

Farmer-herder conflict in sub-Saharan Africa?

Saverio Krätli and Camilla Toulmin





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About the authors

Saverio Krätli is a consultant and freelance researcher on pastoralism and editor of the journal *Nomadic Peoples*. Saverio specialises in the interface between people, science and policies, with a focus on sub-Saharan Africa. Camilla Toulmin is an economist, and former director of IIED. Her research has covered land, agriculture and climate change issues in West Africa, with a particular focus on Mali. See *Land, Investment, and Migration: Thirty-five years of village life in Mali*. OUP, January 2020.

Corresponding author: camilla.toulmin@iied.org; saverio.krattli@gmail.com

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Cover photo: friendly neighbours can be turned into sworn enemies by simply marking a line on the ground between them (Barth, 1999) © Saverio Krätli

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International Institute for Environment and Development
80-86 Gray's Inn Road, London WC1X 8NH, UK
Tel: +44 (0)20 3463 7399
Fax: +44 (0)20 3514 9055
www.iied.org

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Acronyms

ACLED	Armed Conflict Location and Event Data
AFD	Agence Française de Développement
CAR	Central African Republic
CBO	community-based organisation
ECA	Economic Commission for Africa
ECOWAS	Economic Community of West African States,
GTI	Global Terrorism Index
IIED	International Institute for Environment and Development
IIP	incidents involving pastoralists
NFD	Northern Frontier District (Kenya)
NGO	non-governmental organisation
PRAPS	Programme Régional d'Appui au Pastoralisme au Sahel
PRIDEC	Programme d'investissement en faveur de l'élevage dans les pays côtiers
UN	United Nations
UPDF	Ugandan People's Defence Force

Summary

This report responds to heightened concerns over rising levels of farmer-herder conflict across a wide band of semi-arid Africa. We assess the quantitative evidence behind this general impression and review the explanations in the scientific literature in light of the known issues with the legacy of knowledge about pastoralism. We found that total levels of violence have been rising in the last ten years – especially in some countries in West and Central Africa – but found no evidence that incidents associated with farming and herding, or more generally incidents involving pastoralist populations, have grown at a faster rate. We show that looking at the increasing violence through the lens of ‘farmer-herder’ conflict is overly simplistic and identify examples of constructive engagement with the phenomenon, to map out pathways to more peaceful outcomes.

We interrogated the Armed Conflict Location and Events Data (ACLED) set dataset to find out whether violent conflict involving pastoralist populations, either as victims or perpetrators, stands out as exceptional against total records at national and regional level. We looked at 16 countries in three regional clusters, West Africa, Central Africa and East Africa, with an aggregated population of approximately 580 million people. Over the period 1997-2017, the ACLED records some 173,000 civilian fatalities from armed conflict across this sample, about 10,000 of which (5.8 percent) stem from incidents involving pastoralist populations (IIP). But IIP records also include fighting between pastoralists or with militia/insurgency groups. Armed conflict that ACLED identifies as linked to farming and herding is about 40 percent of IIP, or 2 percent of the total violence in our sample. The proportion of IIP violence to total violence is not abnormally high even in countries like Nigeria and CAR, and in some cases is remarkably low, like in Mali, Niger, Senegal, Cameroon, and Chad. While there are significant conflict hotspots at country and regional level, where unresolved disputes fester, peaceful relationships and cooperation continue over much larger areas.

The common assumption that farmers and herders have inescapably clashing identities and compete fiercely for resources misses a history of cooperation. In many parts of Africa there has been strong complementarity between these livelihood systems and related forms of land use for generations. It is this complementarity that has been disrupted. For example, animal damage to crops is commonly accepted as the most frequent cause of conflict. But it is often, itself, just a link in a long chain of mismanagement, such as farmers cutting new fields in grazing areas or along established livestock passages, themselves the consequence of short-sighted or misguided land-tenure policies and poor governance.

A largely negative narrative surrounding pastoralism persists in policy circles and many national media, despite decades of research that demonstrate its lack of foundations. The administration of rural space has affected pastoral and farming systems very differently. Pastoral land use and re-shaping of vegetation patterns across the landscape through regular grazing have never received legal recognition, in stark contrast to farming and the rights associated with the marks of the plough and hoe. Government attitudes towards mobile people hold them to be anti-modern (traditional) and associated with disorder (irrational, ecologically disruptive, 'wandering about in search of water and pasture'). By relying on simplistic assumptions, the analytical category of 'farmer–herder conflict' feeds on this toxic legacy.

Confusion between 'customary' and state procedures has created fertile ground for growing conflict. These different power structures (customary institutions such as traditional leaders and village councils, and state institutions such as administrative officials, the police and the judiciary) often have contradictory and inconsistent rules for accessing resources and managing conflict. Building bridges between these two structures would foster a common understanding and better accountability.

Everyone designing and implementing policies and interventions related to 'farmer–herder conflict' should ground their work in a sound, up-to-date understanding of pastoral systems, to recognise the economic and ecological logic behind mobility, and pastoralism's potential complementarity with cropping. The narrative around insecurity and pastoralism needs to change at all levels. Theorists and decision makers must stop representing pastoralism as an unproductive system locked in the past and battling against the odds in a hostile, resource-scarce environment. Instead, drylands need to be seen as offering an environment in which variability is the rule, and where pastoral systems have specialised to make such variability work for food production. Far from living in the past, pastoralists are amongst the most avid adopters of new technology, such as solar panels and mobile phones.

Rather than a focus on explanations based on 'clashing identities,' those seeking to resolve conflict should try to understand why different groups have powerful, unresolved grievances. Interventions must start from a wider viewpoint of the context: broadening from a technical interpretation of how natural processes trigger conflict over resources into acknowledgment of the wider insecurity and political context. Rather than representing violent conflict as disrupting society, governments must listen to its meaning and communicate with the involved parties to find solutions. Reliance on military means alone will not bring peace.

Public authorities should establish local platforms to listen, negotiate and resolve conflict. They have a critical role to play in providing an impartial, fair platform where rival groups can negotiate and resolve their problems. These local platforms need recognition and

connection into the wider architecture of state institutions, strengthening consistent approaches to resolving conflict

Government must also recognise the need to invest in 'intangible infrastructure', alongside physical works. Customary institutions may lack buildings and titled officials, but their strength can make a big difference in how societies cope with disruption. People need credible and legitimate organisations through which to structure management of space, access to resources and relations with other groups.



Herder in Afar, Ethiopia © Saverio Krättli



1

Introduction

This report responds to heightened concerns over a rising level of conflict and antagonism between predominantly herding groups and more settled farming peoples across a wide band of semi-arid Africa, from the West African Sahel, through central Africa, into southern Ethiopia, Uganda, Kenya and Tanzania.

The International Institute for Environment and Development (IIED) undertook this first phase of work to March 2018 for the Agence Française de Développement (AFD)'s Division Agriculture, Développement Rural et Biodiversité.¹ This largely desk-based work is meant to be validated through discussion with a reference group that includes representation from pastoral civil society. A second phase beginning in 2019 involved field-level engagement with a set of organisations and actors within the affected region.²

The overall purpose of this work is better to understand the root causes of the phenomenon commonly referred to as farmer-herder conflict, with a view to improve the options and capacity for addressing it. In particular, the study focuses on the following objectives:

¹ See Annex 1 for the terms of reference (in French).

² Reports from Phase 2 are available at www.iied.org

- Unpack farmer-herder conflict as a general category, to gain awareness of the differences on the ground and open up the conceptual space for a more fine-grained and hopefully more constructive analysis (Sections 1.1, 1.2, 2 and 3)
- Review and assess the current perception that farmer-herder conflict is on the increase, particularly considering the possibilities that this perception may be: real; the artefact of improved efficiency in collecting and reporting; or the consequence of increased attention by international agencies in the context of the fight against terrorism and concerns about climate change (Sections 1.2, 2 and 3)
- Review conflict resolution tools, methods and institutions. Given the widespread nature of conflict in many of the countries where AFD works, this report seeks to identify examples of constructive engagement in their resolution, which can map out pathways to more peaceful outcomes across the region (Section 5 and Annex 2).

This report complements and informs a portfolio of AFD activity in this field, including the Integrated and Sustainable Livestock Farming and Pastoralism in West Africa (PEPISAO) and its support to: Sahel Regional Project Supporting Pastoralism (PRAPS), Pastoralism and Stability in the Sahel and Horn of Africa (PASSHA), Regional Dialogues and Investment Project for Pastoralism and Transhumance in the Sahel and Coastal countries of West Africa (PREDIP) and Regional Investment and Livestock Program in Coastal Countries (PRIDEC).

1.1 Why farmer-herder conflict?

Since 2012, the Sahel Region has been drawn into a spiral of ever-growing violence, led by a combination of jihadist groups and long-standing resentments among rural people. The escalating cost in human lives lost, number of displaced people and military operations has been very heavy. In the subregion including central Mali, northern and eastern Burkina Faso and western Niger, violent activity involving jihadist groups has reportedly doubled every year since 2015 (Le Roux 2019) and the number of active groups has multiplied from just one (Al Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb) in 2012 to more than ten in 2018 (ACSS 2019a). In 2019 alone, there were 10,460 fatalities from 3,471 reported violent events in the region, which also uprooted almost one million people (ACSS 2020). Military interventions by the United Nations (UN), G5, the European Union and France between 2012 and 2017 cost over €10 billion (ACSS 2019b).

Recently, references to farmer-herder conflict in sub-Saharan Africa have greatly increased in the media, policymaking contexts and academic literature. There is international concern for the apparent magnitude and acceleration of the phenomenon and its relationships with jihadist violence. Yet, two important political declarations issued from relevant international processes – Nouakchott on pastoralism in West Africa and N'Djamena on pastoralism and regional security – both in 2013 made no reference to

farmer-herder conflict, although the latter did note that “many mafia-like and terrorist groups” were destabilising the entire region.

The timeline is important because farmer-herder conflict in the Sahel is often presented as a fundamental problem, based on age-old enmity and competition for scarce resources. But is it in fact a more recent phenomenon? If so, how does it relate to the broader context of insecurity in the region?

A quick search on Google Scholar, looking for articles with the string “farmer(s)-herder(s) conflict”, returned 65 hits for 2000–2009 and 480 for 2010–2019. Of the latter, 347 are from the last five years and 461 included the word ‘Africa’. Much of this literature is either couched in an environmental security narrative or in response to it, as we detail in section 4.

Assumptions mobilised in this debate include characterising drylands as being resource-scarce and representing farmers and herders as rigidly distinct socioeconomic groups, inevitably in competition with each other. These assumptions also often tap into a deep-seated legacy that presents herders/pastoralists as inclined to violence, describing them as ‘backward’, stemming from a warrior culture and heavily armed. As such, discussions of farmer-herder conflict are predominantly posited on the premise that herders are the bad guys.³

Such assumptions have deep roots in both scholarly work and the public imagination around pastoralism. Readers of this report are encouraged to look for them in the literature on farmer-herder conflict, whether academic research, institutional reports or media reporting. Together, they lend credibility to the idea of a nexus between violent conflict and pastoralism and more broadly give credence to the value of farmer-herder conflict as a sound analytical category.

However, over the last 30 years, all these assumptions have been repeatedly challenged as knowledge about pastoralism and the drylands has evolved. Our scrutiny of farmer-herder conflict therefore starts by recalling the most relevant points in this evolution.

1.2 Some important elements of caution

The discourse around pastoralism and pastoralists has been afflicted by a long history of misrepresentation and misunderstanding. For most of this history, government approaches to pastoral development have been based on trying to emancipate livestock production from the vagaries of the dryland ecosystem. By extension, this has often translated into attempts to ‘emancipate’ pastoralists from pastoralism and an understanding of pastoral development as development away from pastoralism.

³ Even today, representing pastoral mobility as a cause of conflict is not uncommon in development discourse and policies (Turner and Schlecht 2019); it has even made it into the Wikipedia entry for ‘Pastoralism’, which states: “Some pastoralists are constantly moving, which may put them at odds with sedentary people of towns and cities. The resulting conflicts can result in war for disputed lands.”

This 'modernist' approach⁴ rested on the experience of agricultural development in temperate climates, where resource distribution is relatively stable and uniform, and on the belief that the environment can and should be mastered. Identifying pastoralism with disorder and outdated traditions, 'modernist' pastoral development interventions invested in replacing local variable and flexible structures and relationships with top-down rigid rules and structures. Often seen as needful modernisation, the latter included:

- centralising control over livestock numbers and grazing patterns (based on carrying capacity estimates);
- introducing permanent wells in seasonal rangelands;
- promoting the sedentarisation of mobile producers;
- replacing flexible land tenure arrangements with rigid and exclusive land ownership;
- replacing diverse/complementary forms of specialisation with 'universal' best solutions, such as replacing seasonal/intermittent crop-livestock integration between different specialist groups with permanent farm-level integration;
- replacing the biodiversity of local livestock species with the uniformity of imported breeds.

The persistence of development interventions overlooking (therefore undermining) customary seasonal forms of crop-livestock integration above the scale of the farm is particularly relevant here (see, for example, Landais and Lhoste 1990; Ramisch 1999; Scoones and Wolmer 2002; Powell et al. 2004; Schiere et al. 2016; Ickowicz et al. 2012; Gebreselassie 2016).

Discontent with this approach among researchers and practitioners in the field bubbled up through the 1970s and 1980s (among others, Digard et al. 1992; Bernus 1990; Westoby et al. 1989; Ellis and Swift 1988; Bourgeot and Guillaume 1986; Benoit 1984; Sandford 1983 – see also Box 1), leading to a formal challenge of the dominant paradigm in the mid-1990s (Behnke et al. 1993). This challenge hinged on understanding environmental variability as a constitutive central element of drylands and pastoral systems, rather than a disturbance. Nevertheless, today the old model remains remarkably strong. Indeed, it has seen a revival on the back of neoliberal policies, with the balance of nature principle and market self-regulation seemingly validating each other. Underlying assumptions that treat uniformity and stability as the norm and variability as a problem remain embedded in the basic tools of rural development, as seen in the many off-the-shelf definitions, indicators and mechanisms of appraisal and conventional scales of observation (Krätli 2016; Goodhand 2020). Such assumptions continue to shape and limit even the work of those researchers, technicians and policymakers who have embraced the new model.

⁴ James Scott, who analysed this approach more broadly in 'Seeing Like a State', described it as "high-modernist ideology [...] a strong, one might even say muscle-bound, version of the self-confidence about scientific and technical progress, the expansion of production, the growing satisfaction of human needs, the mastery of nature (including human nature), and, above all, the rational design of social order commensurate with the scientific understanding of natural laws" (Scott 1998).

“Investments that seek to control the environment fail to unlock the full capacity of the drylands and frequently undermine local economies and livelihoods – creating inequity, degradation and conflict ...” (IIED 2015)

Alternative approaches take a different pathway, by adapting the development project toolbox to generate data representative of contexts dominated by variability, not stability. Since social capital and relationships are key to risk management, small-scale producers are better understood as inclined to form cooperating networks rather than as naturally competing units. In the drylands, the conceptual categories of livestock producers and crop farmers are arbitrary – since everyone combines both activities to varying extents – and lead to undesirable separation in practice. Beyond local differences, all livelihood systems in the drylands share the logic of working with the variability in the biophysical environment by embedding matching variability in their processes of production, at field, household and community levels (Toulmin 1992; IIED 2015; Roe 2020; and a recent overview in MISEREOR 2019).

Inappropriate and misleading assumptions in policy and interventions have left a legacy of problematic outcomes. These are both intended – for example, the permanent occupation and use of rainy-season grazing land, reduced herd mobility, and encouragement of livestock into mixed farming systems – and unintended, such as loss of resilience to environmental shocks and stress for the majority of dryland food producers. A sound analysis of current challenges, including violent conflict, depends on understanding this adverse legacy and considering its lasting impacts.

Box 1. A history of overlooked technical advice on pastoral mobility

In 1983, in conclusion to a major research project in the Sahel, scientists at the Centre for Agrobiological Research in Wageningen, Netherlands, warned that “Replacing nomadism and transhumance by sedentarism will have a very negative effect on animal productivity” (Penning de Vries 1983: 30). International Livestock Center for Africa scientist Poul Sihm listed among the causes of project failure the “one-sided emphasis on technical assistance as a means of accomplishing development [and] encouragement, by developers, of government attempts to control pastoralism, including largely futile efforts to settle the pastoralist, regardless of the fact that this means destroying the most valuable aspect of pastoralism – its mobility and flexibility in the utilization of a marginally productive land resource” (Sihm 1980: 30). The previous decade, French research institute for development ORSTOM geographer Henri Barral talked of “*l’indispensable re-mobilisation des éleveurs Sahéliens*” [the necessity of reverting Sahelian pastoralists to mobility] (Barral 1974: 135). At the UNESCO Paris Symposium on the problems of the Zones Arides in 1960s, Brémaud and Pagot argued that the sedentarisation of pastoralists resulted in both ecological and economic losses (Brémaud and Pagot 1962).

Source: MISEREOR 2019



Young arab woman travelling towards Lake Chad, Kabelawa, Diffa Region, Niger © Marie Monimart



2

Methodology

This report is based on three different sources of evidence: quantitative evidence, from the analysis of the Armed Conflict Location and Event Data Project (ACLED) database; qualitative evidence, from the review of the literature on farmer-herder conflict; and input from expert interview and collective discussion.

2.1 Quantitative analysis

Our analysis of quantitative data is based on the 1997–2017 ACLED data set for Africa.⁵ ACLED is a freely accessible disaggregated data collection on dates, actors, locations, fatalities and modalities of reported political violence and protest events across Africa and several other regions.⁶ It includes events in which there are attacks on, and fighting between, civilians as long as they involve direct violence on people (including kidnapping). Each record includes a brief narrative description of the event, with incidents identified by date and location and disaggregated by the following categories:

⁵ www.acleddata.com

⁶ ACLED covers also South Asia, Southeast Asia, the Middle East, Central Asia and the Caucasus, Latin America and the Caribbean, and South-eastern and Eastern Europe and the Balkans.

- Battles: fights between two armed groups
- Riots/protest: demonstrations, either peaceful or violent
- Violence against civilians: violence by armed actors against unarmed actors
- Remote violence: air raids, improvised explosive devices (not suicide attacks)
- Strategic developments: non-violent events of note.

We queried ACLED for 16 countries: Senegal, Burkina Faso, Mali, Niger, Nigeria, Ghana, Côte d'Ivoire, Benin, Togo, Chad, Cameroon, Central African Republic (CAR), Ethiopia, Kenya, Uganda and Tanzania (a total of 40,349 records). We analysed this subset for relevance to pastoralists, searching the narrative description of records for combinations of terms (and their variants) such as cattle, herder, transhumant, nomad, pastoral, farmer, as well as for the name of pastoralist ethnic groups in their respective countries (Turkana, Fulani, Peul, M'Bororo, Toposa and so on). We then checked the identified records for relevance one by one, looking both at general involvement of pastoralists and more specifically at farmer-herder conflict.

This produced a subset of records that we called incidents involving pastoralists (IIP) either as victims or perpetrators, or both. We identified the actors involved in events as precisely as possible, disaggregated by the following categories: state forces, rebels, political militias/unidentified groups, communal/ethnic/clan militias, rioters, protesters, civilians, foreign/international security forces. We also identified the nature of the interaction – for example, ethnic militia vs ethnic militia or ethnic militia vs state forces.

We analysed the data to highlight:

- Geographical distribution of incidents and hotspots by frequency and intensity
- Temporal distribution of incidents and peaks in frequency and intensity
- Regional and national differences, similarities and connections by type of incident.

The analysis helps answer the following questions:

1. Have farmer-herder conflicts increased in frequency/intensity during the last 20 years? Is there a noticeable trend in the data?
2. What types of conflict involving farmers and herders are predominant?
3. How does the incidence (frequency and intensity) of farmer-herder conflicts compare with the overall incidence of all violent conflicts recorded in ACLED?

2.2 Strengths and weaknesses of ACLED

ACLED is built from systematic screening of selected national and international media, therefore only capturing events that make it to the news. With this important limitation, ACLED has the largest inventory of conflict in Africa at present. While it does not focus on farmer-herder conflict or even incidents involving pastoralists, its records include information on actors involved in each conflict and a brief narrative description of the event. The ACLED data set is only as comprehensive and reliable as the media sources upon which it is based.

Violence against pastoralists suffers from poor reporting. Fatality figures are mostly conservative estimates and the classification of conflict can be inaccurate. The margin of error might be affected by low visibility of pastoral areas (under-reporting) or by a sensationalist focus on pastoralists (over-reporting). Any bias in the media is also likely to be unevenly distributed, both across the countries in our sample and throughout the period in consideration.

Feedback from our reference group emphasised discrepancy between the ACLED figures for Nigeria and Niger and personal impressions from living in these countries. For Nigeria, under-reporting in the media is common and attribution of violence is often a problem, with the media jumping to conclusions before any investigation has taken place. For Niger, the impression is that fatal conflicts between farmers and herders were relatively frequent between 1993 and 2010, although ACLED records only six incidents involving pastoralists as either perpetrators or victims between 1997–2010, with 12 fatalities in 1997 and five in 1999. Some data on the incidence of conflict in Niger are also collected by the *Commissions Foncières*, unfortunately beyond the reach of our study.

Finally, changes in the intensity of reported violence might reflect changes in media attention as well as changes in the world. Within these limitations, while the actual number of events is likely under-represented, we do not expect events of conflict involving pastoralists as initiators to be particularly at risk of being missed out compared to other violent conflict in rural areas. On the contrary, they seem more likely to attract the attention of the media (Shanahan 2013).

ACLED does not disaggregate actors by gender and age, so it is difficult to assess overall how violent conflict impacts on women, children, men and youth. Nevertheless, a scrutiny of newspaper reports often provides further detail to flesh out the statistics. These show that in cases of escalating violence between groups, women and children are frequently targeted, with shocking descriptions emerging of defenceless people being attacked.

