in these areas, and faced with the deadlock in some of them due to the inability to involve the belligerents, peace between the communities could be built on shared socio-economic interests. In the case of the conflicts between Fulani and Daoussahaks in Ménaka, or between Bambara Dozos and jihadists, some of the agreements that put an end to these conflicts concern access to resources, cultivation conditions, the prohibition of cattle rustling, etc. This is an area for POs to explore.

- ◆ **facilitate dialogue with the warring parties.** POs sometimes have privileged access to the belligerents through some of their members who have to negotiate with them about the mobility of their livestock, or because they have former members who have taken up arms. They could therefore be valuable

intermediaries between the authorities and these armed actors if they were to express a desire to find negotiated solutions among themselves.

MAKE THE DSF PROTECTORS, NOT THREATS, IN THE EYES OF HERDERS

Herders, and in particular herders from nomadic communities, have a very negative impression of the DSF. They no longer feel protected, but rather threatened by these armed forces. Two lines of thought could be explored: enabling these actors to talk to each other in order to understand each other better; and putting the DSF at the service of herders like any other citizens.

GETTING THE DSF AND HERDERS TO BETTER UNDERSTAND EACH OTHER

Facilitating dialogue between the armed forces and nomadic communities is an essential first step in improving their perception of each other, a solution that is increasingly 'in fashion', but which unfortunately struggles to have any effect, as executions continue in rural areas. This raises the question of whether these dialogue processes are relying on the wrong actors on both sides - in which case they do not produce the desired effects at grassroots level - or whether they are not sufficient to restore shattered trust. It would be wise for programmes that initiate this kind of dialogue to undertake an exercise to learn from the successes and failures of these initiatives.

The DSF must break out of their instrumental relationship with herders and stop expecting the latter to become 'informants' as if they had to prove their good faith in order not to be suspected. Trust between actors cannot be decreed, but is built gradually on the basis of an understanding of each other's constraints, mutual respect in daily exchanges and the adoption of confidence-building measures that lay the foundations for a new relationship.

MOBILISING THE DSF TO SECURE PASTORAL MOBILITY

Dialogue is not enough; it must also be accompanied by a change in practices on the ground. From this point of view, it would help if the DSF became seen by the herders as those responsible for their protection just like that of any other citizen.

As a first step, it could be imagined, in conjunction with local authorities, that the DSF could be called upon to facilitate the mobility of herders in areas that are particularly at risk for them. These could be border areas where herders' mobility is restricted. Herders seeking to cross the border (inbound and outbound) with their livestock to reach terminal markets are often blocked by the existence of curfew times. This limits the attractiveness of some livestock markets. Having the DSF take responsibility for the crossing could thus facilitate cross-border mobility. In addition, the good practices identified in this study in Maradi and Tahoua in Niger show that the DSF can be used to secure the crossing of herders on transhumance routes that are so nibbled away by cultivated land or urban dwellings that they often lead to conflict. In Madaoua and Arzarori, the mayors and traditional chiefs have asked the DSF to secure a grouped passage for all transhumant herders. In both cases, this kind of solicitation of the DSF risks generating an economy of corruption, but which as we have seen in this study constitutes an adaptation strategy for herders, far preferable to racketeering. Herders could then be asked to pay for the fuel required for this type of service.

More ambitiously, consideration could be given to making the fight against livestock theft a priority for certain DSF units. Livestock theft affects all herders - transhumant and sedentary - and is a priority threat in the Sahel. This can be done at different levels: at the level of municipal police forces (on the initiative of mayors), gendarmerie brigades at regional level, or via the creation of specialised units at national or even sub-regional level (at the level of the G5 Sahel, for example) in a cross-border perspective. The risk of such units becoming militias that are themselves active in what has become a business involving some of the DSF themselves is not insignificant, and it would therefore be advisable to devise mechanisms to protect against this.

With regard to livestock theft specifically, other complementary measures could be considered:

- ◆ the standardisation of animal marking and the setting up of sentinels to alert in the event of livestock theft so that stolen animals can be rapidly identified and recovered. The experiences of the Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue (HD) organisation in Liptako Gourma, among others, are encouraging.
- ◆ the wider use of Whatsapp groups as cross-border alert platforms should be encouraged. This has already proved efficient in some contexts. The important thing is for the group to be administered so that its members are known and their morality is proven in order to prevent thieves from joining.
- ◆ setting up and monitoring a regional database that records all cases of animal theft in order to have reliable statistics to facilitate cooperation between states.
- ◆ Strengthen controls on West African markets to prevent the concealment of stolen animals, as Sahelian livestock markets upstream are increasingly escaping any control or regulation.
- ◆ Pass laws criminalising livestock theft in countries where they do not exist, and ensure legal harmonisation to prevent states from becoming sanctuaries for thieves.