Given these important limitations, our quantitative analysis based on ACLED is meant to provide an approximate indicator, and hopefully a stimulus to invest in more systematic

and reliable collection of data on farmer-herder conflict, if this category is to be at all meaningful in policymaking.⁷

The only systematic inventory of farmer-herder conflict we have come across was carried out in central Chad by the Almy Al Afia project, covering 2004–2007 (Djimadoum and Nodjidang 2009; Marty et al. 2010).⁸ This survey of conflicts addressed through the formal judicial system at *chefs de canton* level and above (but not the national *Gendarmerie*) identified 897 cases, distributed fairly evenly over the four years covered by the survey, and mostly resolved without violence. The vast majority of these incidents (70–85%) were recorded under the category of *divagation d'animaux* (livestock trespassing or stray animals), followed by *refus d'accès à un point d'eau* (disputes around access to water sources). Based on a review of ACLED, only a handful of these incidents recorded by the Almy Al Afia project appears to have made it to media news, although ACLED has 309 records of incidents in Chad for the 2004–2007 period.

2.3 Qualitative analysis

The literature review has used published sources and grey literature, plus a selection of sources identified through Google Scholar by using the search string <herder(s) farmer(s) conflict [Africa or sample-country] > both 'since 2013' and 'any time'.⁹

We also took a subset of countries – Nigeria, Ghana and Mali – for in-depth review, using several newspaper and media sources, to understand how frequently and in what manner herder-farmer conflicts have been portrayed. Our qualitative analysis looked at:

- Categories of description in public data, the media and scientific analysis
- Wider social, political and economic dynamics, such as wealth redistribution, transformation in customary authority, new elites and political games, changes in relationships and power across age groups and gender groups, and public image of pastoralism/pastoralists
- New forms of violent conflict and historical transformation of violence.

⁷ A Conflict Early Warning and Response Mechanism database, including coverage of conflicts involving pastoralists, is now available for Intergovernmental Authority on Development member states (IGAD 2016).

⁸ The *Programme d'Hydraulique Pastorale au Tchad Central–Almy Al Afia*, one of the large projects of pastoral water development to support pastoral mobility funded by AFD in Chad from 1994 onwards, covered 28 *cantons* in Batha-Ouest, Fitri, Guéra, Abtouyour and Barh Signaka, as well as part of Dababa and Assinet.

⁹ Given the large number of hits generated by the search engine (1,800 'since 2017' and 11,000 'since 2013' when using Africa), we focused attention on the first 6–12 pages of hits, until the relevance for all the words in our search string fell.

2.3.1 Expert interviews and collective discussions

We spoke with a range of people who are professionally engaged with issues of conflict and livestock-crop relationships, to explore our findings. We will build on this in the next stage, through a series of on-line events with key informants from government agencies, research organisations, herder and farmer associations and federations and civil society groups, to test out the findings and recommendations from this report for future work.

Although this study focuses on violent conflict, there are also important impacts from low-level conflicts, such as cattle theft, avoidance of markets due to tensions, disputes around water access and extortion of monetary payments to avoid conflict (Pike et al. 2016).

Even when these do not involve physical attacks on people or animals, they do change behaviour and patterns of interaction. These dimensions of conflict might be less easy to track through the media in as much as they are considered less newsworthy. Yet, finding effective means to track low-level conflict and its consequences would seem valuable for understanding dispute resolution and conflict escalation.



Transhumant cattle pass the dry season on farmers' fields, Mali © Camilla Toulmin



3

The phenomenon

In this section, we draw on the qualitative and quantitative data described in Section 2 to map the occurrence of violent conflicts involving pastoralists in West, Central and East Africa over the last 20 years.

3.1 Overview of quantitative data

ACLED records overall show striking levels of violence against civilians across our sample but also huge disparity, both within and between regional clusters, as well as over time (see Figures 1-3 below).

A general increase in violence in the last ten years is very evident in our West Africa and Central Africa clusters. A disproportionately high number of incidents and fatalities in West Africa are recorded in Nigeria (peaking at over 22,000 fatalities in 2014-2015), followed by Mali, Niger and Côte d'Ivoire. In Central Africa, recorded violence remains relatively low (but still around 500 fatalities per year) until 2010 (with the exception of a peak in Chad and CAR in 2000). In 2011 and 2012 figures on fatalities dropped by half but then rose sharply the

following years (2,500 in 2013, 5,000 in 2014), mostly because of incidents in CAR, followed at some distance by Cameroon. In our East Africa cluster, recorded violence throughout the 1997-2017 period has been consistently high with the exception of Tanzania, with the highest peaks in 1999 (28,000), during the war between Ethiopia and Eritrea, and in 2002 (6,000, all in Ethiopia and Uganda).

In the five years between 2013 and 2017, ACLED recorded some 42,000 civilian fatalities in the West Africa cluster (with a population of approximately 291 million), 14,000 fatalities in the Central Africa cluster (43 million) and 9,000 fatalities in the East Africa cluster (248 million). In East Africa, the total number of civilian fatalities for the entire 1997-2017 period (76,000) is higher than in West Africa (74,500), and represents a higher proportion of the aggregate population in the cluster. The highest levels of violence per person are in Central Africa, with over 21,000 fatalities, given they have but a sixth of the population of the West Africa cluster.¹⁰ With a population of 5 million but 9,300 recorded fatalities since 2013, CAR stands out clearly as the worst affected.

Over the period 1997-2017, the ACLED records a total of 173,000 civilian fatalities across the three regional clusters. Amongst these, the recorded fatalities related to incidents involving pastoralists are 10,096.

Against the background of general and persistent levels of violence in these regions, neither the frequency of incidents involving pastoralists nor the number of fatalities stand out as exceptional.

3.1.1 A glance at 2019-2020

Revising this report in early 2020, the impression of an acceleration in the total number of violent incidents and fatalities was confirmed. For the 16 countries in our sample, ACLED recorded a total of 5,100 incidents and 13,364 fatalities in the 12 months from May 2019 to May 2020 (all included). Most of these were in Nigeria (1,421 incidents with 4,168 fatalities), Burkina Faso (580 incidents with 2,231 fatalities), Mali (605 incidents with 2,038 fatalities), and Cameroon (783 incidents, with 1,452 fatalities). Violence in CAR appears to have slightly slowed down (164 incidents and 508 fatalities) while it seems to be increasing in Niger (305 incidents and 986 fatalities) and Chad (130 incidents and 731 fatalities). Records for Ghana, Benin and Côte d'Ivoire were respectively 121, 33 and 146 incidents with 50, 43 and 61 fatalities, whereas Togo and Senegal recorded 32 and 8 incidents, with 10 and 2 fatalities respectively. In East Africa, ACLED recorded 191 incidents in Ethiopia with 581 fatalities, 289 incidents in Uganda with 175 fatalities, 271 incidents in Kenya with 293 fatalities and 21 incidents in Tanzania with 17 fatalities.

¹⁰ See also Chauvin 2014; Dufumier and Lallau 2016; Moritz 2006; Amadou 2017.

Figure 1. Incidence of total violence and proportion of Incidents Involving Pastoralists (IIP) by country (1997-2017)

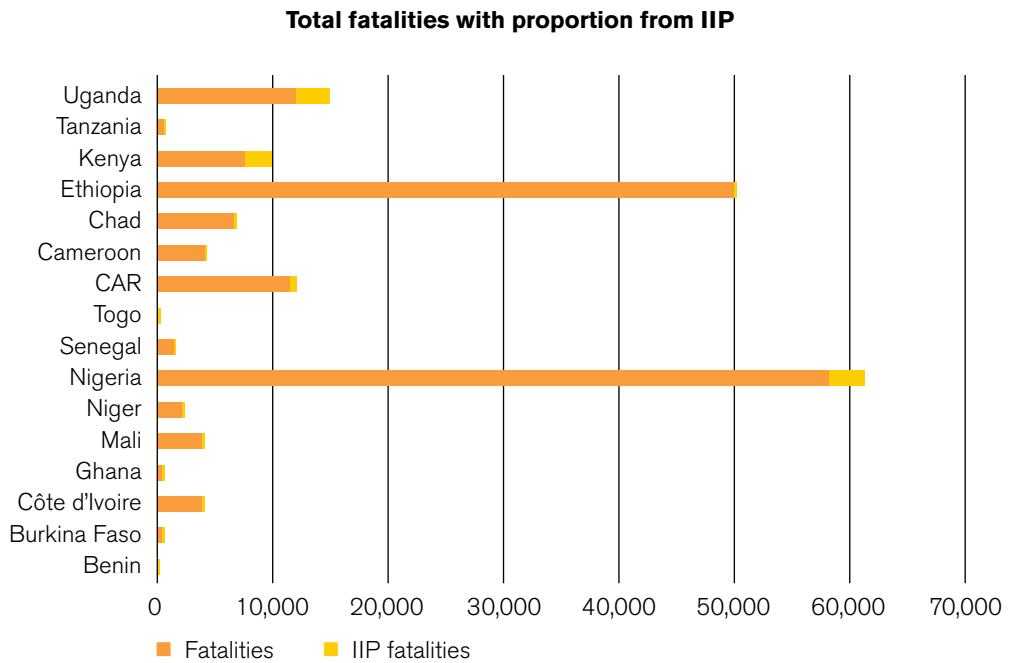
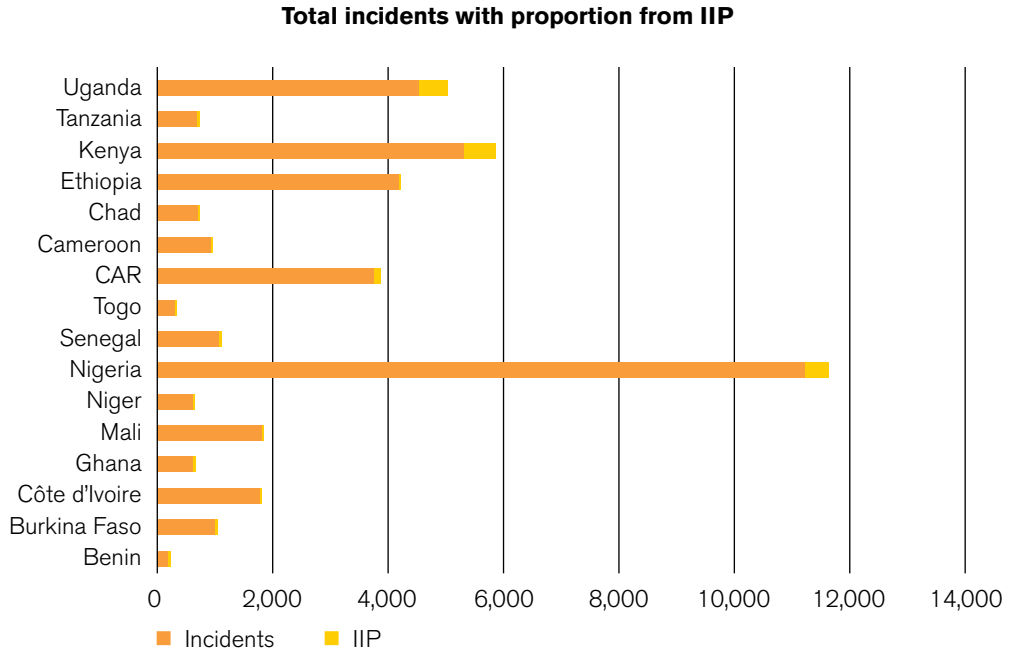
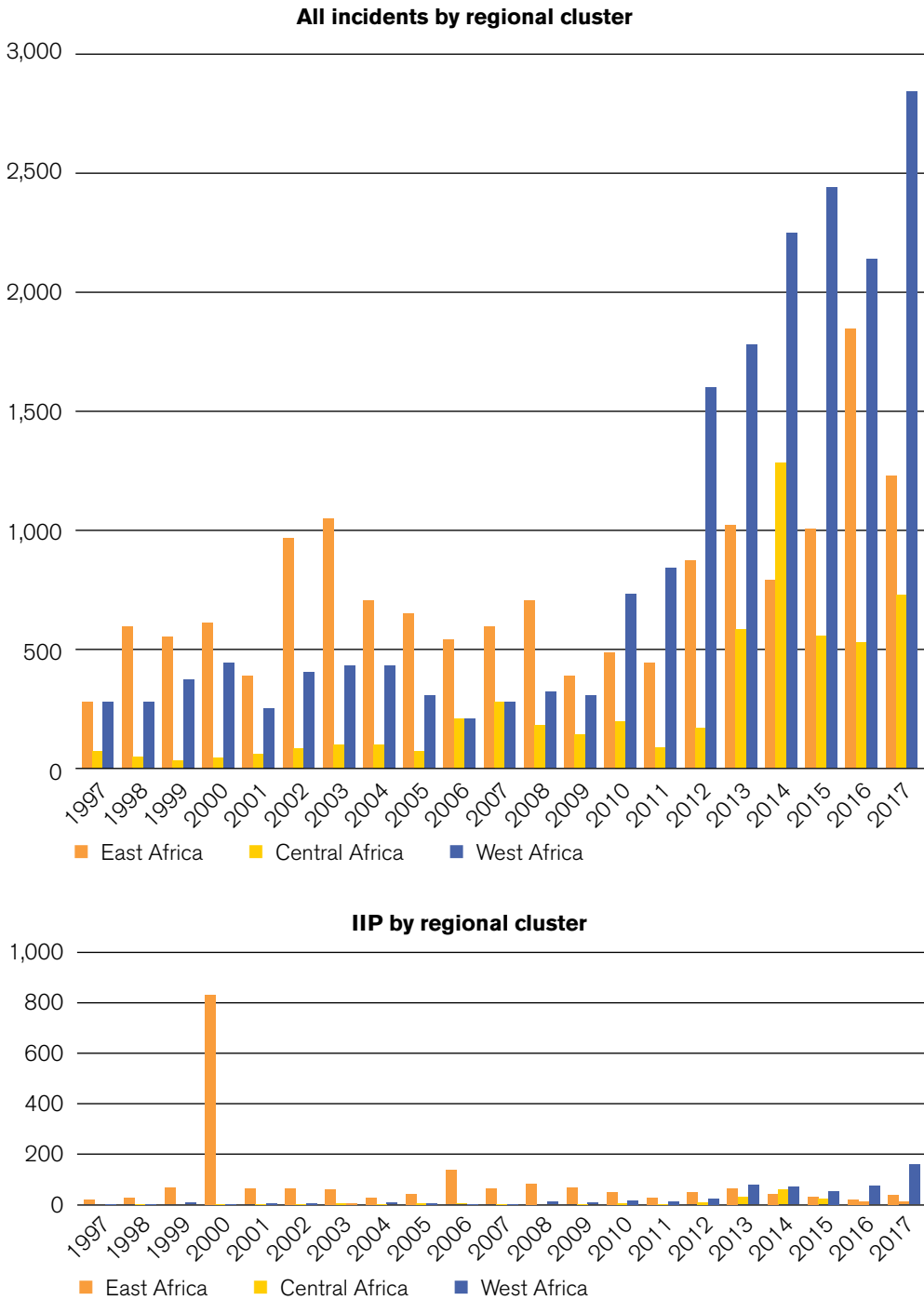
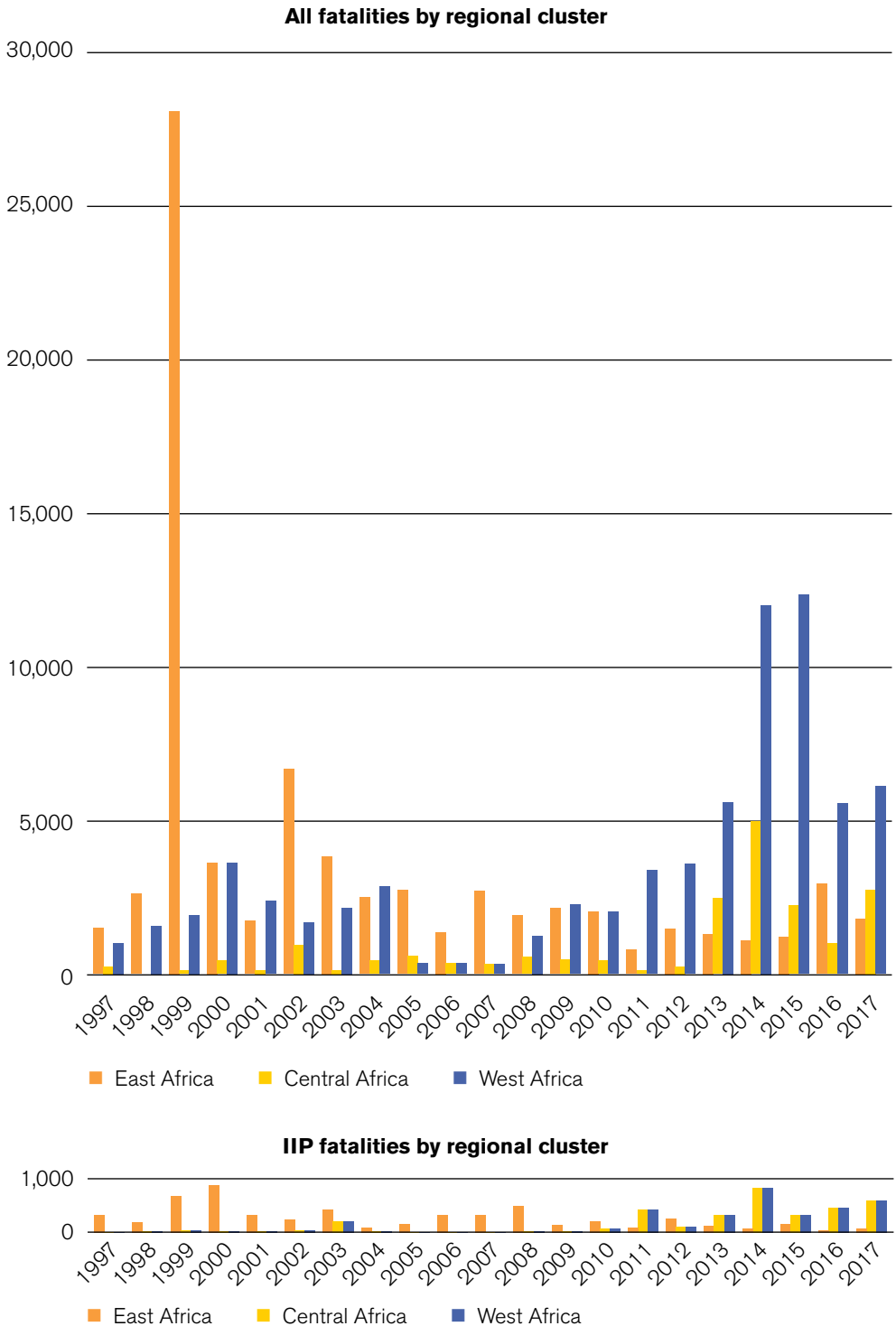


Figure 2. All conflict incidents and IIP by regional cluster (1997–2017)¹¹



¹¹ East Africa cluster: approx 248 million people; Central Africa cluster: approx 43 million; West Africa cluster: approx 291 million.

Figure 3. All fatalities and IIP fatalities by regional cluster (1997–2017)



3.1.2 Incidents involving pastoralists (1997–2017)

It is worth remembering that the category ‘incident involving pastoralists’ (IIP) includes any incident described in the source with reference to a pastoral ethnic group or with relevant identifiers such as ‘herd’, ‘herdsmen’, ‘nomads’, etc. Thus, IIP includes not only cases of incidents between pastoralist groups and farmers, but also between different groups, independently from the role they have played in the conflict. For example, attacks described as against Fulani herders by other actors are counted as IIP.

In our West Africa cluster, while overall fatalities were increasing sharply in 2012 in connection with the civil war in Mali, and with disorders in Niger in 2015, recorded IIP fatalities remained around fifty per year, with the exception of 2003 (201 fatalities) and 2011 (416 fatalities), both cases almost entirely accounted for by incidents in Nigeria. Violence started rising significantly in 2013–2014 following the regional trend, peaking at some 800 fatalities in 2014, then 460 fatalities in 2016 and 580 in 2017. Also, in these cases, almost the totality of the incidents took place in Nigeria.

In Central Africa, IIP levels are even lower, peaking at 63 fatalities in 2002 (a single incident in CAR), 20 fatalities in 2004 and 2005 (the latter in a single incident in Cameroon), 40 fatalities in 2006 (almost all in a single incident in Chad) and 29 in 2010. This was then followed by a spike at 238 fatalities in 2013 (all in CAR), and return to an average of 60 fatalities per year in the following years.

In the East Africa cluster, annual fatalities from IIP are in the order of hundreds throughout the sample until 2015, with few exceptions (98 fatalities in 2004, 94 fatalities in 2011 and 77 in 2014). The highest peak is in 2000 (874 fatalities, 750 of which in Uganda). Other peaks are in 2003 (419 fatalities, also mostly in Uganda, following a military crackdown on pastoralists during the disarmament campaign) and in 2006–2007 (with about 320 fatalities each year) and 2008 (489 recorded fatalities, 362 of which in Kenya, including 74 Turkana pastoralists allegedly bombed by the UPDF).

Aggregate numbers are 3,582 recorded fatalities in the West Africa cluster, 680 in the Central Africa cluster and 5,641 in the East Africa cluster.

3.1.3 Incidents involving pastoralists vs farmer-herder conflict

We interrogated the ACLED dataset to find out whether the number of IIP and related fatalities is proportionate to the overall levels of violence in the regions.

In order to answer this query, we compared the relationship between IIP and total incidents (incidents and fatalities), with the relationship between the size of pastoralist populations and the national population. Data on the number of pastoralists in Africa are

notoriously uncertain (Keita et al. 2016; Krätli and Swift 2014), thus this exercise is an educated guess. The result of this analysis is presented in Table 1.

Fatalities are expressed as a proportion ('per thousands') of the national population, as a comparable measure of the intensity of violence across the sample. IIP fatalities are also expressed as a percentage of total fatalities. This allows the comparison with the percent of pastoralist population (main groups) over total population in the first column of the table.

The data for the West Africa cluster and Central Africa cluster, i.e. the regions where IIP are supposed to be mostly in the form of farmer-herder conflict, show that the proportion of IIP violence to total violence is not abnormally high even in countries like Nigeria and CAR, and in some cases is remarkably low, like in Mali, Niger, Senegal, Cameroon, Chad.

Many IIP recorded in ACLED concern attacks by bandits or organised, paramilitary groups, including Boko Haram. In East Africa, most IIP concern violence in cattle rustling raids and law enforcement operations. In the rest of the sample, a significant number of events are fights in which ethnic militia oppose each other. When the national IIP subsets are filtered to identify conflict not simply between ethnic groups but between farmers as cultivators and pastoralists as herders – that is, when the reported reasons for the conflict are associated with the farming and herding – the numbers thin further (Table 1, column 4). This might however be due to opacity in recording.

In contrast to this scenario, the countries in our East Africa cluster show a higher proportion of fatalities associated with IIP in relation to the proportion of their pastoralist population, with the exception of Ethiopia.

The high IIP fatalities in Uganda (19.9% of total fatalities with pastoralists estimated to be 7% of the national population), reflects both the incidence of cattle raids in Karamoja and the violence of the disarmament programme between 2000 and 2014, which involved forced seizure of guns from pastoral groups by the Ugandan military (Stites 2010; Czuba 2017).

Table 1. ACLED conflict events and incidents involving pastoralists (1997–2017)

Country name, approximate population, estimate size of pastoralist population	Total records of incidents	IIP records and (share of total)	Farmer-herder (fh) or herder-herder (hh) incidents, (share of total), and fatalities	Total fatalities (x1,000 of population ^a)	IIP fatalities (x1000 of population), (% of all fatalities)	Total records of incidents without fatalities	IIP without fatalities
Benin 11 million 7% Peul	183	10 (5.4%)	10 fh (5.4%) 23 fatalities	51 (0.004)	23 (0.002) (44% ^b)	160 (87%)	2 (20%)
Burkina Faso 18 million 13% Peul and Tuareg	1,022	20 (1.9%)	19 fh (1.9%) 49 fatalities	469 (0.03)	49 (0.002) (11%)	878 (86%)	5 (25%)
Côte d'Ivoire 27 million 2% Peul ¹³	1,758	9 (0.5%)	9 fh (0.5%) 37 fatalities	4,080 (0.15)	37 (0.001) (0.9%)	1,318 (75%)	3 (33%)
Ghana 27 million 5% Fulani	603	16 (2.6%)	10 fh (1.6%) 38 fatalities	501 (0.02)	38 (0.002) (7.6%)	474 (79%)	3 (12%)
Mali 15 million 27% Peul and Tuareg	1,809	25 (1.4%)	9 fh+2hh (0.6%) 45 +14 fatalities	4,065 (0.3)	154 (0.010) (3.8%)	1,079 (60%)	1
Niger 21 million 18% Peul and Tuareg	597	11 (1.7%)	7fh (1.2%) 42 fatalities	2,341 (0.111)	58 (0.002) (2.4%)	392 (66%)	4 (20%)

¹²Fulani, Fulbe, Peul are all names for the same ethnic group, either in different languages or following from different colonial histories.

¹³Hundreds of thousands of Peul living in the country are not officially recognised as citizens of Côte d'Ivoire. (<https://www.unhcr.org/uk/news/stories/2019/5/5cd2e5a44/cattle-herders-face-life-limbo-cote-divoire.html>). See also <http://www.axl.cefan.ulaval.ca/afrique/cotiv.htm>

Country name, approximate population, estimate size of pastoralist population	Total records of incidents	IIP records and (share of total)	Farmer-herder (fh) or herder-herder (hh) incidents, (share of total), and fatalities	Total fatalities (x1,000 of population ^a)	IIP fatalities (x1000 of population), (% of all fatalities)	Total records of incidents without fatalities	IIP without fatalities
Nigeria 150 million 4% Fulani	11,672	438 (3.7%)	296 ^c (2%) 2197 fatalities	61,461 (0.4)	3,213 (0.021) (5.2%)	6,448 (55%)	122 (28%)
Senegal 16 million 24% Peul	1,076	9 (0.8%)	2 fh (0.2%) no fatalities	1,401 (0.09)	4 (0.002) (0.3%)	837 (82%)	6 (66%)
Togo 8 million 1% Peul	297	2 (0.7%)	2 fh (0.7%) 6 fatalities	157 (0.02)	6 (0.0007) (4.1%)	255 (86%)	0
CAR 5 million 6 % Peul ¹⁴	3,884	144 ^d (3.7%)	68fh (1.8%) 324 fatalities	12,215 (2.4)	750 (0.15) (6.3%)	2,160 (56%)	42 (29%)
Cameroon 24 million 10% Peul	945	17 ^e (1.9%)	4 fh (0.5%) 20 fatalities	4,293 (0.18)	104 0.0043) (2.5%)	462 (49%)	4 (25%)
Chad 14 million 20% Arab and Toubou	695	10 ^f (1.2%)	4 fh (0.6%) 30 fatalities	6,745 (0.48)	82 0.0058) (1.2%)	457 (66%)	3 (33%)
Ethiopia 100 million 12% pastoralists	4,217	21 ^g (0.5%)	9 hh (0.2%) 89 fatalities	50,210 (0.5)	194 (0.002) (0.4%)	2,202 (52%)	6 (28%)

¹⁴ <https://centralafricanrepublicnews.wordpress.com/2017/04/30/centrafrique-population-et-differentes-langues-parlees/>

FARMER-HERDER CONFLICT IN SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA?

Country name, approximate population, estimate size of pastoralist population	Total records of incidents	IIP records and (share of total)	Farmer-herder (fh) or herder-herder (hh) incidents, (share of total), and fatalities	Total fatalities (x1,000 of population ^a)	IIP fatalities (x1000 of population), (% of all fatalities)	Total records of incidents without fatalities	IIP without fatalities
Kenya 50 million 10% pastoralists	5,845	528 (9%)	65 fh 255 hh (5.4%) ^h 240+1,105 fatalities	9,924 (0.2)	2,334 (0.046) (23.5%)	3,762 (64%)	196 (37%)
Tanzania 56 million 2% pastoralists	716	45 (6.5%) (6%)	24 fh (3.4%) 68 fatalities	812 (0.01)	94 (0.0016) (12%)	509 (71%)	14 (38%)
Uganda 42 million 7% pastoralists	5,030	510 ⁱ (9.7%)	43 fh + 290hh (6.6%) 222+ 1,700 fatalities	15,131 (0.35)	3,014 (0.071) (19.9%)	2,847 (56%)	96 (23%)

Notes: ^aA crude quantification of fatalities against 1,000 members of the population; ^bBenin: all fatalities the last three years in two frontier *communes* (Ketou/Nigeria and Malanville/Niger); ^cNigeria: ACLED also records another 213 incidents involving 'Fulani militia' (3,201 fatalities); ^dCAR: at least 64 of these incidents (384 fatalities) are recorded as attacks by militia groups, either Anti-Balaka (30 incidents, 203 fatalities), Seleka/ex-Seleka (32 incidents, 181 fatalities) or PK5 (2 incidents, 3 fatalities); ^eCameroon: eleven of these incidents and 23 of the fatalities were livestock raids by Boko Haram (6) and rebel groups from CAR (5); ^fChad: all but four were raids against herders or villages by militia groups from Sudan and CAR; ^gEthiopia: eleven of these incidents (87 fatalities) were with police or military forces; ^hKenya: the other incidents were between law enforcement and bandits/cattle raiders, or attacks by various militia groups and ten were allegedly by the Uganda People's Defence Force (UPDF) (with 76 fatalities); ⁱUganda: of these incidents, 190 were clashes with police or, mostly, UPDF (959 fatalities).

3.1.4 Geographical distribution of conflict

There are huge disparities across our sample, both with regard to the incidence of conflict and the number of fatalities as a proportion of total national population (see Table 1). Overall, ACLED-recorded fatalities are the highest in Nigeria and CAR, followed at significant distance by Chad, Ethiopia, Mali,¹⁵ Uganda, Kenya and Cameroon. However, when we look at the fatalities from incidents involving pastoralists there is a different pattern. A crude measure of fatalities relative to the size of the population shows a peak in CAR, followed at some distance by Uganda, Kenya and Nigeria, but much lower values (by ten times) in all the other countries in the sample.

Evidence of conflict hotspots, based on our analysis of the ACLED records (Table 2), shows high disparity in the location of incidents within individual countries. Areas that have seen violent conflict in the past tend to experience recurrent conflict, as unresolved disputes generate further violence. The records include the location down to the lowest administrative unit identified in the media source. Some locations are recurrent.¹⁶ A word of caution is due here, however, as media coverage is not evenly distributed within countries, some of these hotspots might simply reflect more comprehensive or consistent coverage, while others are certainly missing from our list.

Table 2. ACLED hotspots for incidents involving pastoralists (1997–2017)

Country	Hotspots 1997–2013	Hotspots 2013–2017
Benin	-	Ouémé/Adjohoun Atakora/Malanville Plateau/Kétou
Burkina Faso	Est/Komandjoari Boucle du Mouhoun/Kossi Sud-Ouest/Poni, Bougouriba Est/Tapoa Centre-Est/Boulgou	Centre-Nord/Sanmatenga Centre-Sud/Nahouri Plateau-Central/Ganzourgou Boucle du Mouhoun/Sourou Nord/Yatenga
Côte d'Ivoire	Abidjan Sikensi	Abidjan Lagune/Jacquerville Vallée du Bandama/Bouaké

¹⁵ But media coverage of fatalities in Mali after the collapse of the state in 2011 and at least until 2014 is not comprehensive.

¹⁶ A recent survey of conflict involving pastoralists in West Africa also highlights this disparity in distribution within countries, noting that sometimes areas with similar pressure on natural resources show a very different incidence of violent conflict (Adam Higazi, University of Amsterdam, personal communication referring to the survey for UNOWAS 2018).

Country	Hotspots 1997–2013	Hotspots 2013–2017
Ghana	Ashanti/Asante Akim North Northern Region	Eastern/New Juaben, Aram Plains, Kwahu East Ashanti/Asante Akim North, Afigya Sekyere Upper West/Jirapa Lambussie Brong Ahafo/Pru Northern/West Mamprussi
Mali	Mopti/Sari Koro	Gao/Menaka Mopti/Tenenkou, Kareri, Douentza, Koro Gourma
Niger	Tillabery/Tera, Kollo Dosso/Boboye	Tahoua/Birni N'Konni, Madaoua Diffa/N'Guigmi
Nigeria	Zamfara Kaduna Plateau/Jos, Wase	Zamfara Kaduna Plateau/Jos, Wase Kogi/Bassa, Acha Kwara State Benue/Agatu Taraba/Mambilla plateau Bauchi/Tafawa Balewa Adamawa/Demsa, Numan
Senegal	-	Sedhiou/Goudomp/Djibanar
Togo	-	Savanes/Tône
Cameroon		Extreme-Nord/Mayo-Sava
CAR	Bangui Baminigui/Bangoran/Ndele Nana-Grebizi	Ouham/Batangafo/Bossangoa Ouham Pendé/Paoua
Chad	Batha/Fitri Moyen-Chari/Grande Sido Ouaddai/Assoungha Dar Sila/Sila	Ouaddai/Ouara
Ethiopia	Oromia/Moyale	Oromia/Borena Amhara/Semien, Gondar

Country	Hotspots 1997–2013	Hotspots 2013–2017
Kenya	Turkana/Lokichokio, Lodwar Marsabit/Saku/North Horr Moyale	Turkana/Lodwar Tana River/Galole Laikipia/Salama
Tanzania	Mara/Tarime Arusha/Ngorongoro	Morogoro/Kichangani Iringa/Pawaga Mara/Tarime
Uganda	Moroto/Katikekile Nakapiripirit/Kadam Kotido/Panyankara Kaabong	Kotido Kaabong

* Administrative region (district or county)/location/sub-location, other location or sub-location.

3.1.5 Timing of incidents: is violence associated with drought or seasons?

There is no obvious evidence of a connection between the number of incidents or the intensity of violence (fatalities) and drought years in West and Central Africa. For example, Chad had a peak of violence in 2006 but just from two incidents. CAR had peaks in 2002, 2013 and 2014. ACLED data for Niger show an increase in fatalities in 2012, 2014 and 2016, but just four incidents and no recorded fatalities between 2000 and 2011. However, we should note that these figures are so low they suggest severe under-reporting and would need to be triangulated against national sources – such as the traditional chiefs (*chefferie traditionnelle*) for herding and farming groups and *Commissions Foncières*. There is no clear pattern to the incidence of conflict by season in Nigeria, but this might result from the scale of the analysis, as ACLED does not allow for an automatic disaggregation of Northern Nigeria.

The records for East Africa on the other hand, show some correlation between incidents and droughts, although this is not entirely consistent with the occurrence of all droughts. Kenya has a peak of incidents and fatalities in 1997, 2001–2002 (1999–2001 drought), 2007–2008, 2011–2012 (all drought years) – but no peak in 1999–2000, 2004–2005, nor during the 2014–2017 drought. In Tanzania, incidents and fatalities peak in 2013 and 2014; in Ethiopia, they peak in 2015 and 2016 only.

Do incidents and violence peak at particular seasons? IIP appear to peak during the rainy season, with the exception of CAR (dry season). Those IIP that ACLED identify as farmer-herder incidents peak at harvest time, as one would expect. However, even during peak time a substantial number of IIP involve militia groups or the army, and the incidents are not identifiable as related to farming and herding as such (Table 1). Overall, based on our

analysis of ACLED, the often-presumed causal link between violence and natural stress or shocks, or to resource scarcity, is not confirmed. Further analysis, checking seasonality against the narrative in each of the ACLED records related to IIP (about 1,800 for our sample), and comparing it with the seasonal distribution of non-IIP conflict, could add detail to this picture.

3.2 Qualitative snapshots

In this subsection, we present a more qualitative analysis of three countries: Ghana, where farmer-herder conflict appears to be rapidly rising; and Nigeria and Mali, which are both important regional hotspots.

3.2.1 Ghana snapshot

The ACLED data show 603 violent incidents for Ghana between 1997 and 2017, 16 (2.6%) of which involved Fulani pastoralists, with 38 fatalities. Fulani represent around 5% of the total population. The number of violent incidents in Ghana has increased significantly since 2012, with most fatalities between 2016 and 2017 attributed to incidents involving pastoralists. These relate to a few hotspots, especially Agogo, the Akatsi North District and Volta Region.

The main governmental mechanism for dealing with 'farmer-herder conflict' is a joint military-police force called 'Operation Cow Leg', that goes back to the late 1980s.

The media stories describe Fulani herders invading the country with tens of thousands of cattle looking for water and fodder resources, causing widespread damage to crops and being at the epicentre of violent conflict.¹⁷ Reports show that violence comes from both farmers and herders, with retaliation between groups a large part of the problem.¹⁸ Many of the most violent clashes have come about because the authorities have failed to intervene, so local people have taken matters into their own hands.¹⁹ There is also anger among farmers that chiefs and landowners agree to allow Fulani herders to pasture their herds in a given area, usually at local farmers' expense.²⁰

A recent doctoral study on farmer-herder relations in Ghana asked what drives them at times to cooperation and at times to conflict and looked for evidence of a nexus between conflict and climate change (Bukari 2017). Escalation of violence does not appear to be the result of one single identifiable predominant reason; rather, it tends to follow from a complex and context-dependent combination of political, historical, social and ecological

¹⁷ The Ghanaian Times (6 May 2015) 'The Nomadic Herdsmen and Ministers Ban' and (4 February 2016) 'Fulani herdsmen return to V.R.

¹⁸ The Ghanaian Times (18 February 2016) 'Five Gogo residents arrested for killing nomadic Fulanis' cattle.

¹⁹ The Ghanaian Times (10 November 2017) 'Fulani herdsmen nearly lynched by farmers.

²⁰ The Ghanaian Times (27 March 2015) '15 arrested for stealing herds of cattle.

factors. With regard to the climate-conflict nexus, Bukari found confirming narratives amongst farmers and herders, which emphasised increased herder migrations and competition for pastureland, but no hard evidence of significant changes in the amount of rainfall since 1960, at least in the conflict hot-spots considered by the study. What the meteorological data do indicate is increased variability in the pattern of the rainy season, especially at the beginning and the end of the season, and particularly for Northern Ghana. In Agogo (southern Ghana), the increase in conflict showed little relationship with scarcity of resources. On the contrary, field data linked it to an unusual abundance of resources and an increase in the commercial value of land. It is also important to temper the arguments around environmentally induced migrations of Fulani herders into Ghana in search of water and pasture. A more fine-grained analysis of the phenomenon shows that many of those herders enter Ghana without livestock, searching for paid work from local livestock owners. This dates back to the beginning of the 20th century and is rooted in the attraction of new economic opportunities – not just better pasture – with each reason identified with a specific vernacular term among farmers and the Fulani. Bukari points out the lack of appropriate regulations and good governance, especially clear national and local policies to deal with issues of land use and access, cattle rearing and pastoralism in general. He concludes by emphasising the need for moving beyond the ‘all-explaining’ approach to conflict that focuses on climate change as the main driver, and instead commit to rigorous field-based analysis.

3.2.2 Nigeria snapshot²¹

ACLED data show a general rising trend in the number of all conflict incidents and fatalities from 2012–13. These figures are strongly influenced by the Boko Haram insurgency. The number of recorded fatalities from IIP is slightly higher (5.2%) than the official proportion of Fulani people in the national population (4%).

With an official estimated cattle population of 20 million, Nigeria is the largest livestock producer in the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) region, and home to the largest number of pastoral producers, including Fulani-speaking peoples and visiting Tuareg and Arab herders from Niger.

Perceptions of pastoralists have changed greatly over recent decades. One important factor is a shift in the composition of Nigerian bureaucracy. At independence, many were drawn from rural backgrounds, but now recruitment is entirely from the urban class and few have any experience or sympathy with pastoral livestock-keeping practices. Starting from the 1980s, the national system of Grazing Reserves and stock routes (*burti*) was increasingly neglected and eventually allowed to collapse. There has been mounting political pressure to settle the herders and establish ranches – despite the poor record

²¹ Based on contributions by Adam Higazi and Roger Blench, and included here by kind permission of Misereor, the organisation that commissioned some of their studies.

of such experiments since the 1980s. Political arguments have become increasingly polarised on 'the Fulani question', with assertions that Fulani are not Nigerian nationals – despite many having lived in the country for centuries.

Conflicts between herders and farmers have much to do with successive Nigerian governments' failure to support pastoralism and agriculture, facilitate peaceful relations at local level and help regulate access to water, land and grazing. The desiccation of Lake Chad, take-up of *fadama* land (low-lying areas of flood-retreat) for dry season cropping, the Boko Haram insurgency in Borno State and rampant banditry in Zamfara are major hurdles to peace, which put at risk the co-existence of pastoralists and farmers. Farmer-herder conflict often merges into inter-ethnic or religious violence and sometimes spills over from urban election violence. It has become increasingly difficult to resolve due to heavy casualties – thousands of people have been killed in these clashes over recent years, leading to a breakdown of trust between communities, which is promptly exploited by different economic and political interests.

Former grazing reserves have been sold for building plots or cropland. In many areas, any armed Fulani pastoralist is treated as a terrorist and vigilante groups have been set up, often supported by local politicians. Thousands of innocent people have been killed. Since the Boko Haram insurgency took off, the northeast region has also become extremely dangerous for pastoralists. Boko Haram fighters regard herders as non-orthodox Muslims (by Boko Haram standards), and have been burning their villages. Shuwa Arabs have fled to Chad and Fulani to regions further south in Nigeria.²²

Although the usual household-based pastoralism remains common, many families who used to travel together now send young men and children on long transhumance routes alone, keeping in touch via mobile phones. Increasingly, young men are heavily armed and ready to engage in violence. This situation is aggravated by the spreading abuse of drugs such as Tramadol in West Africa, an analgesic that can combat tiredness and induce a state of euphoria (Fuseini et al. 2019; Boateng, nd). Media report that herders enter the farms of resident cultivators, dig up tubers to feed to cattle, often at night or on Sundays when the farmers are in church. There are also rising claims of sexual assaults on women farmers.

²² Personal communication from Adam Higazi: Although some Shuwa Arabs fled Borno to Chad and Cameroon, many were killed, especially men. They also lost thousands of cattle, seized by Boko Haram or lost during the conflict. There are tens of thousands of internally displaced Shuwa Arab in Maiduguri and other internally displaced people's camps who have been impoverished by the conflict. Boko Haram is now split into two factions. The Shekau faction is still in conflict with most of the Fulani and Shuwa Arab pastoralists and raids them, but the Abu Musab Al-Barnawi / Mamman Nur faction – which split from Shekau and is affiliated to Islamic State (and is known as Islamic State, West Africa Province or ISWAP) – is trying to win over civilian support and allow pastoralists to graze their herds in the areas of Borno they control, including Lake Chad. ISWAP regulate access to pasture, providing some kind of rural governance.

In Benue and Taraba States (north-central and northeast geopolitical zones), levels of violence are high. There are variations within the states, and there are still some areas of Taraba where violence is at a lower level, but the overall situation is close to open warfare, with burned villages, large-scale atrocities and large numbers of displaced people. Grim photographs circulate on social media, but problems are under-reported by mainstream media and have been given little attention by government or indeed the international community.