PROMOTE THE INTEGRATION OF NOMADIC POPULATIONS INTO THE DSF

Nomadic communities will only feel fully Sahelian citizens once they are represented in national institutions, and in particular in the armed forces (police, national guard, republican police, gendarmerie). Niger is a pioneer in this area and continues to be so by significantly increasing the share of Touareg and Fulani communities in the national guard in 2020. In addition to the fact that this would contribute to their anchoring as citizens, the integration of herders would be essential in the fight against cattle theft or to provide security for transhumants along the transhumance routes.

SUPERVISING SELF-DEFENCE GROUPS

Be they from the communities themselves or favoured by the authorities, these self-defence groups fill a security vacuum caused by the absence or shortcomings of the DSF. The authorities are therefore either not in a strong position to control them, sometimes they are politically dependent on them, or they are prisoners of past alliances. However, as these self-defence groups are at the heart of the dynamics of violence, efforts must be made to reduce levels of communal violence:

- ◆ **increase local dialogues between self-defence groups and communities**, including when jihadist groups need to be involved, as is currently being done in central Mali. Local authorities, the CSOs and NGOs are already active in this field, but the POs could also be more involved;
- ◆ **restructure the governance of these vigilante groups so that they are not composed of a single community**, but are part of a territorial governance framework (local, regional or national) that includes other communities. This may be the best way to avoid community violence that may result from their actions. Here again, POs have a role to play in advocating for the integration of nomadic populations into these groups;
- ◆ **put an end to the impunity of these groups by conducting national and/or international investigations**, if necessary with the technical and financial support of international partners (financing of investigative missions, financing of witness transport, etc.);

STRENGTHENING THE LIVELIHOODS OF HERDERS BY ENHANCING THE ROLE OF POS

Herders' livelihoods are currently under threat. The security crisis in the Sahel is encouraging the adoption of protectionist measures by West African states, which could further deteriorate the socio-economic situation of pastoral households. In addition to the political and diplomatic need for POs and their partners to convince these states not to adopt measures that could prove counterproductive in the medium term, such as banning transhumance, emergency support (cattle feed, veterinary care, etc.) is essential to enable herders to cope with this crisis.

Strengthening the role of POs in insurgency areas. One of the fundamental issues here is the accessibility of insurgency areas by livestock services, POs and national/international NGOs working in the field of livestock. It is imperative to initiate a process to systematise how these different actors operate in these areas. Some herders, ruggas or imams have access to insurgency zones on a personal basis. However, POs do not exploit this access, which only benefits a limited number of people. The role of POs should be enhanced, for example by strengthening their capacity to negotiate humanitarian access with armed groups, either autonomously or in conjunction with NGOs that have more experience in this area, and by training them in conflict-sensitive approaches and monitoring their activities in the field.

An increased presence of POs in the most remote areas is desirable in order to reduce the gap between the elites of these organisations and their members, who, as we have seen, feel largely abandoned. They should be able to take over from international NGOs to strengthen their links with these members and contribute to better structuring the livestock sector. They would then become even more valuable intermediaries on which the technical livestock services could rely to reach their beneficiaries, especially in places where these services can no longer go.

Stronger involvement of POs in areas where other actors can no longer go requires encouraging renewal within POs. PO networks should value new members, including very small ones, but who have a very strong local legitimacy and who could be coached to grow. Donors have a certain responsibility in this respect. They should also renew their partners and, based on grassroots evaluations, diversify their collaborations. The case of the Danish cooperation DANIDA's Support Fund for Drivers of Change (FAMOC) is an enlightening example of how to enhance the birth of CSOs at the grassroots level and accompany their development.

4. SUPPORTING HERDERS' ASPIRATIONS FOR THE FUTURE OF LIVESTOCK AND PASTORALISM

The most important lesson to be learned from this study is that young herders all have different views of the future. While the majority are concerned about the future of livestock farming, they do not all draw the same conclusions.

In general, governments need to increase their investment in livestock. The share dedicated to this sector in national budgets does not reflect its contribution to GDP. POs could play a more systematic advocacy role to promote the benefits of livestock to the national economy. They could also play a role in informing the authorities - for example through the establishment of national observatories - by collecting and disseminating data on pastoralism. Public policies in this area would then be better informed.

Some herders are resolutely attached to transhumant herding, for agro-ecological, cultural or even economic reasons, and this type of herding should not be associated with archaism, as is too often the case. Transhumant livestock farming is also essential to the food security of the Sahelian and West African states, as it is a determining factor in the value chain of dairy and meat products. It is the only mode of production that allows for adaptation to shocks and climatic variability, but also promotes soil and pasture regeneration. The preservation of this production system is therefore essential, especially as many herders who wish to move towards intensive forms of livestock production do not do so by abandoning transhumance. Transhumant herders must therefore be fully represented within pastoral organisations, their interests better defended by the latter and thus better taken into account in public policies.