Local leaders, traditional rulers, emirs, chiefs, district and village heads have important roles to play in managing access to land and water, and brokering dialogue between groups to avoid sources of dispute. In some states – like Katsina and Gombe – proactive state policies have shown significant benefits. But the overall government response to farmer-herder conflict has lacked nuance. They typically treat incidents as a security problem, moving in the army for a few weeks. But their heavy-handed treatment of local populations creates further resentment.

Peace and reconciliation non-governmental organisations (NGOs) typically adopt pre-packaged methodologies, involving professional workshop attendees, who have little influence within the communities they claim to represent. Donors are now exploring the possibility that they might gain a more realistic appreciation of the situation through an intensive programme of field visits, aimed at rooting the analysis of the conflicts in a deeper understanding of local conditions. An initiative of this kind, funded by Misereor in numerous states across a large part of Nigeria, has partnered with a Fulfulde speaker who was able to use his wide range of contacts with pastoral organisations, to generate a comprehensive list of influential leaders. The list was then circulated to relevant civil society organisations and NGOs, which are now taking steps to engage with anti-pastoralist prejudice, reach a wider range of decision makers and craft a different narrative (Blench 2018).

3.2.3 Mali snapshot

ACLED data show a rising number of violent incidents and fatalities from 2012 onwards, which is unsurprising given the war underway in northern and central Mali. The figures show an upsurge in violence and fatalities involving pastoralists in 2017, with more than 100 people killed. However, these figures are likely to be a significant underestimate, if we consider other sources of information regarding violent clashes. From May 2017 to May 2020, the escalation of conflict across central Mali has generated 5,479 recorded fatalities in 1,830 incidents; 295 of these (and 1,216 fatalities) were in the first quarter of 2020.

Mali has one of West Africa's largest livestock herds, with an estimated 10 million cattle. A large part of this herd is owned by pastoral groups, composed of mainly Peul (known in other countries as Fulani or FulBe) in central Mali, and Tuareg, Bella, Arab and Peul in the north, alongside visitors from Mauritania and Niger. Settled farmers also keep sheep, goats and cattle. Livestock are an important part of the national economy, estimated at providing 15% of GDP, just slightly less than cropping. Livestock make a central contribution to the viability of farming systems, providing plough services and manure. Given Mali's great size and diversity, there is much short- and long-distance pastoral mobility within the country; but there is also significant cross-border movement into Mauritania, Burkina Faso and Côte d'Ivoire. The Inner Niger Delta has been of particularly high value to crop-livestock systems for millennia, offering natural flooding of grazing and rice fields.

Since the start of the war in northern Mali in January 2012, there has been a surge in the number and deadliness of conflicts pitting communities against each other, particularly in the north, and since 2015, increasingly in central Mali. These areas have suffered many years of neglect and poor governance, with few resources invested in rural areas. The Peul herding population has felt particularly left behind, with little state investment in livestock, non-application of the *Code Pastoral*, livestock routes ploughed up and many of the areas herders use for grazing now occupied by cultivation. Major development schemes in the country, such as the irrigated *Office du Niger*, have not incorporated the needs of herding groups. The state is now largely absent across much of central Mali, especially in Mopti and northern Ségou (Buseth 2009; Benjaminsen and Ba 2009; Benjaminsen and Ba 2018). Targeted killings of officials by jihadi groups, and general insecurity have prompted all government employees to flee to safer ground.

Examples of incidents can illustrate the nature of the problem. On the northern edge of the Niger Delta, in April 2016, more than 30 were left dead in a Peul-Bambara clash in Tenenkou *cercle*. In August 2016, another clash left five dead and seven injured. The government sent in the military to restore order and prevent further clashes between groups. It is said to have started with the theft of a large number of cattle whose owners were ambushed and killed when they set off in search of them. In February 2017, conflict erupted in Ké Macina, with an estimated 32 deaths. Sparked by the murder of a shopkeeper, it led to a series of reprisals, with camps burnt, livestock slaughtered, and people killed. In Flamana *arrondissement*, Yanfolila *cercle* in southwest Mali, farmers have demanded that all herders leave the area. The Peul have responded by claiming they face hefty exactions from government officials, forest agents and villagers themselves.

The insurgent groups in northern and central Mali have now established close links, with an alliance between Al Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb and the Katibat of Macina, led by preacher Ahmadou Kouffa. Kouffa has partly based his appeal to fellow Peul on the 19th century history of the Mopti Region, where Sekou Ahmadou created the powerful Macina Empire. Many Peul feel politically and economically marginalised, providing fertile ground for recruitment by jihadist groups. Increasing numbers of Peul are being driven into sympathy with the jihadi movement to protect themselves against bandits and other criminal gangs who seize the opportunity to steal cattle.

This insecurity has led to the collapse of the tourist economy in the Mopti Region, which used to provide jobs and incomes for many people. Jihadists have launched regular attacks on Bambara, who they believe are providing information to the military. Bambara farmers have formed their own militia based on traditional hunting associations (*donsoya*) to offer protection. Some Peul leaders and others have argued that the Bambara and Dogon have used their self-defence groups – set up to fight against jihadi groups – to engage in banditry and to force Peul off valuable land (Human Rights Watch 2018). When the army arrives to establish order, they frequently seize young Peul men, who they consider jihadists²³. None of the armed groups in central Mali were included in the peace agreement of 2015 with northern armed groups, and they want their own grievances addressed.

3.3 Overall considerations

There is a worrying disparity between the volume of literature suggesting solutions for farmer-herder conflict in Africa, and the availability of reliable and organised data on the phenomenon.

Even analysing a dataset such as ACLED, which is far from comprehensive, raises questions about the popular view of a general increase in farmer-herder conflict. Although there are significant regional and national hotspots of conflict, there are also much larger areas where peaceful relationships and cooperation continue. Even within the hotspots, violent conflict is usually punctuated and intermittent, and takes place alongside situations of cooperation.

There is also a puzzling asymmetry between the recent emphasis on violent conflict between farmers and herders in development circles and the relative magnitude of this phenomenon when compared to the overall incidence of conflict captured in the ACLED dataset. While ACLED shows exceptional and increasing levels of violence in some countries, these are overall figures for the whole population. The data do not show that farmer-herder conflict has increased at a faster rate. Indeed, in many countries, the

²³ This is not unique to Mali. A recent study by IFRI points out that 'Counterinsurgency Campaigns Are Fuelling Human Rights Abuses in the Sahel' (Tinti 2020); cf also Human Rights Watch (2020).

proportion of recorded incidents and fatalities associated with farmer-herder conflict is often lower than the proportion of pastoralists in the national population. However, when these incidents happen, they are often shocking in their brutality and given wide exposure in the media.

There has been a marked increase in violence involving ethnic militia and organised militant groups, especially in Nigeria and CAR, and in Mali since 2011, which has spilled over to bordering countries, particularly Cameroon, Niger and Burkina Faso. The fuzziness among the fighting sides is especially evident in CAR, where the anti-Balaka militia indiscriminately targets Fulani, but has also been fighting against Seleka/ex-Seleka militias who, although supposedly supported by Fulani militia, are also sometimes active against Fulani herders. In Nigeria, much of the conflict between herding populations and settled farmers has taken on an ethnopolitical quality, with local and national politicians vilifying Fulani people, and both farmers and herders arming themselves heavily. Four Nigerian states – Ekiti, Edo, Benue and Taraba – introduced ‘anti-open grazing laws’ in 2016/17, and pastoralists who have been living in the country intermittently or even permanently for decades are being represented as alien or illegal immigrants (Bukari 2017; IWGIA 2016). In the Jos Plateau, conflict labelled as ‘farmer-herder conflict’ often originates not as a clash over rural resources but with the spread of rioting from urban to rural areas (Higazi 2018). It does not help that ‘Fulani’ are being classified as terrorists.²⁴ In much of central Mali, a series of jihadist groups are fighting representatives of the state administration and demanding adherence to strict Islamic practices (Thiam 2017). These patterns of ethnic mobilisation, vilification and conflict show strikingly common features with conflict and political manipulation in Darfur, Sudan (see Box 5 in section 4.3.4), but also the border regions of Ethiopia, Kenya and Uganda, and of course South Sudan (UNECA 2016; World Bank 2020). The violent conflict in Mali, Niger and Burkina Faso has taken on strong international dimensions, with shifting alliances between jihadist groups operating across national boundaries and able to call upon fighters from disaffected communities within the region as well as from North Africa and the Middle East.

In East Africa, violence involving pastoralists is more pronounced overall, but incidents defined as farmer-herder conflict represent only a handful of events. This compares with the much larger number of incidents involving cattle rustling between pastoral groups and the fatalities associated with violent responses to militarised and heavy-handed law enforcement. A recent UN study on the human and economic cost of conflict in the Horn of Africa found that organised violence by non-state actors and insurgents (including, but not only, IIP) was dwarfed by the scale of state-based conflict (UNECA 2016).

²⁴ Since 2015, the Global Terrorism Index (GTI) includes ‘Fulani militants’ (with no further specification). The GTI is produced by the Institute for Economics and Peace, a thinktank with offices in Sydney, New York, Mexico City and The Hague (<http://globalterrorismindex.org>). Uncritical references to this categorisation are already populating the academic literature (see, for example, Olu-Adeyemi 2017).

Most conflicts routinely included under the farmer-herder conflict category take the form of chains of retaliation that may last for months or years, often with profound connections to the wider economic and political context. They are complex phenomena deserving focused attention and calling for rigorous and in-depth investigation.²⁵ Simplistic generalised explanations and blueprint solutions fail to do them justice, and seem more likely to make things worse.

²⁵ For recent examples, Chauvin et al. (2020); and Higazi (2020).



Women weed the millet crop, Mali © Camilla Toulmin



4

The explanations

In this section, we present and discuss how the different categories of violent conflict associated with pastoralism are understood and explained in the scientific literature. We map current explanatory frameworks, introduce work on differentiating the phenomenon, take a closer look at some key categories, and review elements of the historical background often mobilised in explanations of farmer-herder conflict.

4.1 Explaining farmer-herder conflict

Most of the work on farmer-herder conflict operates within one of two explanatory models: environmental security and political ecology.

4.1.1 Environmental security

This model asserts that conflict is the outcome of competition for scarce resources, assuming that they are undergoing degradation through overuse and the effects of climate change. This narrative is common among those seeking to generate consensus around political

actions to protect the environment and mitigate climate change (Homer-Dixon 1994; Hartmann 2010). 'Overuse' of natural resources is often associated with demographic growth in a basically Malthusian argument. Causation is linear: overpopulation plus environmental degradation lead to resource scarcity; this leads to increased competition, which eventually triggers violent conflict.

This model sees conflict as originating from structural and objective conditions such as resource scarcity or competition. This non-political simplification is so powerful in the view of its promoters, as to be able to explain 'any conflict'. A large research project²⁶ that operated within this approach states: "Environmental conflicts manifest themselves as political, social, economic, ethnic, religious, or territorial conflicts, or conflicts over resources or national interests, or any type of conflict" (Shettima and Tar 2008). But the cost of explaining everything is to remain on the surface and thus not be able to actually explain very much at all. It is good enough when the objective is not to understand conflict but to mobilise action about something else – as indeed in this case – such as climate change. But using it as the basis for building policies or interventions from a concern for farmers and herders, or even more generally about conflict and security, would seem rushed, risky and seriously inadequate to the task.

The environmental security narrative is mobilised to explain farmer-herder conflict as the result of rising competition between systems (crop farming and pastoral grazing), which are assumed to be inherently incompatible.²⁷ As the natural resource base shrinks in the drylands under the pressure of ecological degradation, demographic growth and climate change, the perceived inherent incompatibility between crop and grazing land turns to forms of open violence. So, persistent natural resource conflict creates a breeding ground for more organised and far-reaching forms of violence, from local rebel groups to jihadist movements. Solutions drawn from this narrative usually focus on seeking to achieve environmental and political stabilisation by removing herders (whether by facilitating their exit from pastoralism, settling them, expelling them, or banning them from entering the country) or by introducing clear-cut mechanisms to control their activities.

²⁶ The Environmental Conflicts Project, covering 40 different area studies including countries in West Africa (Baechler 1999, quoted in Shettima and Tar 2008).

²⁷ It is not unusual, in the literature on environmental conflict, to find a reference to the biblical story of Cain and Abel as evidence of everlasting bad relationships between farmers and herders (Shettima and Tar 2008; Cabot 2017). However, the Bible story of Cain and Abel provides no such evidence; neither does its version in the Quran. Cain kills his brother out of resentment and jealousy, because God preferred Abel's offer (Genesis 4:1–16). The Quran adds that the offer was meant to solve a dispute over their wives to be (Surah Al Maidah 5:27–32). In the use of this story as a metaphor of farmer-herder conflict, the focus on the killing of the herder Abel by the farmer Cain overlooks all the other details, starting from their description as brothers, to the fact that the reason given for the killing has nothing to do with farming and herding, nor competition for natural resources.

The environmental-security explanation presents remarkable similarities in its underlying assumptions, with the old 'equilibrium' model of pastoral development. This is particularly evident in the emphasis both place on the link between resource availability and population ('carrying capacity', simply being shifted from livestock to people), which is also at the core of the argument known as the tragedy of the commons.²⁸

4.1.2 Political ecology

Critics of the environmental security approach have challenged the primacy of an ecological trigger for violence (Peluso and Watts 2001; Hartmann 2010; Turner 2004; Gausset et al. 2005) or even that there is a structural link between violent conflict and resource scarcity (Hagmann 2005; Benjaminsen 2008; Mehta 2010). Some have pointed out that most of the literature on climate change and conflict focuses on the short-term effects of extreme weather events rather than on the long-term average and variability of climate, such as temperature or rainfall (Scheffran et al. 2012). Others have observed that, in crisis, cooperation frequently prevails (Slettebak 2012). Empirical evidence remains inconclusive, at most allowing to treat climate change as "a 'risk multiplier' that could exacerbate security risks and conflicts in fragile regions and hotspots where poverty, violence, injustice, and social insecurity are prevalent" (Scheffran et al. 2019).

Critics do not contest the existence, at times, of natural resource scarcity or competition among users. But they point out that focusing on such conditions is not enough to explain the incidence of violent conflict. When closely examined, the correlation between the intensity of conflict and the intensity of climatic events appears weak and inconsistent. Most importantly, the majority of conflict incidents never escalate into violence (Djimadoum and Nodjidang 2009). Crop damage incidents tend to happen under circumstances where resource scarcity is absent or insignificant, while sparse and variable land resources in the drylands are rarely worth the cost of investing in conflict, in case of agricultural encroachment (Turner 2004). Most studies from this perspective emphasise the need for a more nuanced and contextual analysis.

²⁸ In the tragedy of the commons (Hardin 1968), pastoralism is an analogy used to make a point about the ecological risk of uncontrolled human population growth (Eggertsson 2009). In a later article, Hardin retracted his use of pastoralism to illustrate his general argument and apologised, but the damage had been done.

Box 2. Pulled by economic opportunities, not pushed by resource scarcity

The dominant narrative tends to describe the southward movement of pastoral herds in West Africa as the need to flee over-grazing and desertification for which they are responsible. But in reality, this transhumant movement from south to north and south again takes place because herders across the Sahel and savanna recognise the seasonal gains from taking their animals northwards during the rains, where they can benefit from high-quality pastures and low parasitic threats. Take the case of Chad, with its broad range of ecology. Over the seasons, herds travel north to the 200mm rainfall region of North Batha and then south to the 1,200mm rainfall zone by South Salamat. By contrast, some camel herders choose to remain in northern pastures year-round. If you ask why herds move southwards, the reasons are largely economic – more southerly markets offer them a better price for their animals and the cost of buying grain is cheaper. Pastoralists are also increasingly keen to establish a foothold that provides tenure rights with the creation of settlements (known as *damré arabes missirés*) by groups such as Ouled Rachid in Southern Guéra, and Melfi.

Source: Bernard Bonnet and Sergio Magnani (IRAM), personal communication

Besides resource scarcity, this approach also investigates a range of other drivers of conflict, from historical legacy and wider political context, to institutional failure to prevent or resolve conflicts. The latter results from a combination of forces undermining customary institutions for conflict management, confusion, contradiction and anachronism in the law, or a lack of trust in state and local authority law enforcement. Decades of global influence and arguments have played their part, reshaping policy and interventions based on promoting competition as the central principle for reorganising society. These explanations also call upon cultural differences between herders and farmers and the breakdown (or active dismantling) of networks of interdependence between pastoral and agricultural economies, with livestock-poor pastoralists taking up crop-farming as a complementary livelihood strategy and livestock-rich farmers no longer needing pastoralists to manure their fields. This approach also presents conflict as a state of things, but considers a much wider range of possible factors, allowing for a better representation of the complexity of conflict and consequently, a more sophisticated analysis.

“Exclusion is a bigger trigger of violence than inequality in distribution. Especially extreme exclusion from the benefits of development, when exclusion appears to be exercised or at least permitted by the institutions of governance.” (Cramer 2006)

4.1.3 A general theory of farmer-herder conflict

Both the environmental security and the political ecology frameworks for explaining farmer-herder conflict focus on structural causes – primarily environmental ones for the

former and more complex ones for the latter. Both focus on ethnic or political groups, overlooking dynamics between individuals. Both are concerned with states (how things are), more than with processes (the dynamic of events, moment-by-moment). This leads to a focus on design and planning (for example, institutions or structural elements) rather than choices for real time management (for example, agency or individual behaviour). Neither can explain why some conflicts escalate into violence and most do not, all background conditions – such as resource scarcity, political inequality or religious, ethnic or political conditions – remaining the same. For every conflict that turns into violence, hundreds are settled peacefully and are therefore not visible.

Moritz (2010) integrates this focus on structural causes, with insights from conflict theory in anthropology (Kriesberg and Dayton 2016²⁹), an approach that describes conflict as a sequence of interactions – a process, rather than a state. This allows any conflict to be broken down into a typology of phases, focusing on their succession rather than their background conditions. An individual's behaviour is key, as in the interaction with others, each move unfolds as a response to the previous one. To explain why some conflicts escalate and others do not, we can identify the reasons for the escalation by analysing the sequence of interactions. How adversaries assess each move has profound implications for the next move. Escalation can be the unintended product of a sequence of moves, rather than as a strategic political choice (Kriesberg and Dayton 2016).

“Conflicts between groups do not exist independently of the way the members of the group view their situation... how activists on one side frame a conflict can be crucial in mobilizing supporters for their cause, but changing the frame can also contribute to constructively transforming relations with their adversaries.” (Kriesberg and Dayton 2016)

Here conflict is not merely the result of an objective state of things but also of a social relationship between individuals or groups. Indeed, it is a social relationship: not something that happens to people, like a disease or an accident, but a process produced and sustained by people in their social interactions. The importance of considering the role of agency extends to law enforcement and governance institutions themselves, which are made up of individuals in their roles of officers, civil servants and politicians.

The role of agency does not exclude structural causes of conflict. Nor are all individuals involved in a conflict at different levels necessarily operating for the same reasons – or indeed, in their own interest. The emphasis on agency, however, places a much stronger responsibility on the individuals actively constructing (or defusing) the conflict. It also opens up an entirely new front of intervention, as it is easier to change people's choices than structural conditions. Peace building and conflict management itself can be just as fluid as conflict, as it, too, is a process in which individuals in key institutions exercise agency.

²⁹ Our reference is for the 2016 fifth edition, but this work was originally published in 2007.

Box 3. Predatory law enforcement

Attempts to apply the law are often at the root of agro-pastoral conflicts, rendering them more bitter and entrenched (as found in Niger's Zinder Region). Getting the gendarmes, police and elected officials involved can block more informal agreement and mediation efforts. Predatory behaviour by public officials, members of local or national structures or business-people using threats and protection rackets is a big problem for herders, whose animals are seen as an easy source of money. The presence of other actors and intermediaries who have a strong interest in keeping the conflict going is another important factor (Gandau et al. 2007; Bonnet and Hérault 2011).

During a visit to Ghana on behalf of the PRIDEC project, we heard that the traditional 'host and stranger' system – whereby visiting herders seek the help and protection of customary authorities – was coming under violent challenge. Customary leaders were accused of taking backhanders and benefits from visiting herders, with local people bearing the price, in terms of damage to their farms. Shifts in these relationships have been further strained by the confusion stemming from national legislation and its ever-tighter constraints and regulations on livestock movements, which include using official livestock corridors, imposing heavy taxes on arriving herds, charging local taxes for herds to access pasture and banning livestock movements on the hoof. The more constraining the law becomes, the more it is worth avoiding – for example, by taking more risky routes or moving animals at night. The more herders engage in such illegal practices, the more vulnerable they are to corrupt demands. New regulations recently put in place in Benin, Côte d'Ivoire, Guinea and Nigeria are a significant departure from the ECOWAS decision ADEC 05/10/98, which laid out the framework of rules regulating transboundary livestock movement in West Africa. This ECOWAS framework has the potential to be a valuable means of managing transboundary movements, if the frontier officials responsible for applying the agreement did so fairly and effectively (Magnani and Guibert 2017).

Source: Bernard Bonnet and Sergio Magnani (IRAM), personal communication.

Conflict can be destructive or constructive. Crucial to the anthropological theory of conflict is recognising that conflict can also be constructive: “a potential source for human betterment” (Kriesberg and Dayton 2016; Richards, 2005). Conflict is destructive or constructive, depending on the way people engage with it. In a similar way to ‘variability’ and ‘risk taking’,³⁰ conflict can be a central constituent of adaptation and resilience, thereby representing “social change involving divergent interests and hard choices” (Turner 2010).

³⁰ There are here strong similarities with the notion emerged from the study of pastoralism, that variability can be disruptive or constructive depending on the way people engage with it (IIED 2015). On the use of variability and risk-taking as adaptation and a road to resilience, see Roe et al. (1998), Krätli (2016), Levine and Mosey (2014).

“Constructive conflict management is fostered when partisans and analysts alike avoid self-indulgent perspectives and instead appreciate that there is almost always more than one story when it comes to conflict... An important way to reduce the danger of thinking about conflicts from too narrow a perspective is to use a comprehensive framework of analysis that forces us to see conflicts from different vantage points.” (Kriesberg and Dayton 2016)

A conflict and its escalation may have different causes. Escalation is often the result of dynamics that take place after the initial incident.³¹ These can range from poor management by administration and law enforcement, to effective manipulation. The extremes often overlap, with confusion and contradiction in the legal frameworks and its procedures playing into the hands of corruption and malpractice (Benjaminsen and Ba 2009; Benjaminsen et al. 2009). The authorities can manage, or even induce and cultivate conflict to maximise the extraction of rewards from the parties involved or to attract humanitarian and development money (Moritz 2006; Marty et al. 2010). Impunity for the perpetrators of violence – and the consequent sense of injustice among those who suffer from it – cannot be overestimated. A good starting point for understanding conflict is therefore the study of the official procedures for managing it. For example, in the case of the administrative compensation procedure, this would involve establishing the authorities in charge to identify the livestock owner or those who have injured animals, defining the parameters to be considered when assessing the damage and options for enforcing payment of compensation (Hagberg 2005).

Box 4. Theory of constructive conflict

There are three modes of operation in conflict, although it is usually a combination of these: negative sanctions and coercive actions (violent or non-violent); positive sanctions and rewards; and persuasion. There is also variability within conflict. Not all moments in a conflict are the same, but there are stages, each of which has different standards of certainty. Each adversary is also heterogeneous. Crisis or unpredictability are not uniformly critical or unpredictable. Like any social relationship, conflicts are complex and interconnected over time and space, nested in larger-scale conflicts and incorporating smaller-scale conflicts: “one or more sides in a conflict may view their current conflict as a renewal of a prior conflict, waged years, decades or even centuries in the past.”

Source: Kriesberg and Dayton (2016)

³¹ Violent conflicts can be transformed after escalation. Some of the farmer-herder conflicts in Nigeria's Plateau and Kaduna States began after rioting spread from urban to rural areas, which led to ethnoreligious violence and the breakdown of conflict resolution mechanisms (communication from Adam Higazi, University of Amsterdam).

Representing conflict: between noise and communication. Analysis of farmer-herder conflict is usually limited to the calendar of events between the beginning of violence and the moment when peace returns. It might extend backwards to seek out longer-term structural causes (political ecology approach) or break down the sequence by which violence escalated, to understand its internal dynamics (processual approach). The outcome of violence beyond the return of peace is not usually included. Departing from this tradition, some anthropologists have urged that violent conflict be recognised as organised, intended social action and a form of communication, rather than noise and a breakdown of meaningful relationships (Cramer 2006; Richards 2005).³² An analytical approach that stops at the moment when peace returns is not enough to capture the content or the outcome of such communication. When looking at violent conflict as a form of communication, the core principle of a participatory approach in development – ‘listen, listen, listen’ – seems more relevant than a muscular military response. Perhaps asking ‘what do you mean?’ is a more pertinent way of engaging with farmer-herder conflict than asking ‘what does it take to stop this noise?’

Either order or stability? From the perspective of conventional notions of order as stability, violent conflict is disorder or crisis, where conditions have been tipped out of normality. So conflict management consists of reinstating stability. By contrast, the theory of constructive conflict represents conflict as internal to social systems, neither a disturbance nor an interruption of social relationships, but itself a social relationship and a form of communication. These two positions echo a fundamental difference in the understanding of order and normality – as stability on one hand, and as change/variability on the other – that is at the core of the current understanding of pastoralism (as discussed above in section 1.2) and resilience in the face of climate change.

Understanding conflict management as the task of reinstating stability has strong affinity with the representation of environmental variability as disturbance in mainstream (‘modernist’) pastoral development. The ‘new ecology’ and its critique of the equilibrium model in pastoral development have shifted the understanding of environmental variability from disturbance to norm; from external to core attribute of pastoral ecosystems.

There are also strong affinities between understanding order as stability, and the emphasis on ‘states’ and ‘bouncing back’ in the initial meaning of resilience from engineering, before the development of resilience thinking within the new ecology (Holling 1986). Resilience thinking moved beyond this static understanding of resilience, emphasising instead the need to embrace change and transformation as normal (for example, Folke et al. 2002).³³

³² Paul Richards (2005) traces this approach back to the Prussian military theorist Carl von Clausewitz (1780-1831) and his definition of war as “the continuation of politics by other means”.

³³ In an early paper, Holling contrasted his own new notion of ‘resilience’ to ‘stability’, describing stability (not resilience) as characterised by “the ability of a system to return to an equilibrium state after a temporary disturbance” (Holling 1973).

Analysists of high-reliability systems such as air-traffic control and power grids, but also pastoralism (Roe et al. 1998), have emphasised the need to understand instability as an operational space, with its own control mechanisms, rather than seeing it as the threshold over which the system tips into chaos (Roe and Schulman 2016). In these contexts, the task of management is not to eliminate instability from operations (which is not possible), but to engage with it in ways that keep operations within bandwidths of acceptability – in other words, within the region of 'known unknowns' or 'familiar risk' (Roe 2020). Efforts to 'stabilise' conditions that are inescapably variable can lead to increased perturbation, and generate thereby an outcome which is the opposite to that envisaged by the intervention (Roe 2013).³⁴

4.2 Differentiating the phenomenon

The only typology of conflict between farmers and herders we have come across which has been constructed from a comprehensive inventory of incidents, is part of a study commissioned in Chad for the period 2004–2008 by the Direction for Pastoral Organisation and Securing Pastoral Systems (*Direction de l'Organisation Pastorale et de la Sécurisation des Systèmes Pastoraux*) of the Chadian Ministry of Livestock (*Ministère de l'élevage et des ressources animales*) (Marty et al. 2010). The typology, presented in Table 3, organises the incidents by parties involved, by macro-ecological zones (Sahelian and Sudanese), and by trigger or proximate cause. There were more incidents involving settled pastoralists who also farmed than those involving mobile pastoralists. Farmers involved were predominantly those cultivating isolated spots of land near grazing areas with late-maturing or all-year-round crops.

Other studies offering typologies of farmer-herder conflict include Hendrickson (1997), Hussein (1998), Blench (1998), de Haan et al. (2014), Guibert (2013) – who offers a typology of issues that are subject to conflict and of local terms to describe the stages of escalation in Chad – and Ibrahim (2016), who focuses on land use conflicts in Niger.

³⁴ Emery Roe, of the Center for Catastrophic Risk Management at the University of California, Berkeley, highlights this paradox, describing contexts dominated by variability as 'messes' because they escape order in the conventional sense that associates it with stability and symmetry: "The more mess there is, the more reliability decision makers want; but the more reliable we try to be, the more mess is produced." Realistic management respects the limitations posed by structural variability and focuses on the capacity for real-time adaptation (Roe 2013: 7). A similar observation was also made with regard to natural resource management and resilience: "If natural levels of variation in system behavior are reduced through command-and-control, then the system becomes less resilient to external perturbations, resulting in crises and surprises [...] we propose a 'Golden Rule' of natural resource management that we believe is necessary for sustainability: management should strive to retain critical types and ranges of natural variation in resource systems in order to maintain their resiliency" (Holling and Meffe 1996: 328).

Table 3. Typology of incidents between herders and others, by region in Chad

Conflict between	Sahelian regions (drier)	Sudanese regions (wetter)
Herders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use of pastoral space, appropriation and settlement Control and management of pastoral wells Livestock theft 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use of pastoral space, especially pasture needed by transhumant herders to feed their livestock on the way south and by local agro-pastoralists to feed their animals during the dry season Damage to cultivated fields
Herders and other groups	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Damage caused by livestock Use of space and natural resources Fragmentation of rangelands (more than lack of it) Violence against livestock 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reduction and fragmentation of rangeland by farming Use of pastoral space, appropriation and settlement Damage to crops, including 'trap fields' Soil exhaustion and consequent 'mobility' of cultivation Sedentarisation of pastoralists Shift from rainfed agriculture to cultivation in the beds of seasonal rivers
Herders and institutions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Forceful closing of rangeland for the purpose of wildlife conservation New projects in areas already compromised by historical contestation against the state Creation of new resources, such as water points, or new decisional forums such as management committees or administrative units that unsettle local power relationships 	

Source: Based on Marty et al. (2010)

* "Trap Fields" are those deliberately cultivated on or near transhumance routes in order to claim compensation for crop-damage by passing livestock.

4.2.1 A closer look at key categories

"It is important that we develop the language and analytical tools to present the fuller complexity of resource-related conflict" (Turner 2010). The three categories discussed below and commonly used to explain farmer-herder conflict – competing livelihood

strategies, crop damage and natural resources – are just a sample of a systematic reassessment that we cannot cover within the constraints of this paper.

Farmer-herder competition. The common assumption behind this concept is that farming and herding are naturally competing, or even incompatible livelihood strategies. But this assumption has no scientific foundation. In fact, in nature as in business, competition increases with similarity, not diversity of specialisations. Historically, the relationship between farming and herding groups has been one of complementarity more than competition, either on the same level or along a hierarchical scale. In areas where so called farmer-herder conflict seems to be especially frequent and intense, it is rarely between specialist farmers and specialist herders. Instead, those involved tend to be herders who have taken up farming and farmers who have taken up livestock keeping (Marty et al. 2010). While the violence is often focalised through their identity as farmers and herders, the increased competition seems to be more associated with their growing similarities than their differences, as their respective livelihood strategies are being encouraged to converge. In such cases, a setting in which specialist farmers and specialist herders operate in an integrated system with intermittent contact, has been replaced by a more uniform agropastoral/mixed farming model with integration at farm level. In this model, everybody competes for the same resources, which is not even sustainable from an economic point of view (Aubague and Grimaud 2017). Farmer-herder competition is possible and often real. However, it is neither natural nor inevitable, but rather the result of political and macro-economic choices.

Crop damage. The damage to crops by livestock is generally considered the main cause of farmer-herder conflict. Yet, close analysis shows that crop damage itself is often the result of other problems, such as a shortfall in herding skills whether through labour scarcity, exhaustion or loss of specialisation (Turner 2004). Insufficient herd control could be the result of shifting to hired herders (hiring fewer people than necessary to keep costs low) or splitting the household between sedentary (farming) and mobile (herding) teams. Labour scarcity is relative to the workload, which in turn is greatly increased when the length, complexity and uncertainty of migration itineraries are increased. When crop damage is a conscious choice – for example, when herders deliberately drive their animals to graze on a cultivated field – it is often a result of social division between particular groups of people in particular locations (Marty 1999). It does not necessarily involve all herders and all farmers in an area. It can also be in retaliation for crops encroaching onto former pastureland. More rarely, it can be a last resort to keep animals alive – for example, when herders find themselves with nowhere else to go during a severe drought.

Crop damage, therefore, is better understood as one link in a chain of problems, rather than as a primary cause of conflict. We therefore need to ask: on what basis, in descriptions of farmer-herder conflict, is the moment when a crop is damaged commonly

accepted as more significant than the moment when pasture has been encroached upon, or social division has been let to spread or even encouraged? Placing the spotlight on crop damage alone as the origin of conflict is unbalanced as it frames the understanding of conflict purely from the perspective of crop farming.

Natural resources. This concept is pivotal in environmental security explanations of farmer-herder conflict, when referring to competition over natural resources, natural resource degradation and natural resource scarcity. But references to competition for natural resources in the context of farmer-herder conflict are common even outside this line of argument.

The notion of natural resources suggests that resources are substances or things, out there in the world independently from human behaviour and human relationships and somehow up for grab (in a state of nature) unless access is otherwise managed. This is incorrect in several ways.

First, hardly any of the resources involved in the functioning of pastoral systems are actually natural. Surface water is used in the rainy season and during the dry season only where permanent rivers or ponds are accessible; most pastoralists use built water points for most of the year. Thus, while water as such might be seen as natural, water as a pastoral resource is mostly not. Pasture as a pastoral resource is also not as natural as it might seem. Although rangeland pastures are not cultivated, ecosystems used by domestic livestock over centuries have been shaped by such use, creating anthropogenic biomes, which incorporate the ways humans and animals interact with ecosystems (Ellis and Ramankutty 2008).³⁵ While human intervention in the development of farmland is easily recognisable and consequently acknowledged in land tenure legislation, formal recognition of human and animal shaping of pastoral rangelands is yet to happen.³⁶ Most pastoral livelihood systems, and virtually all those in the Sahel, can exist only by sharing the territory with crop farming systems for a great part of the year, using fallow land, crop residues and failed crops while regenerating the soil with manure and the work of the hooves (Porensky and Veblen 2015).

Second, in as much as pastoral systems are allowed to operate according to their specialisation, they create a resource through their relationship with the ecosystem more than by accessing something (an entity) that exists independently from such a relationship (Krätli 2017; Rutten and Mwangi 2014). Indeed, the very 'resource'

³⁵ Areas that have been grazed for generations have few physical marks to show the administrator or judge, as evidence of historical rights acquired through long-term use. A range ecologist, however, would easily recognise the particular composition of grasses, herbs and shrubs that are associated with long-term pasturing (Oba et al. 2000). Scientists in environmental archaeology and drylands archaeology can detect changes in landscapes resulting from their inclusion in pastoral systems as far back as 10,000 years (Marshall et al. 2018).

³⁶ A noticeable exception is the first Kenyan policy for the development of their arid and semi-arid lands, where it is promised that the 'government will...recognise, through legislation, pastoralism as a legitimate form of productive land use and development on the same basis as farming' (Republic of Kenya 2012: 19).

pastoral systems specialise to use, the variability of the natural environment, is normally considered a constraint for agriculture, thus a resource only through the mediation of pastoralist's expertise.

Understanding resources as “relationships” rather than “things” takes away the central role of competition while creating the conceptual space for complementarity. While things only allow one use and one user at a time (particularly within exclusive property systems), virtually infinite complementary relationships can coexist in the same biophysical space (Bathelt and Glückler 2005).

In short, there is no natural state so far as pastoral and farming resources are concerned. Resources are created within wider socio-economic and socio-political processes that also are at work in regulating their management. Representing resources as entities rather than relationships, separated from the processes that create and manage them, effectively contributes to their separation in practice, artificially creating a void of regulation and therefore a breeding-ground for disputes.

4.3 A look at the past

4.3.1 Pre-colonial times

The literature presents the varied historical backgrounds within which farmer-herder conflict is found today, from the West African Sahel in which dryland peoples, livestock and livelihoods have been entangled in varying combinations for millennia, to more separate patterns of farming and herding in some parts of East Africa. Recent centuries have witnessed shifting relationships of power, coexistence, conflict and migration across Africa, under pressures of trade, climate, disease and conquest. In all settings, local power rivalries have been shaped by pre-colonial polities, the colonial administration and post-independence governments. The struggle for power between groups takes differing forms – religious, ethnic or political – depending on opportunity and the broader context. This can and does often spill over into conflicts over land and water.

In the Sahel, there was no pre-colonial idyll. Gallais (1972) describes the 18th and 19th centuries as a time when many peasant farmers suffered military and political dominance from herding polities: “*relations between farmers and herders are still dominated by a conflict-ridden historical legacy*”³⁷ Descriptions by Mungo Park of his travels across the Sahel in the 1790s present high levels of insecurity due to warfare and raiding between neighbouring kingdoms, and between Maures and their sedentary neighbours (Park 2000). There were many burned-out villages along Mungo Park's route, where only a few well-fortified settlements could withstand attack; people cultivating the fields were armed to fight off raiding parties. There were more peaceful times, as major kingdoms

³⁷ “Les rapports du paysan et du pasteur sont encore dominés par un héritage historique conflictuelle.”

were established in the 18th and 19th centuries, with extensive trade routes, taxes and military service. But such polities were often weak, and in the 30 years before the French established their authority in the Middle Niger Valley, conditions were very insecure, with local warlords – both settled and pastoral – taking every opportunity to seize people and goods.

In East Africa, the evolution of land and natural resources policy from colonialism to the present day continues to be defined largely by a central government push to appropriate control from local communities and their institutions, and locate it in modern structures outside the community, including state, parastatal and more recently, private sector organisations. Although this is true for all communities, it is particularly so for pastoralists and those who occupied land that the state, both before and after independence, considered to be of high value. For example, nearly all Maasai land in southern Kenya and northern Tanzania has been taken – first, by the colonial administrations, and later by state bodies and private companies.

Land use and development classifications introduced in colonial times and often maintained after independence focused on individual ownership, crop farming and building permanent structures. This approach overlooks those communities, like pastoralists, whose livelihoods depend on the seasonal, intermittent, sustainable use of resources over grassland and forests.³⁸

4.3.2 Colonial conquest

Much of Africa's interior was conquered by Europeans in the late 1800s, at the same time as the spread of the Rinderpest epidemic that killed as much as 90% of the cattle population in some places. This devastated the livelihoods and wealth of many pastoral people in East Africa, shifting the balance of power away from pastoral groups. The colonial administrators' attitudes to pastoral herders fell into two main camps. The first considered them a serious threat to peace and stability and sought to control and settle their nomadic movement and reverse their dominance over farming groups. The second portrayed them as the 'noble savage' operating to a different rhythm and sense of space to be admired, respected and co-opted into the colonial endeavour, to a certain extent.

In the West African Sahel, the French colonial conquest and policy aimed to separate the black farming peoples from relations of tribute demanded by nomadic former rulers. The colonial authorities found the sedentary populations much easier to control, tax and enrol into schools. The strong French military presence assured effective control and brought an end to well-armed parties raiding sedentary groups. Alongside the abolition of slavery in 1905, they established a zone north of the River Niger which the Tuareg were unable to enter. This divide-and-rule policy cut the roots from the Tuareg

³⁸In Ethiopia, for example, the 1955 Revised Constitution declared "all forests and all grazing lands, water courses, lakes and territorial waters" to be state domain (Haile Selassie I 1955).

pastoral economy, which had relied on control over land and people in cereal-growing regions. The colonial administration took these pastoral systems that had co-evolved in ecological and economic integration with the farming systems of wetter regions and presented them as production systems of the drier regions of rainy-season rangelands, renamed 'nomad districts' (*les districts nomades*) (and later 'pastoral zones' or *zones pastorales*). Pastoralists were represented as 'belonging' to those regions although in reality they spent most of the year in the wetter regions or travelling between the two. Institutionalising the concepts of 'sedentary' and 'nomad' as administrative categories for people turned flexible and intermittent boundaries into rigid and permanent ones (Marty 1999). Herders needed a written permit, or *laissez-passer*, to move their animals between *cercles* and had to pay tax on each head of stock. The higher rainfall years of the 1950s and 60s enabled the Tuareg to occupy areas to the south of their previous range. But their lower degree of mobility (compared with the Peul Wodaabe) meant that they were badly hit by drought in the 1970s and even more so in the 1980s (see Bernus 1977; Mesnil 1978; Habou and Danguioua 1991). Their distance from centres of power meant they had become marginalised, with few of them receiving a formal education or acquiring power within the politics and society of modern states. With the end of raiding attacks, it became easier for farmers to spread out and move into areas formerly used for grazing. Bigger villages have spawned many smaller settlements, scattered across an ever-wider space. In high-risk low-rainfall areas, both herders and farmers follow strategies aimed at the survival and growth of their assets; herders by expanding the number of animals they own, farmers by extending their fields and increasing their crops. But governments offer few opportunities to bring different groups together to find consensus in managing shared resources. Rather, people perceive that public officials take one side or the other, using disputes to line their pockets.

In Kenya, the British followed a broadly similar policy to the French in the Sahel, by creating the Northern Frontier District (NFD) as a separate region and tightly controlling the movement of people and livestock between this extensive arid district and the high-potential Kenyan highlands. Inhabited by various pastoral groups, but principally Somali, the colonial authorities considered the region to be of no economic value. They also viewed its largely Islamic population as a threat to the rest of the country, particularly the white settler economy. To contain this perceived risk, they administered the area as a 'closed district' implementing punitive laws to control the movement of people and raise taxes,³⁹ while leaving the local population to manage their affairs according to their own customs and institutions. This included natural resource management and dispute resolution. The lack of British involvement in local affairs contributed to the preservation of local institutions – such as the Boran's *dedha* – for managing common rangelands.

³⁹ These laws included the NFD Poll Tax, the Vagrancy Act, the Outlying Districts Act, and the Special Districts (Administration) Act. The latter sought to hinder social interaction between different groups in the NFD by demarcating the area into tribal zones.

Colonial attitudes towards herders and farmers persisted beyond independence, with governments emphasising the differences between communities and electoral systems, and the media magnifying these differences, playing on religious and ethnic affiliations.

4.3.3 Post-independence

Since the droughts of the 1970s and 80s, there has been a process of slow homogenisation of livelihoods across the Sahel (Toulmin 1983; Gallais 1972), with many herders seeking land for growing crops and farmers investing in cattle, sheep and goats. The droughts of the 1970s and 80s saw a major transfer of livestock into the hands of urban investors and farmers who had grain stored, as the terms of trade between cereals and livestock played in their favour, forcing herders to sell their livestock for next to nothing.⁴⁰ At farm level, this merging of livelihood strategies met the favour of development policies and interventions promoting crop-livestock integration. But specialist grazers faced a growing risk of being refused traditional access to crop residues during the dry season, which farmers were now using for their own livestock.⁴¹ A growing number of pastoralists, especially in the Sahel, started to establish their own formal settlements and took up farming to secure land and administrative visibility (Raynaut 1997; Krätli et al. 2018). Uneven access to new opportunities and market-based solutions to new problems has also favoured the growth of deep-rooted inequality within pastoral societies. Powerful elites – such as traders and people in the army, government and politics – own increasingly large herds, hiring young men to look after them on their own. These solitary herders are usually well-armed and often ruthless, safe in the knowledge that they have powerful people to protect them in case of disputes (IOM 2019; Turner and Hiernaux 2008).