Many young herders expressed the wish to remain in livestock farming, but to do so in a different way, by taking advantage of diversification opportunities, including the setting up of semi-intensive milk or meat production units. Almost all of them expressed strong expectations of the state, which should assist them in moving towards forms of livestock farming that are still too little known. Facilitating change in livestock farming is a major area of intervention for the states, which involves both better information on existing and potential commercial outlets, technical measures (equipment, training), and also political will to secure pastoral land for herders wishing to move towards more intensive farming.

Many herders have shown a will - sometimes forced by insecurity - to leave the world of animal husbandry to work or invest in sectors for which they have little or no training, in particular in trade or artisanal gold panning. Many could benefit from the support of vocational training services and their partners in order to make their conversion more sustainable. This also means that these services must adapt to the mobility of herders and organise informative caravans, for example, on market opportunities identified locally or on the existence of vocational training to encourage this type of conversion.

Whatever the future in which herders see themselves, offering them the opportunity to choose and not to be subjected to it would, in itself, constitute real progress. In the long term, this means making education in pastoral settings a priority. We have mentioned in this report the innovative nature of the Swiss programme Programme régional d'éducation et de formation des populations pastorales (Regional education and training programme for pastoralists) (PREPP) with the setting up of mobile schools¹³⁷. This type of initiative would be worth emulating on a larger scale and be officially endorsed by the education services of the Sahelian states, on the basis of feedback and capitalisation. Sahelian education systems need to be adapted to the pastoral production system: nomadic schools, boarding schools and school canteens, a calendar that is reversed in relation to periods of mobility, curricula that integrate livestock farming with more appropriate educational materials, teacher training, etc.

Beyond the education sector, herders' access to basic services is a condition for their sense of civic belonging. As Sahelian states are built on sedentary models, nomadic populations have less access to these services. Bringing these populations closer to their states therefore requires the authorities to assert their presence in a positive way, i.e. through highlighting the benefits they can offer the populations. The organisation of mobile courts - provided that justice is impartial - and caravans providing civil status services are already forms of adaptation by the state to cover isolated areas. They could be extended to all other services, starting with health services.

The future of livestock farming is now threatened by the challenges of regional integration resulting from the spread of security risks to the coastal countries of West Africa. It is pushing these states to close in on themselves. By restricting cross-border pastoral mobility, they mortgage the future of a multitude of actors dependent on the pastoral economy. It is imperative that regional institutions respond to this challenge, which affects the fundamentals of regional integration and their own existence. ECOWAS and UEMOA must define new rules of the game by updating existing agreements in order to reassure both the states and the actors of the pastoral economy in the region. These organisations should also strengthen their interdepartmental synergies (agriculture/food, early warning, human rights, etc.) to limit the impact of insecurity.

Institutions are struggling to adapt to the current situation. States must therefore strengthen their ties and provide a framework for mobility on a bilateral basis. From this point of view, it is essential to make the transhumance committees operational - in particular by building on the achievements and good practices already recorded among those that are functional - and to encourage exchanges between the committees through the establishment of a framework for cross-border consultation.

These major axes do not exhaust the many questions that these pastoral and security crises pose for Sahelian and West African states more generally as well as for their partners. This study does not aim to provide prefabricated answers, firstly because the sample of herders surveyed does not allow for such an ambition. The simple fact that herders have different horizons calls for differentiated responses from states, a holistic vision that is often lacking as mentioned above. These solutions need to be preceded by a multi-level dialogue between actors who do not normally talk to each other or do not talk much, especially on subjects that are still taboo or not sufficiently taken into consideration, namely pastoral crises and insecurity in pastoral areas. The present study puts its finger on these critical challenges in the hope of opening the way for an inclusive and frank dialogue that can make it possible to move forward.

First steps were taken in the first half of 2021. A Herders' Gathering was held in Niamey in May 2021 where the results of the study were shared and discussed. The participants fully recognised these results and launched the Niamey Appeal for the Sahelian authorities to urgently respond with structural, and therefore

¹³⁷ See Boubakar Barry, « Entretien : L'éducation contre l'exclusion » ("Interview: Education against exclusion"), Rue Grain de Sel, 3 January 2018.

sustainable, solutions to the pastoralist crisis. The President of Niger, Mohamed Bazoum, agreed to take on the role of ambassador for pastoral organisations¹³⁸. A meeting of the G5 Sahel held in the wake of this meeting made it possible to mobilise a certain number of international partners so that this study would not remain yet another expert report, but would instead constitute a reference document that would make it possible to identify sustainable solutions to the twofold crisis facing Sahelian herders.

¹³⁸ G5 Sahel, « Le président du Niger, Mohamed Bazoum endosse le rôle d’ambassadeur des organisations pastorales pour résoudre la double crise, pastorale et sécuritaire » (Niger’s President Mohamed Bazoum takes on the role of ambassador of pastoral organisations to resolve the dual crisis of pastoral and security), 12 June 2021.

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