4.3.4 Politics, institutions and the state

History matters in terms of understanding local political power and relationships between groups, in terms of who has first settler rights and who is the land chief and therefore holds ritual power. Conflict between central state authority and local power structures – whether pastoral or farmer-based – has existed since colonial times. 'Strangers' are expected to respect, recognise and pay tribute to local powerholders and usually have a person who acts as intermediary in their relations with the local community. In areas of growing insecurity, such as central Mali, a rise in ownership of automatic weapons among herders has been paralleled by a resurgence in the power of traditional hunters' associations, which now act as local militia for settled groups.

⁴⁰ During the great 1970s drought, the deterioration of cereal-livestock terms of trade caused more destitution among Ethiopian pastoralists than animal mortality (Sen 1981).

⁴¹ See, for example, Aubague and Grimaud (2017) on promoting agropastoral practices in Chad.

Past and present governments and their interventions have helped defuse or aggravate conflicts between groups. Several observers noted that, while the establishment of decentralised local government has brought some level of local democracy and accountability in much of Africa, it has also been damaging for pastoral groups. They are poorly represented in most communes and local councils, and decentralisation has established a boundary mentality that artificially separates grazing and water resources in neighbouring communes. This separation has only partially been mitigated by inter-communality initiatives. Project approaches such as “Village-lands management” (*Gestion des Terroirs*) and other large-scale infrastructure projects have also adversely impacted many pastoral groups, who have found grazing land taken into irrigation schemes and barriers placed across livestock corridors. Large dam schemes, such as the Awash and Gibe dams in Ethiopia, continue to be built across East and West Africa, with damaging consequences for the pastoral sector. In Ethiopia’s Afar region, for example, clan leaders have done deals with investors seeking land for large-scale farms along the river, depriving herds of access to water and grazing land (Rettberg 2010). In cases of conflict, the government and police back the investors, leading to bloody clashes (Behnke and Kerven 2012; Fantini and Puddu 2016).

There have also been large-scale land transfers to commercial interests for agriculture, forestry and tourism. Land taken for wildlife conservation areas has had a particularly damaging impact on former pastoral areas in East Africa. In Tanzania, for example, 40% of the country’s land has been classified as a conservation or protected area, allowing pastoral herders only limited access and use.

The state has failed to mediate impartially between local interests and is often perceived as being in collusion with one group or another (see Box 5 for the example of Darfur, Sudan). People have little trust in the army and police, whose interventions are frequently brutal, and there is widespread belief that the police and army are arming ethnic militias. Farmers in northern Côte d’Ivoire have accused the national government of having privileged settlement by the Fulani after the 1970s drought, to gain greater access to meat and milk from domestic, rather than imported, sources. In Chad, both farmers and herders complain that arbitration by local government officials and judges is far from impartial. In Ghana, local farmers accuse traditional chiefs of favouring Fulani herders when there is a dispute between them and farmers, because the Fulani care for the chiefs’ large cattle herds.

Since 1998, cross-border movement within ECOWAS member states has been regulated by a Protocol on Transhumance, which also provides for establishing local and regional coordination, and conflict management mechanisms. However, to comply with the protocol, pastoralists need certificates that the border regions are ill-equipped to provide. As a result, people waste much time at official border posts waiting for administrative procedures. Some of the signatory states have also passed legislation that partly

contradicts the provisions of the protocol, submitting pastoralists to further restrictions or prohibiting transhumance between neighbouring countries altogether (IOM 2019).

Box 5. Politicising farmer-herder conflict: the case of Darfur, Sudan

The conflict in Darfur which started in 2003 is often given as a paradigmatic example of farmer-herder conflict. Yet more cautious observers argue that these conflicts are the result of decades of neglect and institutional failure by government. Rather than address these conflicts and invest in better governance, the Sudanese government has set rival groups against each other, in a callous manipulation of competition between farming and herding peoples over land and water. In the 1970s, the central government took all unfarmed land into public ownership for allocation to its political allies, often in the form of large mechanised grain farms. Migratory livestock routes were ploughed up. Worried about losing control over outlying regions like Darfur, the government cut away the roots of traditional authority. Unable to suppress growing demands for greater autonomy, they then 'outsourced' military suppression to the Janjawid militia. This militia was made up of Arab herders, many of whom had lost their herds after the droughts of the 1970s and 80s, who were interested in receiving money and arms to re-establish their status and assets. Encouraging Arab supremacist ideology, central government played on the age-old relations of fear and conflict to generate chaos. These divide-and-rule tactics are not dissimilar to those practiced by colonial regimes.

Source: Rottenburg (2008)

4.3.5 Modernisation narratives and bureaucratic control

Persistent ideas and narratives run through the earlier literature. From the 1960s onwards, development and modernisation are seen as necessarily involving the settlement of nomads, who are perceived as unproductive, adding nothing to the country's economic growth and development and in need of modernisation through initiatives such as ranching schemes. A narrowly defined notion of agricultural 'modernisation' moulded on the Euro-American experience – the sustainability of which is now increasingly questioned even within Europe and the United States – has helped foster anti-pastoral feeling. Successive governments and national media have represented pastoralism as a delay to the march of progress and the epitome of what should be left behind,⁴² and blamed herders for overgrazing and desert advance. Many of these attitudes date from pre-independence, as French colonial administrators considered the sedentarisation of nomads as a sign of progress: «*historiens et géographes rejoignent les administrateurs pour considérer la sédentarisation comme évidente depuis un demi-siècle irréversible et chargée de progrès.*» (Gallais 1972: 310). Such attitudes see settlement as defining

⁴² Claims that "we cannot wait for pastoralists to develop" are common in national media and political speech, at least in East Africa.

development. Poorer groups have in fact been settling out of pastoral herding for many generations, since being an effective herder requires a certain level of livestock capital, without which it is impossible to sustain a herder's existence. A study of similar problems in southwest Asia in the 1970s suggested that helping pastoral producers to adapt to present conditions would be a much better option than seeking to settle them (Barth 1973). But administrators and policy design emanate from urban areas, where people have been used to settled conditions, and which breed a different mindset.

4.3.6 Ethnic stereotyping and distance

For centuries, livelihood patterns in some areas have involved cross-border smuggling and illicit activities. Some pastoral groups have 'heroic' traditions that celebrate warfare and raiding. At the same time, herders need to provide means of defending the animals in their care and thus arm themselves. Limited contact between social groups and little inter-marriage mean that stereotypes continue. This is a particular problem in areas where pastoralists are relatively recent arrivals and have not built up good relations with local settlements, or where herds are guarded by a single male herder, who is often well armed, has too many animals to care for and has few local connections. Establishing social connections with local communities reduces risks of conflict and helps dispel the narrative that herders are armed and violent. Herder families who travel together on transhumance are often better able to establish and strengthen these social connections, as pastoral women visit local markets and settlements to sell milk.

4.3.7 Land pressures and the enclosure process

In Europe, the process of land enclosure transformed open access grazing and common lands into private fields, pastures and hunting grounds for the elites, depriving commoners of their ancestral subsistence rights to food, fuel, building materials and fodder resources (Standing 2019). In 19th century Scotland, for example, this broke down the practice of driving cattle on foot from the highlands to meat markets in England along well-established livestock routes. Loss of access to grazing, privatisation of fodder resources and enclosure of land along these livestock routes made this movement increasingly difficult and long-distance animal transportation by ship and train gradually replaced moving livestock on the hoof. Experience in southwest Asia describes a similar process, as pastureland was enclosed and converted to crop fields, making herders pay ever-larger sums to access pasture and blocking transhumance routes and drover roads.

Rural people face exclusion from their land and resources in many parts of the world. Millions of smallholder farmers are under pressure and feeling insecure, due to poor land governance and large-scale land attributions. They also suffer alienation from common resources and the consequences of land privatisation. In much of Africa, commoners' rights (both herders and farmers) have been poorly served by the introduction of titling

systems built on the imported notion of land as a tradeable commodity rather than on the local reality of variable access rights for specific uses (ALPC 2017; Mousseau et al. 2019). Few mechanisms, if any, effectively protect smallholders' plots or herders' rights over seasonal grazing areas. Both farmers and herders are subject to neglect and poor representation in political circles, and have limited access to basic state services, such as education and health. Sadly, rather than finding common cause in the wake of such failures of state provision, farmers and herders are encouraged to set on each other. The case of Darfur (see Box 5) stands out for the intensity of the violence and magnitude, but it is far from unique.

4.3.8 Deepening inequality

The wealth disparity among pastoralists, although certainly not new, is becoming wider and more permanent (Catley and Iyasu 2010; Aklilu and Catley 2010a, 2010b). Pushed by government and development projects and pulled by increased demand for meat on domestic and export markets, current livestock commercialisation models are redistributing livestock from the poor to the rich. These trends reward wealthy operators while making it more difficult for poorer pastoralists to withstand drought and rebuild herds. Wealthier households have greater capacity to control key land and water resources – for example, by digging their own wells and underground cisterns, and erecting enclosures around pastureland – thereby effectively privatising valuable, formerly common resources with devastating impacts on poorer herders. Richer herders can also engage with export markets. The current emphasis in development, on increasing production for markets (especially exports) plays against impoverished pastoralists. They cannot command access to export markets and their primary economic interest is to sell less, not more, while they try to rebuild a viable herd. Increased inequality within groups impacts heavily on women and young people, who are generally on the losing side in the redistribution of property rights, labour obligations and status in accessing and managing basic resources or livestock products, once they are commercialised beyond a certain scale.

“Despite the importance of commercialization as a trend which can cause and reinforce pastoral vulnerability, it is a trend which seems to be understated or even absent from the policy narratives and related strategies of many government and donor actors. Where livestock marketing and exports are mentioned, it is always from a position of universal benefits.” (Aklilu and Catley 2010b: 2)

Box 6. Getting voices from pastoral herders: portraits of transhumance 2014–2016

This is testimony from interviews carried out with 300 transhumant families from Senegal, Mali and Niger, who travel for most of the year – northwards during the wet season or southwards once the rains stop. It offers a broader understanding of farmer-herder relations, how they have been changing and the difficulties faced on both sides. Giving voice to pastoral herders shows the substantial expenditures they make, which contribute to the incomes of villagers, traders and shopkeepers in the zones through which they pass.

For all herders, there were significant benefits in terms of herd performance, animal numbers and health, from taking animals on transhumance, relative to staying put at their home base. But it has become harder to keep mobile. To cross international borders, herders must have a Vaccination Document (*carnet de vaccination*) and a Transhumance Certificate (*certificat de transhumance*), but these documents are often difficult and costly to acquire. Movements within national borders have also become more difficult: while herders used to organise their stops informally through a *logueur* (intermediary), they are now expected to negotiate with the administration at village and local government levels (*communes*).

One of the biggest changes the herders noted is that “many farmers now have livestock themselves, and thus no longer welcome you as they did before; you now must pay for water and crop residues.” This monetisation of relations is everywhere, with villagers, frontier guards and forest agents all making demands for payment. Relations have hardened and herders are accused of damaging crops and trees. With no effective state presence and many armed people circulating in ‘the bush’ for all sorts of reasons, insecurity is much greater, especially for mobile assets like livestock. So, herders also arm themselves. Many livestock corridors no longer exist and water points along the remaining stretches are often spaced far apart. Within this more difficult context, pastoral women help forge strong bonds with village society, taking part in village festivals, making gifts of milk and establishing friendships with women from other groups.

Source: Thébaud (2017)

4.3.9 A new trend in farmer-herder conflict?

A study of the Horn of Africa by the UN Economic Commission for Africa (ECA), looking at the Uppsala Conflict Data Program for 1990–2014, found that civilian and insurgency violence took place against the background of state-based conflicts, with “a strong relationship between the intensity of State-based conflicts and the total number of fatalities resulting from one-sided and non-State violence” (UNECA 2016: 49). It concluded that “there is a strong correlation between governance deficit and conflict” (UNECA 2016: vii). The study was part of a programme to evaluate the economic dimensions of conflict in the Horn of Africa, Sahel and Great Lakes. A second study, on the Sahel, found a profound disconnect between the state and people’s interpretations of security and stability, highlighting that “strategies and remedies that provide resilience to the population [for example cross-border mobility] ... are those considered by State actors as major threats to the State and resisted by military approaches” (UNECA 2017a: x-xi).⁴³

Another ECA study published the same year focused on crime-related insecurity in the Horn and the Sahel. Practices such as illegal international migration, human trafficking and trading in arms, drugs and contraband are described as pastoralists’ new career patterns and have been gathered under the made-to-measure label of ‘new fringe pastoralism’ (UNECA 2017b). In the stated intentions of the authors, the new label is based on the idea that “due to their regular mobility and remoteness from the authority of government, pastoralists are increasingly implicated in international crime networks” (UNECA 2017b: vii). Throughout the report, the authors emphasise that only a small number of people from pastoral background are involved in this phenomenon. Besides, none of the ‘new career patterns’ discussed in the report have much to do with pastoralism as such. Thus, while it would have been interesting to explore what drives borderlands people into international criminal networks,⁴⁴ referring to this phenomenon as new fringe pastoralism – or even more confusingly, as new pastoralism or post-pastoralism (UNECA 2017b: 30) – seems an ill-advised choice.⁴⁵

Finally, a study on pastoralism and security commissioned by the UN Office for West Africa found a general trend of increasing violence, especially – although not only –

⁴³ This theme has recently been analysed and expanded in a study looking at the political economy of development in borderlands. A borderlands perspective starts from acknowledging the limitations of the methodological approach pervasive in both the research and development industry, centred around nation states and their boundaries, and assuming “a world of fixity, stasis, and boundedness” (World Bank 2020: 177).

⁴⁴ Others have talked of “[borderland] communities ... overwhelmed by well-financed criminal networks and by armed groups that appeal to the historical grievances of marginalized groups in their recruitment strategies” (World Bank 2020: 3).

⁴⁵ The preamble to the report candidly states that the official mandate was “to investigate the socio-economic and political factors that contribute to pastoralists’ role in insecurity, violence and illicit activities in the Horn of Africa and the Sahel” (UNECA 2017b: vi, emphasis added). The illicit nature of their role itself is therefore taken for granted.

between farmers and pastoralists over the allocation and management of key resources. The study emphasises that this trend is not generalised, and there are important differences both within and between states.

Violence is particularly high when farmer-herder conflicts happen in a context of prevailing insecurity, especially rural areas that are already suffering from the consequences of insurgency, war, political or ethnic violence, or banditry. Violence peaks in insecure parts of Nigeria, “with more fatalities in farmer herder conflict than the rest of the ECOWAS combined” and Mali, where “in many other areas, farmers and pastoralists manage their relationship peacefully and mutually benefit from economic exchange and cooperation” (UNOWAS 2018: 12). The report highlights the responsibilities of local and national politics in the frequency and scale of conflicts involving pastoralists and concludes that “conflicts between pastoralists and farmers are thus closely intertwined with multiple other security, economic, environmental and political factors that impact both groups” (UNOWAS 2018: 14, 16).

4.4 Overall considerations

The legacy of misrepresentation of pastoralism is reflected and even amplified in the conceptualisation and explanation of conflict between farmers and herders. The bigger and more powerful the simplification mobilised in the explanation, the bigger the exposure to this risk.

The environmental security framework, which focuses attention on resource scarcity and climate change, has been widely adopted to analyse and explain farmer-herder conflict. However, the environmental security framework was meant as a tool to generate consensus for political action to address climate change (Hartmann 2010). It was not designed to help understand conflict between farmers and herders – indeed, it is far too blunt to do so. The closest connection with pastoralism is that it shares with the old equilibrium model of pastoral development the assumption that variability (in this case, conflict) is a disturbance in a world where stability is the sought-after norm.

Other frameworks emphasise the complexity of conflict and the need for nuanced and contextual analysis. The political ecology angle, for example, calls for analysis of a wider range of interacting drivers – from historical legacy and wider political context to institutional failure to prevent or resolve conflicts, cultural differences and the breaking down (or active dismantling) of traditional networks of interdependence.

Beyond the focus on structural causes and group dynamics characteristic of both the environmental security perspective and the political ecology approach, explanations of farmer-herder conflict have looked at the role of contingent causes and individual agency to understand why, given identical structural conditions, conflict sometimes escalates into violence and sometimes does not. This approach treats conflict as a process rather than

an event. It roots the analysis in all parties' understanding of the conflict and focuses on the succession of stages within the process rather than the background conditions.

Analysts from anthropology have proposed that conflict be considered as a phenomenon internal to social systems. Seen in this light, conflict remains within the meaningful operational space of social relationships rather than being considered an interruption of relationships and meaning. Consequently, conflict management is not so much about eliminating it – which is not possible and prone to trigger bigger perturbation. Rather, it is about engaging with it in ways that make sense of it, which will also help keep violent conflict within bandwidths of acceptability.

An overview of historical elements mobilised in explanatory frameworks of farmer-herder conflict points at two main families of drivers: those concerning the breakdown of complementary relationships between farmers and herders, and those concerning the mounting and often generalised sense of injustice amid the failure of governance institutions to deliver equitable rights and opportunities to all citizens.

While it is clear that conflictual relationships between farmers and herders (as between farmers and farmers or herder and herders) have always existed – as has the escalation of violence alongside long periods of cooperation and complementarity – the last century has witnessed important transformations that undermine such co-operation.

Noticeably, the colonial divide-and-rule system constructed nomadic and sedentary people as distinct and opposed administrative identities and created the political isolation of pastoralists by establishing *districts nomades* in West Africa and closed districts in East Africa.

Most importantly, the seasonal economic integration of specialist farming and herding systems over large areas – a cornerstone of complementarity – suffered severe erosion from the relentless pressure for sedentarisation and the promotion of crop-livestock integration at farm level. To make things worse, the great droughts of the 1970s and 1980s played against pastoralists (fall in livestock prices relative to cereals) and in favour of those who had access to grain or capital, leading to important shifts in livestock ownership from pastoralists to farmers and urban investors.

In more recent years, these transformations have combined with the processes of decentralisation, and with the deep rooting of economic inequality brought in by globalisation. Incentives for marketing livestock favour those who have more assets and better access to money (wealthier households over poorer households) or more social status (elite men and elders over women and youth; educated over less educated). In all cases, women are most likely to lose.

The second family of drivers is the mounting sense of injustice in the face of the uneven distribution of opportunities and the governance void, or contradictory directions in governance and interventions that result in offending all sides.

In parallel, the large-scale transfer of high-value grazing lands to outside investors, promoted or permitted by governments, and the privatisation of land by those in a position to do so have led to an enclosure process. This promotion of agricultural modernisation by encouraging large-scale investors comes on the back of a long legacy of framing pastoralism in negative terms in the context of rural development: anti-modern (traditional), associated with disorder (irrational, ecologically disruptive, war-loving) or trapped in a natural state, unconnected to modern, market-based economics, 'wandering about in search of water and pasture'. All these clichés linger in the public imagination and are being revived on the wave of current us-vs-them ideology, although disproved for decades in specialist circles and in important policies (UNDP-GDI 2003; African Union 2010; Republic of Kenya 2012).



Herders in Karamoja, Uganda © Saverio Krättli



5

Lessons from the field

After reviewing the framework of assumptions that guide the search for ‘solutions’, we present a reflection based on a selection of case studies. We conclude with the feedback from our reference group and a series of recommendations.

5.1 Alternative approaches bring different ‘solutions’

The design of approaches for resolving farmer-herder conflict depends on how the conflict is framed and understood. Here, we examine the two main frameworks for understanding farmer-herder conflict.

Linear cause-and-effect: This approach frames farmer-herder conflict as a competition between rigidly defined actors (farmers and herders, understood as mutually exclusive identities) over rigidly defined resources (objects with mutually exclusive uses and users) that results in a disruption to stability. Such a framing supports the perception of pastoralists as a security issue and leads to ‘solutions’ in terms of counteractions sought to re-establish stability.

Measures generated by this perspective have focused on control. Programmes to disarm the different

parties and limit the mobility of pastoralists in space and time have been the foremost measures. There have been many restrictions on mobility across boundaries and borders, internationally and within the country – in Uganda, Ethiopia, some coastal West African countries and various states in Nigeria. These measures tend to reinforce a long-standing aim of national policies to sedentarise pastoralists.

Some countries or states have directly introduced boundaries by enclosing grazing land and introducing private property rights over land. Others have done so indirectly by turning rainy season areas into all-year grazing land through water development, with the aim of eliminating the sharing of space with farmers during the dry season.

When organisations or governments understand violent conflict as a failure of particular structures – such as customary rules for managing land or conflict management institutions – they aim interventions at rebuilding the structures deemed to have failed. In this scenario, ‘solutions’ include supporting customary institutions for accessing and managing key pastoral resources, building conflict resolution mechanisms and strengthening conflict management institutions, protecting and fostering networks of interdependence between pastoral and agricultural economies, addressing historical roots of enmity and embitterment, and promoting cross-cultural dialogue.

A relationship and a process: By contrast, when we view conflict as a relationship and a process, it becomes a regular fact of life rather than a disturbance from the norm. Instead of trying to re-establish stability, interventions using this perspective focus on working with conflict, paying attention to its meaning as a form of communication between interests and taking these disputes as a motor for change while keeping them within bandwidths of acceptability. This approach is better at recognising the contingent and dynamic nature of conflict, including the different stages and choices within a process of escalation and the variability among the conflicting parties, who are rarely unitary entities and singular, fixed identities. Individuals involved on either side are likely to have multiple intersecting identities (Sen 2006). They may change their positions in relation to one another along these and over time. There is still a need for solutions, of course, to contain the escalation of violence, but this understanding opens an operational space beyond the linear logic of counter-reaction to include forces that are internal to the process of conflict. In doing so, it increases the opportunities for intervention.

5.1.1 Understanding drivers

Drivers of conflict can be structural or contingent, but whatever the case, we can only understand conflict in relation to its context. Routine conflictual situations between farmers and herders take up new meanings and are shaped into new dynamics when they take place in a broader context that is already characterised by insecurity and violence. The farmer-herder conflict lenses, on the other hand, extract a particular dimension out of the general context of insecurity and explain it as if it happened in a void.

Obvious structural drivers include historical enmities and distrust, loss or dispossession of key resources, past and ongoing violence and injustice (including the undermining or erosion of livelihoods), widening power and wealth disparities, exploitation, neglect and marginalisation (especially in the face of new opportunities, redistribution of wealth and status). Others include gaps, confusion, contradiction or bias in governance and law enforcement institutions and their procedures – from those responsible for resolution on the ground to the higher-level bodies who are meant to regulate access to resources – as well as corruption and manipulation of people and situations for economic and political gain.⁴⁶

Contingent drivers include acts of violence (especially deliberate, organised attacks, or actions that increase a sense of injustice for one or both parties), actions that increase distance between the parties, thus closing down possibilities of dialogue and negotiation, and reframing the nature of the conflict or the identity of the conflicting groups in more general terms, thus moving up in scale from a single incident to abstract causes and objectives, or from individuals to larger networks (for example, based on kinship or ethnicity).

'Solutions' aimed at keeping conflict within bandwidths of acceptability need to identify the multiple drivers at play in any particular case, bring the structural causes into the open, engage with them, be able to 'read' the sequence of contingent events and influence the future pathways parties take. Focusing on a single driver along the winding path to violence effectively hides all other relevant drivers or accepts them as inevitable.

Let us take as an example the spaces along important axes of pastoral migration. Where possible, such migration axes provide a web linking dozens of livestock routes a few kilometres from one another but roughly heading in the same direction.⁴⁷ Contiguous routes intersect and pastoralists shift from one axis to another. As these livestock routes, with their associated resting areas, 'comb' a region with corridors of well-manured land, farmers living within reach often target them for cultivation even when alternative land is available. But once under cultivation, the superior fertility of land on a livestock corridor only lasts for one or two years. If pastoralists were informed in time and had the option to adjust their itinerary accordingly, the same land could be used in turns for livestock and as fields, and farmers' preference for cultivating on livestock routes would cause little disruption. This would be a way of introducing 'process variability' to match variability in inputs. Instead, both fields and livestock routes are being permanently 'fixed' through titles and demarcation. These permanent fields quickly lose fertility, while the costs of demarcation reduce the number of routes by singling out 'the most important' ones. Their

⁴⁶ In times of the globalised market economy, the boundaries of politics as a discrete sphere of values and human activity have been blurred, making it hard to distinguish political action from market transaction even in situations of extremely violent conflict (De Waal 2015).

⁴⁷ A survey across Chad's Dar Sila, which covers a latitudinal stretch of 300km, counted 47 migration routes (*mourhals*) for livestock production and trade – that is, one every 6km on average (VST/Burgeap 1998).

demarcation as pastoral corridors then implicitly turns the rest into farmland, in the eyes of farmers. And in practice, most routes are unprotected, whether formally demarcated or not.

A coordinated rotation of livestock routes and cultivation has received only marginal attention, so far. A formal rotation of land between pastoralists and farmers has been successfully set up, however, in Pankshin Local Government Area, in Nigeria's central Plateau State. Over a cycle of years, pastoralists and farmers alternatively use the same plots for cultivation and as grazing land while the land lies fallow (UNOWAS 2018). To date, this method of accommodating the needs of both groups has operated successfully.

5.2 Learning from projects on the ground

We reviewed several case study projects aimed at preventing and resolving farmer-herder conflicts (see Annex 2 for case study details). While each context is different, several common issues emerge, summarised here. Input from our reference group supported these findings.

The model of decentralisation followed in much of Africa has had mixed impacts. On the one hand, decentralisation has devolved powers to locally elected government, offering potential new spaces for people to negotiate and make decisions at a more local level. On the other hand, it has multiplied boundaries and fragmented rural space, reconfiguring the distribution of entitlements and opposing sedentary populations with mobile, intermittent users. Settled farming populations have been better able to benefit from newly established local government structures and get their candidates elected to the *commune* council. By creating further obstacles to the movement of animals, the new local government boundaries have also necessitated the establishment of shared resource management across several communes, such as grazing zones and water resources. If decentralisation is to live up to its potential, it needs to establish dialogue-spaces for resolving problems between groups, while minimising the practical impact of boundaries between each local government area.

Many areas suffer from long-term government neglect. Investment in strengthening institutional arrangements is key to creating spaces for negotiation between parties to discuss land use and mobility patterns each season (Toulmin et al. 2015). In the face of variable rainfall, there needs to be flexibility to leave options open and encourage real-time management of farmland, grazing and water resources, depending on the rains. Governments must regulate and control private investment in livestock production in pastoral areas, as it affects the availability of resources while escaping local regulation mechanisms.

Conflicts are often self-sustained processes. As the initial trigger event fades into the background or takes on a quasi-mythical status, each new move is largely determined by the previous one. And while the trigger event cannot be undone, it is possible to influence the next move. Working with the media to move away from the current negative stereotyping of pastoralists is necessary. The political economy brought about by conflicts also helps sustain them, as certain people will always find multiple opportunities to gain economic advantage from disruption. Breaking the silence surrounding such vested interests is difficult and, in some cases, women especially can voice unpalatable truths. Their involvement as a party to negotiations increases the likelihood of longer-term, stable, and successful implementation of peace agreements (Hudson et al. 2008; CFR 2016; Rahmani 2020). There is a need, therefore, for opportunities and spaces for women and youth to contribute to institutions and processes, thus bringing their perspectives into focus.

Conflicts can grow from the confusion between customary and state/judicial procedures. There are often contradictory and inconsistent rules for accessing resources and managing conflict between customary power structures, which retain a degree of local legitimacy, and formal state institutions, such as the police, judges and the courts. This legal pluralism generates multiple opportunities for misunderstandings and corruption. Building bridges between local leaders and the formal government administration, police and army would help establish a common understanding and implementation of rules; it would also help re-establish better accountability and transparent and consistent procedures. Including governments in the picture is crucial: there are many good approaches for community engagement in conflict management, but their gains are fragile and at risk of government interference.

5.3 Feedback from the reference group

As part of our methodology, we benefitted from feedback sent by an independent reference group, which responded to the text in general and provided guidance on the construction of clear, focused, pragmatic recommendations for future action. We received a wealth of reflections and suggestions, which we have integrated throughout the text wherever possible. We also present elements of this feedback here.

The feedback from our reference group emphasised three lines of potential development of this study.

- 1. Strengthen the current critique of the environmental security narrative by further developing an alternative narrative**, articulating the aspects of such a

narrative around key economic, administrative and political dimensions. These could be from:

- Representing pastoral areas as marginal and backwards to recognising their true value to the national economy
- Representing security as stability and focusing on generating hard internal/external borders, including through decentralisation, to recognising the opportunities for security from overlapping territories, flexibility and spaces for negotiation
- Seeking security in exclusion and the protection of privilege to recognising it in inclusive citizenship and associated processes.

2. Expand and consolidate the systematic review of the phenomena behind the farmer-herder conflict label, by:

- Unpacking the terms 'government' and 'law enforcement': The literature on farmer-herder conflict, whether from the environmental security or political ecology angle, refers to farmers and herders on one side and government and law enforcement on the other. These key categories need unpacking, drawing out their individual dimension (agency) as well as their social and institutional dimensions. Only the categories of farmers and herders have received attention in this sense.
- Developing databases of descriptions of 'farmer-herder conflict' by the people involved, including their characterisation in vernacular languages: Behind the label, there is a plethora of phenomena and any attempt to manage these processes must understand them from the point of view of the people directly involved. Examples of such studies include inventories for Central Chad (Djimadoum and Nodjidang 2009) and Mali's Inner Niger Delta (Barrière and Barrière 1995).
- Documenting the strong feelings of injustice among young pastoralists today and analysing their roots and manifestations.
- Expanding the analysis of conflict in East Africa to include Somalia and South Sudan. The Somali angle is critical in conflicts in southern Ethiopia and northern Kenya. Interactions between the Messiriya and the Dinka in the livestock migration corridors that link Greater Kordofan in Sudan with the Bahr-el-Ghazal region in South Sudan are highly relevant. Any analysis should include the barriers to livestock mobility and farmer-herder complementarities, which engender conflict.
- Expanding and deepening the analysis of how farmer-herder conflict differs between West and East Africa, and between the Sahel and coastal countries, considering:

- Greater loss of land in East Africa – first to white settlers, then to conservation and mega-projects (dams, mechanised farming)
- Most peace-building work in East Africa has never effectively engaged with national political leadership, staying within the comfort zone of community-based peace structures
- In the sub-humid coastal countries of West Africa, complementary and specialised livestock keeping and crop farming has fewer evident advantages, although manure may be badly needed.⁴⁸ While virtually every farmer in the Sahel is also a livestock keeper, in coastal countries and West Africa's sub-humid regions, livestock keeping is not a common experience and farmers are less used to visiting pastoralists. As a result, the infrastructure to support pastoral grazing – such as transhumance routes or pasture reserves – is inadequate.

3. Expand the analysis of the structural changes in livelihood options in areas of more frequent and intense conflict, especially in relation to land use by:

- Exploring the implications of the finding that pastoralists are pulled south into the sub-humid zone by economic opportunities rather than pushed out of the north (Sahelian drylands) by ecological pressure (Box 2).
- Exploring the implications of structural changes, such as the dramatic reduction in seasonal migration by pastoral herders in certain areas of the Sahel: Improved veterinary services in the south and the proliferation of permanent wells in the northern belt of the Sahel have triggered a significant degree of sedentarisation, thereby eliminating conditions for traditional complementarity between specialist herding and farming systems.
- Expanding the analysis of the role of demographic growth, looking at both intensity and distribution; especially in relation to access to land and livestock where competition has been introduced or exacerbated by interventions such as the promotion of agro-pastoralism or the introduction of access rights centred on settlements – for example the introduction of territorial administration (*territorialisation cantonale*) in Central Chad.

⁴⁸ In the Sudanese-Guinean zone, soil fertility is often a problem and is quickly depleted. In such cases, gaining access to manure is an important strategy for farmers – see, for example, the long-standing practice of livestock kraaling on cereal plots as a central part of the farming system in Haute Casamance and Sine Saloum, Senegal (Bernard Bonnet, IRAM, personal communication).

Box 7. Examples of good management of local conflict and transboundary mobility

- The Katsina-Maradi agreement, supported by producer groups and national NGOs on either side of the Nigeria-Niger frontier, with some external funding. There are also agreements at Gaya-Malanville between Niger and Benin; Kéné Dougou on the Mali-Burkina Faso frontier where cooperation includes both livestock movement and stolen animals; Téra Markoye; and Tessit.
- Cross-border initiatives and dialogues: negotiation of agreements, methodological support, structured dialogue, local agreements and support to innovations led by producer groups and local organisations. These include: Niger-Nigeria-Benin (PREPP⁴⁹); Burkina Faso-Côte d'Ivoire (PRAPS⁵⁰/World Bank); Burkina Faso-Niger-Benin (GIZ-ZFD⁵¹); Niger-Benin (PASEL/DDC⁵²); Katsina-Maradi (PRAPS/World Bank); Chad-Nigeria (CORET⁵³); Burkina Faso-Côte d'Ivoire-Ghana and Burkina Faso-Togo-Ghana (AFD); Mali-Côte d'Ivoire-Guinea (PRAPS).
- During recent violence in CAR, many herding populations were given protection by farming communities and the church and welcomed back (IRAM's⁵⁴ work in Mambere Kadei).
- A series of inter-tribal alliances, such as those called *ahalié* in Chad (Zakinet 2015), and the role of the local chief (Ardo) in negotiating for mobile groups.
- Mixed commissions, such as at Abéché (1995), in Mongo (Al Salim) and Mangalmé (Al Moussawa), and several other informal mechanisms led by traditional or administrative officials.

Source: Feedback from the reference group

⁴⁹ Programme Régional d'Education et Formation des Populations Pastorales en zones transfrontalières.

⁵⁰ Projet Régional d'Appui au Pastoralisme au Sahel.

⁵¹ The Civil Peace Service (ZFD) of the GIZ (the German Agency for International Cooperation).

⁵² Programme d'Appui au Secteur de l'Élevage (PASEL). Direction du Développement et de la Coopération Suisse (DDC).

⁵³ Confédération des Organisations des Éleveurs Traditionnels.

⁵⁴ Institute for Research and Application of Development Methods.

Box 8. Tested approaches for re-establishing relationships between groups after violent conflict

- Using local conventions or negotiated agreements.
- Shared learning about conflict management tools among principal structures and institutions that need to understand and master nested systems of law, spanning multiple landscapes and socio-political systems (PSSP⁵⁵ Zinder).
- Problem analysis, as carried out for pastoral water projects in Chad (AFD).
- The approaches led by GENOVICO⁵⁶ in Niger, with ZFD/FNEN⁵⁷ Daddo, and the Mechanism for Conflict Prevention programme in Chad.
- Mboscuda's Alliance Farming project in northwest Cameroon, which encourages pastoralists and farmers to find sustainable ways to use the land for the benefit of both communities.⁵⁸

Source: Feedback from the reference group

5.4 Recommendations

Our recommendations are derived from the review of past experience with policy and project interventions, and are aimed to inform those designing interventions to address “farmer-herder conflict”:

- 1. Ground the work on conflict involving herders in a sound understanding of pastoralism,** the economic and ecological logic behind mobility, the potential complementarity with cropping and recognition of the contribution pastoral systems make to GDP and exports. Africa's drylands should be understood as regions where mobile livestock keepers use their expertise to harvest variable but high-value resources and play a valuable role in maintaining resilient landscape systems. Such resilience is particularly relevant in the context of climate change, which brings more uncertain rainfall.
- 2. Change the narrative around insecurity and pastoralism at all levels:**
 - At the theoretical level: rather than represent pastoralism as an unproductive system locked in the past and battling with resource-scarce drylands, represent it as a specialised system capable of turning drylands variability into a resource for food production, where variability is the norm and food production has learned

⁵⁵ *Programme Sécurisation des Systèmes Pastoraux.*

⁵⁶ *Gestion Non-Violente des Conflits.*

⁵⁷ Fédération Nationale des Eleveurs du Niger (FNEN). ZFD is the Civil Peace Service of the GIZ.

⁵⁸ www.mboscuda.org/index.php/our-projects/alliance-farming#

to work with it. Far from living in the past, pastoralists are among the most avid adopters of new technology, such as solar panels and mobile phones.

- At governance and administration level: rather than reason in terms of inevitable competition for natural resources, see the interconnections between people's livelihoods and need for equitable access rights; rather than reason in terms of clashing identities, recognise why different groups have powerful, unresolved grievances.
- At intervention level: rather than focus on a technical view of natural processes triggering conflict over resources, acknowledge the wider context of insecurity and global political processes; rather than treat violent conflict as an interruption in the flow of meaning across society, listen to its meaning and engage in communication with the parties involved.

3. Establish local platforms to listen, negotiate and resolve conflict. Public authorities have a critical role to play in providing an impartial, fair platform where rival groups can negotiate and resolve their problems. These local-level platforms need recognition and connection into the wider architecture of state institutions to strengthen consistent approaches to resolving conflict. People meeting within such local-level platforms need to reflect the voices of different social and producer groups – women and men, young and old – to build more effective governance of resource access and address conflict.

4. Invest in intangible infrastructure alongside physical works. People need credible and legitimate organisations to structure and manage land spaces and relations between different interest groups using an area. For example, in northern Kenya, investment in the traditional Boran organisation (*dedha*) greatly improved grazing management during droughts and led to lower herd mortality and higher milk production than neighbouring areas.

5. Restore government legitimacy and the rule of law, in the current context, where jihadist groups have successfully mobilised local resentments. For most of the population, improving livelihoods and creating economic opportunities – particularly for young people – would go a long way to restore the state's legitimacy. In parallel, there is a need to invest in strengthening relations between citizens and government institutions, building confidence in effective decision-making structures and promoting leadership training to ensure local democracy and accountability.

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Annex 1: Terms of reference for this study

Conflit agriculteurs-éleveurs dans les zones semi-arides d'Afrique

IIED, mars 2017

Cette note expose les grandes lignes d'une proposition d'un programme de travail devant être réalisé par l'IIED pour le compte de la division Agriculture, Développement rural et Biodiversité de l'AFD. Cette proposition répond à l'augmentation des conflits et de l'antagonisme entre des groupes composés en majorité des éleveurs et des agriculteurs à travers une large bande de terres semi-arides en Afrique sub-sahariennes, du Sahel en Afrique de l'Ouest à la Corne à l'est, descendant au sud sur une grande partie du Kenya, et la Tanzanie, en passant par l'Afrique centrale et le Soudan. La première phase de travail, allant jusqu'en mars 2018, sera principalement documentaire, et sera validée au moyen d'une discussion avec un groupe de référence, y compris des chercheurs et représentants des associations pastorales. Une deuxième phase est proposée pour l'année suivante, jusqu'en mars 2019, et inclue un engagement sur le terrain auprès d'un ensemble d'organisations et d'acteurs dans deux pays sélectionnés de la région affectée (la sélection des pays reste à convenir). L'objectif de ce travail est de mieux comprendre les causes profondes de tels conflits et, étant donné le caractère répandu de ceux-ci dans de nombreux pays où travaille l'AFD, d'identifier des façons constructives de s'engager en faveur de leur résolution, ainsi que d'atténuer leurs effets négatifs.

Analyse d'événements et forces motrices

Une analyse documentaire de la documentation existante (documents publiés et littérature grise), donnera un aperçu des connaissances sur les tendances concernant les niveaux de conflit, la manière dont ils se déroulent, les acteurs impliqués, la forme qu'ils prennent, et leurs conséquences en termes de pertes humaines et matérielles et de changements dans les activités de subsistance. Elle présentera une analyse approfondie des forces sous-jacentes en action, ainsi que de la façon dont de tels conflits participent à des processus plus larges d'insécurité, du mauvaise gouvernance, d'extrémisme religieux et de développement économique inégal, qui ont lieu à l'échelle nationale et

internationale. Elle identifiera également les lieux et les initiatives efficaces qui ont permis dans certains endroits de réduire les tensions et les conflits entre les groupes.

Une telle analyse requiert une compréhension historique sur le long terme des relations entre ces différents groupes. Ainsi, il est nécessaire de savoir qui revendique des droits coutumiers sur une terre et de connaître les relations sociales existant entre ces groupes ainsi que la façon dont la langue, la culture, la vie religieuse et l'identité ont été utilisées pour mobiliser un soutien politique aux niveaux national et local. Il y a également des différences notables entre les terres arides d'Afrique de l'Est, où la plupart des conflits ont lieu entre différents groupes pastoraux, et l'Afrique de l'Ouest où il s'agit plus souvent de conflits entre des agriculteurs et des éleveurs. De telles différences sont en partie dues aux différences entre les écosystèmes ainsi qu'aux différences de moyens de vie liés avec ceux-ci.

Alors que le déroulement des conflits est très varié à travers la région, en fonction de l'endroit, on retrouve certains facteurs communs qui poussent les groupes à entrer dans une concurrence plus forte entre eux, dont les résultats sont de plus en plus meurtriers. Ces facteurs incluent :

L'échec des institutions à gérer de façon efficace et équitable la pression accrue sur les terres et les ressources naturelles (en particulier sur les pâturages et les sources d'eau) en raison de l'expansion continue des cultures dans les zones arides et dans les bas-fonds, qui ont une grande valeur. Ces pressions se sont intensifiées là où les acquisitions foncières dans le cadre de l'agriculture commerciale, du développement de l'irrigation ou des zones de gestion de la faune ont pris des terres de pâturage. Les ressources gérées en commun sont particulièrement vulnérables à être accaparées par les acteurs puissants. Dans certains pays, la croissance démographique, sans une transformation en parallèle des stratégies agricoles, contribue à une compétition de plus en plus forte pour les terres à cultiver, à la fois par les familles d'agriculteurs ainsi que celles d'éleveurs démunis de leur bétail. Cela nuit à la productivité liée avec la mobilité pastorale, poussant les anciens éleveurs à se reconverter dans l'agriculture, exacerbant ainsi la concurrence pour les ressources.

Des investissements dans de grosses infrastructures, telles que des routes et des barrages, qui modifient de façon importante le paysage et les liens entre terres cultivées, eau et pâturage, et bloquent les pistes traditionnelles du bétail.

La diminution de la complémentarité entre systèmes d'élevage et d'agriculture. Alors qu'auparavant les agriculteurs et les éleveurs négociaient souvent des arrangements mutuellement bénéfiques (par exemple les agriculteurs autorisaient aux troupeaux l'accès aux sources d'eau pendant la saison sèche et aux résidus de récolte en échange de fumier et de lait), ces derniers ont été rompus suite à la hausse considérable de la possession de cheptel par les agriculteurs et le besoin de ceux-ci de conserver ces

ressources pour leurs propres animaux. Cela contribue dans de nombreux endroits à la fragmentation des zones de pâturage. Les agriculteurs cherchent à préserver les pâturages pour leur usage individuel, installant souvent leurs champs en forme de cercle afin d'annexer une zone intérieure de pâturage pour leur usage personnel. Les éleveurs plus aisés peuvent aussi en effet accaparer de vastes zones servant de pâturages durant la saison sèche en amenant l'eau par camion, ou en creusant des puits privés, empêchant les autres d'accéder à l'eau ou en leur faisant payer des frais d'accès exorbitants.

L'insécurité dans certaines régions, causée par les djihadistes et d'autres conflits civils, qui a perturbé les mouvements saisonniers de bétail, ralentissant souvent la transhumance de celui-ci au cours de la saison des pluies une fois qu'il est éloigné des zones agricoles. Les éleveurs sont donc contraints de rester près de zones cultivées plus sécurisées, disposant de peu d'espace pour le pâturage, ce qui aboutit souvent à la dégradation des champs par les animaux.

Les changements techniques. De meilleurs moyens de transport, les téléphones portables, et des panneaux solaires, ont tous un impact sur les systèmes de production, et la capacité des individus à tirer des revenus stables d'une série de ressources. L'impact de ces nouveaux outils fournit de nouvelles opportunités ainsi que de nouveaux défis.

Les politiques qui ont marginalisé les intérêts des populations pastorales et en particulier, le besoin essentiel de mobilité et d'accès aux pâturages, aux forêts et aux terres agricoles après la récolte. Malgré un nombre important de pays publiant des codes destinés aux systèmes pastoraux, codes qui reconnaissent officiellement de tels droits, ni les autorités au niveau national ni celles au niveau local n'ont investi suffisamment de ressources pour assurer leur mise en œuvre. De ce fait, les pratiques sur le terrain contredisent souvent la loi. Le poids politique au sein de nombreux gouvernements et de parlements à travers la région représente mal les intérêts et les besoins des populations pastorales, pour des raisons à la fois historiques et culturelles.

Les zones de pastoralisme se retrouvent prises dans des luttes plus larges, telles que la demande d'indépendance dans le nord du Mali, les guerres de clans en Somalie et la guerre civile au Soudan du Sud. En conséquence, souvent les éleveurs sont soupçonnés de participer activement aux guerres ou au banditisme, aux affrontements transfrontaliers, la propagation des armes, les revenus considérables suite au trafic d'armes, drogues, et les butins de guerre, nourrissant l'intensification des affrontements et des règlements de compte.

La pauvreté et la marginalisation des activités économiques rurales, les faibles perspectives d'amélioration économique pour des millions de personnes dans les zones semi-arides, les niveaux élevés d'émigration, en particulier chez les jeunes gens, et les activités illégales généralisées (trafic de stupéfiants, d'armes et trafic d'êtres humains).

Ces régions défavorisées souffrent d'une mauvaise gouvernance et de corruption, ainsi que d'un accès très limité aux services publics, tels que la santé et l'éducation.

Proposition de travail

Phase n° 1 : d'avril 2017 à mars 2018, elle se chargera des actions suivantes :

- Réaliser une étude documentaire pour collecter les informations et les analyses existantes des tendances, des forces motrices et des expériences afin de mieux gérer les conflits éleveurs-agriculteurs (20 à 30 pages d'ici à novembre 2017).
- Collaborer avec un groupe de référence multi-acteur, grâce à des moyens électroniques, et en organisant une réunion de deux jours pour valider les résultats (janvier-février 2018). Ce groupe sera constitué à partir des groupes consultatifs/de référence décrits ci-dessous.
- Préparer et convenir d'un plan de travail détaillé pour la phase n° 2 à la lumière des résultats de la phase n° 1 et des données issues du groupe multi-acteur (février-mars 2018).

Phase n° 2 : Engagement de 12 mois dans deux pays où les conflits sont répandus et en augmentation. Peut-être le Mali et la Tanzanie, ou bien deux pays en Afrique de l'Ouest. Le choix final sera fait en collaboration avec le groupe multi-acteur. Travailler en partenariat avec des personnes et des organisations clés afin d'identifier les zones sensibles, et avec des chefs coutumiers, les « vieux », des responsables politiques locaux et d'autres dirigeants communautaires dans le but d'identifier des voies pouvant mener à des pourparlers de paix, en particulier au niveau local. Nous examinerons les progrès effectués sur le terrain par les accords locaux, tels que les Conventions locales, et analyserons la façon dont ils ont évolué, leur statut, leur efficacité, leur reconnaissance et leur crédibilité au sein des institutions de l'état. Par exemple, plusieurs sites du projet de *Gestion partagée des ressources naturelles communes*⁵⁹ pourraient être examinés, comme la forêt de Khelka près de Douentza, au Mali, ou la forêt de Takiéta, au Niger, afin de découvrir comment elles s'en sont sorties au cours des 10 dernières années.

Un groupe consultatif/de référence sera mis en place durant la première phase, et sera constitué de personnes bénéficiant d'une expérience et d'une légitimité de longue date dans ce domaine. (les noms restent à être convenus par l'IIED/l'AFD).

⁵⁹ Projet mené par l'IIED et SOS Sahel, avec organisations partenaires en 4 pays d'Afrique 2000–2003.

Annex 2: Projects and processes that are addressing conflict between groups

This is a first collection of practical examples of projects and processes that are addressing conflict between groups. We drew lessons from these case studies and used them as a basis for the recommendations of this report. The eight projects are drawn from a pool of examples from across the Sahel and Horn of Africa. In some cases – such as the Anambé Basin, Sénégal and Kebkabiya, Sudan – there is clear evidence of these programmes bringing about a reduction in the incidence of conflict. In others, the projects are just beginning and describe the processes being followed, or the problems to be solved. The contexts are highly diverse, as are the range of actors.

1. LAND project, Southern Ethiopia

Funded by USAID, the LAND project legally recognises and protects communal land and resource rights of pastoral communities, recognising and strengthening customary land governance institutions. The project provides pilot certification of communal land rights, giving communities official recognition through paper documentation. It also aims to strengthen pastoral communities' capacity for inclusive land use planning, management and investment negotiations. The project has been working in the Guji-Borana zone of Southern Ethiopia's Oromia Region since 2015.

One of the areas of intervention is to address land conflicts. Complications frequently originate from the lack of congruence between new administrative units and their boundaries and traditional Borana grazing territories (*dedha*), which contain both dry and wet season grazing areas and are used by a relatively well defined set of households. However, privatisation of grazing areas by individual households is on the increase, together with the creation of new settlements and the erosion of customary authority alongside increased government administrative presence at all levels.

While overall levels of conflict were low, there were hotspots for violence. These included areas where new borders between regions have created a barrier for pastoral movement and a shift in perceived ownership. In these areas, pastoralists rely on governmental institutions to resolve the problems created by government policy. As one herder says, “it is beyond our capacity to resolve this conflict – we need government intervention ... conflict is not at village but at district level. It must be taken to district level, elders cannot solve it.” Elders are responsible for solving conflicts over water, forest, privatisation of commons and crop damage. Raiding – an “age-old local practice” – remains unresolved and generates a series of counter-raids throughout the study area. A comparison of mechanisms to deal with conflict shows that, although government is the most commonly used institution for settling disputes, it also offers the mechanism least likely to lead to a satisfactory outcome. But this may be because the problems they face are intractable.

Redefining administrative boundaries has increased competition over territory between ethnic groups, spurring violent conflict. While decentralisation has helped bring public services closer to people, it can also damage mobile livestock production systems by fragmenting large grazing areas. Increased collaboration between administrative structures and customary institutions is essential to reduce conflicts in future and develop joint management plans to protect many grazing areas from being put into cultivation, where yields are low.

Source: McPeak, J and Little, P (2018) Mobile peoples, contested borders: land use conflicts and resolution mechanisms among Borana and Guji communities, Southern Ethiopia. *World Development* 103:119–132.

2. Participative agreements in Senegal’s Anambé Basin

The construction of the Confluent (1984) and Niandouba (1997) dams in the Anambé Basin created 5,000 hectares of irrigated land. Planning for the schemes ignored the importance of the pastoral livestock economy and led to multiple conflicts and clashes between herders and farmers. From 2004 onwards, SODAGRI, the company responsible for managing and developing the Anambé Basin, supported the seven local communes to develop local land use plans, with little impact. From 2012, with support from GWI, a series of meetings at village and community level have greatly improved the situation. The plans have been discussed in detail in many local meetings, with updated rules drawn up and training for community members in monitoring adherence with these plans. The agreements have been disseminated through radio programmes and village meetings.

Since the agreements were set up, there has been a large fall in the number of herder-farmer conflicts. In each of the four *communautés rurales*, farmers have freed up the former grazing lands they had occupied, herders ensured that animals were properly guarded from the start of the rainy season and farmers respected the ban on cultivation within designated grazing zones. An organised structure has been established for

receiving transhumant herds fire breaks have been built to prevent the spread of bush fires.

To continue to be effective, there must be ongoing training at community level to ensure monitoring takes place. Community-level work must link up with higher level structures and the *communes* must set aside enough funds in their budgets to cover the costs of ensuring people continue to abide by the agreements the observation going – for example, they will need funding for bikes, radio programmes and meetings – and to spread this approach to the wider region.

Source: Global Water Initiative (GWI) (2014) *Un processus participatif pour réduire les conflits fonciers au Sénégal*. Fiche d'information, Casamance region.

3. Promoting conflict resolution in Chad

This project to promote the peaceful resolution of conflicts and management of violent disputes over natural resources ran in three regions Chari-Baguirmi, Mandoul and Moyen Chari between 2013 and 2016. Two linked activities aimed to increase local organisations' and citizens' capacity to resolve conflict and strengthen dialogue in decision making around natural resource conflict management.

The project found that herders' animals damaging fields and farmers cultivating areas set aside as livestock movement corridors have become important sources of conflict. Identified causes of conflict include falling levels of soil fertility, which have led to very extensive, low-yield cultivation systems that eat into grazing areas, combined with rapid population growth and pastoralists migrations stretching more into the southern regions for the dry season than they used to do in the past. People also have different attitudes to land, resources and space: herders from further north treat land as a common good, with easy movement between areas, while farmers in more southerly zones are keen on firm rights over land and establishing boundaries. There has also been a governance vacuum, as local people consider legislation to be incomprehensible and local administrators, who often own significant numbers of cattle themselves, can also abuse their power.

Results from the study showed that resolution through negotiation and consensus was the preferred solution to conflicts, since involving a formal third party usually create heavy costs for both sides to the dispute. Traditional authorities such as village chiefs and their councils are usually brought in to resolve conflicts peacefully, taking evidence from both sides and then fixing a sum to be paid. People consider state structures as less able to reconcile the parties, and find they can generate more anger and resentment, with government administrators often accused of being in league with herders and very corrupt, taking money from whoever seeks to win the dispute. Civil society groups are considered more impartial and help with training and supporting local peaceful resolution structures.

The report present several recommendations from the local population, such as: further strengthening the capacity of civil society groups to support conflict management, greater engagement with local authorities, judges, police and army so their actions follow values consistent with the nation's values and providing more space for women and young men to get involved.

Source: PADL-GRN, APRODAIT and Search for Common Ground (2014) *Prévention et gestions des conflits violents autour des ressources naturelles partagées dans les régions du Chari-Baguirmi, Mandoul et Moyen Chari.*

4. Cross-border peace and sports programmes in Sudan, Uganda and Kenya

The Cross-border Peace and Sports Programme started from the grassroots in early 2005 when the first pilots were implemented during peace conferences for pastoralists in Kuro and Narus in Sudan. The programme has strong partnerships with local organisations that have already invested in peace building initiatives within their own communities and its implementation relies on their in-depth knowledge and will. These local organisations are:

- LOKADO among the Turkana people of Northern Kenya
- KOPEIN among the Jie people of Northern Uganda
- The Catholic Diocese of Torit among different ethnic groups in Eastern Equatoria State Sudan (EES)
- Kuron Peace Village situation among the Toposa in EES
- LRDA in Sudan along the Toposa-Turkana corridor
- DADO in Uganda along the Dodoth-Didinga, Dodoth-Jie-Turkana corridors, and
- The Catholic Diocese of Lodwar on the Turkana-Toposa corridor.

The programme focuses on five pastoralist corridors and targets people who are often difficult to reach, but crucial to involve in regional peace processes. Along these corridors, there is often a lack of basic services, education, law, order and security, and groups of youth are susceptible to manipulation by different stakeholders holding different agendas. The programme's peace and reconciliation activities focus on inter-communal conflicts, particularly where different communities raid each other's cattle within and along the borders.

The programme highlights specific conflict contexts within each corridor, often revolving around competition over water and pasture, cattle raiding and a change in cultural dynamics, due to a decline in tribal elders' influence over the youth. It also identifies areas without government security, such as the Toposa-Turkana peace track on the border of Sudan and Kenya, which includes a 20km piece of no man's land. Addressing each area's

specific context, the programme targets youth to commit them to a process of conflict transformation through different strategies and activities.

Specifically, it uses sport to bring together previously hostile population groups, expanding ways for the youth to participate in developing their communities and using public spaces so people can gain access to services. It supports sport infrastructures through investment, training sport leaders who go on to act as peace and sport facilitators, and collecting information for early warning and exchange programmes. It also holds peace conferences, including an important cross border peace conference in Kapoeta in 2008 that drew around 500 participants, mainly from pastoralist communities but also including Kraal leaders, community elders and political and local leaders. Via these peace conferences and peace facilitators, the programme has effectively reduced conflict within the named corridors and its focus on youth pastoralists has given hope of creating sustainable peace.

Source: Seeds of Peace Africa and IKV Pax Christi (2009) Cross-border Peace and Sports Programs for Youth Warriors. Program document 2009–2011.

5. Practical Action and SOS Sahel: community-based conflict reduction in Darfur

Community-based conflict reduction and peace building in Kebkabiya.

This two-year project in Darfur, Sudan, which ran from January 2013 to December 2014, was implemented by Practical Action in partnership with SOS Sahel, Kebkabiya Women's Development Association, Al Twaf El Rahel and the Nomadic Mobility Organisation. It was funded by the Darfur Community Peace Stability Fund. After an absence of 25 years, Practical Action returned to work in Kebkabiya with the aim of strengthening rural livelihoods, improving local capacity to equitably manage access to natural resources and addressing conflict through inclusive development planning. Within the project, a range of training courses were made available for nine community-based organisations (CBOs) including: conflict analysis and early warning to help communities build appropriate and effective community-based mechanisms to reduce and mitigate conflict; conflict resolution and peacebuilding; and conflict-sensitive design. These training courses were evidently successful; in 2014, the CBOs identified 71 cases in total, resolving 50 of them.

Kebkabiya is one of the region's most important agricultural areas and includes one of the longest pastoral migration routes. Farmers increasingly move into traditional livestock corridors, exacerbating ongoing conflict over water and pasture accessibility. The project used peace and migratory route committees to identify community needs and translate them into promoting peace between diverse groups. The committees also developed consensus-led community programmes and offered information on improving community management of natural resources.

The peace committees would analyse each reported conflict and try to resolve it using traditional conflict resolution mechanisms. If this failed, they could involve neighbouring actors and convene a meeting with high-level local leaders and persons of influence. Once an agreement was reached, the committee was tasked with monitoring the implementation of the agreement.

The project also implemented a range of activities to improve intercommunity dialogue and cooperation. This included rehabilitating a key local market and holding a market open day, attended by over 2,000 people, to improve relations between the diverse users. Other activities included demarcating pastoralist migratory routes, establishing three community forests and two community seedling nurseries and building 27 water points. These activities ensured that local communities were fully engaged in identifying, analysing and prioritising their livelihood and development needs, establishing regular dialogue and building consensus between different stakeholders.

6. SAFERWORLD, Africa Peace Forum, Ethiopian Pastoralist Research and Development Association and INTERAFRICA Group

This study identifies the fundamental causes of conflict, their implications for local communities and the range of options for community-led peace building and conflict-sensitive development interventions. Taking the Kuraz and Hamer subdistricts in Ethiopia's South Omo zone, the study focuses on cross-border conflicts within a region of great ethnic diversity and highly variable natural resources. The increased availability of small arms has led to a rise in commercialised cattle raiding. The report brings to light multiple impacts of pastoral conflict, including lower school attendance, the targeting of women and internal displacement. With traditional governmental conflict resolution methods often implemented too late and with no long-term vision, the study identified several local mechanisms for resolving conflict.

Intermarriage and mixed settlements bring ethnic and subethnic groups together, giving them access to diverse climatic areas and ecosystems and enabling exchanges of activities and knowledge on fishing, crop cultivation, beekeeping and medicine use. The study found that traditional local institutions and committees of elders were effective, although mostly within their own ethnic groupings. The report also identified ways to improve these local initiatives, highlighting a general lack of knowledge on conflict resolution within committees and their physical distance from the areas where much of the conflict takes place.

The study recognises that some government policies – such as pastoralists' constitutional right not to be displaced – have had a positive effect on pastoral conflict in the South Omo region. However, it is unclear how these policies are being applied in practice and involvement from the regional council and House of Nationalities has been limited.

Support for localised, knowledgeable peace committees that are accessible to remote areas is important for providing space and resources for pastoral groups to engage in talks to identify the practices that are fuelling conflict and first steps they can make towards sustainable peace.

Since the report was written, the construction of major dams on the Omo River have further disrupted livelihood systems for pastoral and farming groups, displacing more than 200,000 people. As a result, the nature of conflict between groups and the issues at stake are now much greater and involve billions of euros of investment.

Source: Gebre Michael, Y, Hadgu, K and Ambaye, Z (2005) Addressing pastoralist conflict in Ethiopia: the case of the Kuraz and Hamer sub-districts of South Omo zone.

7. The work of the Oromia Pastoralist Association in southern Ethiopia

This project describes the work of the Oromia Pastoralist Association (OPA), established and led by a Boran woman, Abdia Galma Boru. Having lost family members and experienced great insecurity and theft of many livestock assets over the years, she decided to create the OPA with some women from rival community groups. These women were “tired of the frequent and cyclical dispute culture in their area, the enmity and mistrust, revenge and under-development which made life so difficult” and decided to seize the initiative to establish a peace building project. From 2013, they worked with local government officials to support a range of peace-building activities.

These initiatives have finally created understanding among all community members regarding the relevance of peaceful coexistence in Moyale. According to Abdia, since the end of 2013 it has been possible to peacefully resolve dispute cases that has been raised among the neighbouring Oromo and Somali communities in Gofa, Guchi, Lay, Kalai, Chamuk and other kebeles, able to return more than 200 livestock stolen by individuals to their rightful owners and brought perpetrators to justice irrespective their ethnic backgrounds. The joint peace committees are also able to broker a reciprocal joint natural resource use and management that has facilitated free movement of livestock and people in all localities.

The local community conflict resolution and peacebuilding initiative supported by the Oromia Pastoralist Association (OPA) through the financial support from CAFOD, SCIAF and Trócaire (CST) has significantly contributed for Abdia, her neighbours and for more than 257,000 community members to breath a peaceful air and to undertake their daily work without fear of violence as no single community based violence has occurred in both Moyale Woredas of Oromia and Somali regions for the last two years. This has also contributed (according to Abdia) to:

- Improved security and increased access to natural resources under custody of one group to be used by neighbouring communities strengthening Abdias' and the larger communities' resilience to drought and climate change induced hazards. Abdia witnessed that before three years she had only 5 heads of cattle, 3 donkeys and 10 goats, but currently she has more than double of the number of animals she had before three years.



Abdia says she is committed to continue her peace building work with her fellow community members, elders and government representatives, to make inter-community relationships flourish and convince more women to take part in peace building. She particularly recommends a focus on youth empowerment to address the vulnerability of the younger generation by involving them in peace work, and supporting income generating skills.

Source: CAFOD, SCIAF and Trocaire (2015) Living in harmony with neighbours. The work of the Oromia Pastoralist Association, southern Ethiopia.

8. Review of conflictual situations in Chad, 2004–08

This document describes the findings of the Almy Al Afia project's review of 897 conflictual situations in Chad between 2004 and 2008. It recommends using the term *cas de conflits*, since there are a wide number and range of forms of conflict and, although the context varies, it is often due to the loss of power and authority of traditional chiefs. Bad management of an initial dispute can lead to a much wider conflict between communities, so early resolution is preferable.

Experience shows that, to be of lasting impact in building peace processes, dialogue between community representatives needs commitment from credible leaders, financial resources and long-term external support. It is also important to get the leaders themselves to contribute, thus ensuring their commitment. There are no blueprint institutional forms; what is needed is space for discussion and collective debate among the different interests, which establishes itself over time and gains a sense of direction and progress. Recognition from the state authorities is also vital. Complementary work on investments such as livestock corridors can also take place, but should be seen as no more than a concrete realisation of a social agreement. Most important is agreeing to work together to prevent and manage disputes, ensuring all actors are included, restoring inter-community links and relationships, and privileging peace education – especially for youth.

Source: Djimadoum Djalta / équipe AGRP (2013) Expériences de démarches et politiques de prévention des conflits liés au pastoralisme. Djimadoum Djalta, Projet Almy Al Afia II, Mongo, Tchad. Contribution de l'élevage pastoral à la sécurité et au développement des espaces saharo-sahéliens. Colloque régional de N'Djamena, 27–29 mai 201360.

⁶⁰ https://www.pasto-secu-ndjamena.org/classified/J2-1-7-Djimadoum-Experience_du_PHPTC_2.pdf



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Research Report

October 2020

Drylands and pastoralism

Keywords:

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This report responds to heightened concerns over rising levels of farmer-herder conflict across a wide band of semi-arid Africa. We assess the quantitative evidence behind this general impression and review the explanations in the scientific literature in light of the known issues with the legacy of knowledge about pastoralism. We find that total levels of violence have been rising in the last ten years – especially in some countries in West and Central Africa – but find no evidence that incidents associated with farming and herding, or more generally incidents involving pastoralist populations, have grown at a faster rate. We show that looking at the increasing violence through the lens of ‘farmer-herder’ conflict is overly simplistic and identify examples of constructive engagement with the phenomenon, to map out pathways to more peaceful outcomes.

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International Institute for Environment and Development
80-86 Gray's Inn Road, London WC1X 8NH, UK

Tel: +44 (0)20 3463 7399
Fax: +44 (0)20 3514 9055
www.iied.org



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