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**New mobilities and insecurities  
in Fulbe nomadic societies:  
a multi-country study  
in west-central Africa  
(Niger-Nigeria)**

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# **New mobilities and insecurities in Fulbe nomadic societies: a multi-country study in west-central Africa (Niger-Nigeria)**

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## **1. Introduction**

This report is the outcome of the joint venture undertaken by Oxfam/Novib (The Hague-The Netherlands), African Studies Centre (Leiden-The Netherlands), LASDEL (Niamey-Niger), MAI (Ugep/Ibadan-Nigeria) and Billital Maroobé (Niamey/Dori-Niger/Burkina Faso). This collaboration resulted in the “Knowledge Structure in Development” project with as first period March 2010 to May 2011. The title of the research is: ‘New mobilities and insecurities in Fulbe nomadic societies: a multi-country study in west-central Africa (Niger-Nigeria)’.<sup>1</sup>

This project is linked to Oxfam/Novib’s programme “Knowledge Infrastructure with and between Counterparts” (KIC)<sup>2</sup>. The two main objectives of the Knowledge Structure in Development project are:

- Establish a sustainable network of knowledge production and exchange in West Africa
- Formulate and execute a study that forms a scientific base for local organisations who work in a specific field

Building knowledge networks is all about knowledge. Knowledge and information will trigger political, civil society and development organizations to relate to each other in order to exchange, discuss and use the knowledge and information. Interest in the similar knowledge domains can thus stimulate the creation of knowledge networks. These networks of knowledge can only operate in an adequate way if, in the first place, the knowledge that they share is relevant to all of them and in the second place if participants are willing to communicate and negotiate this knowledge. If these networks operate well, not only the alliance building and capacity building will be

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<sup>1</sup> Discussions started in 2009. For Oxfam/Novib: Mieke Hartveld and Gerard Stehouwer, and for the African Studies Centre (ASC): Mirjam de Bruijn, Leo de Haan, agreed to start a project for the development of knowledge networks in Africa. The first pilot study would concentrate on pastoralists in the Sahel-Sudan. Oxfam/Novib supports one of the dominant grassroots’ organisations of (nomadic) pastoralists in West Africa which is called « Billital Maroobé » and the ASC has a long expertise in the field of pastoralism, in particular with regard to pastoral mobility of Fulani, and contacts with local research institutes.

<sup>2</sup> See [www.oxfamnovib.nl/KIC.html](http://www.oxfamnovib.nl/KIC.html)

reinforced but also the knowledge itself will be refined, become more detailed and thus developed.

In the case of our project the KIC objectives are oriented towards knowledge in the field of pastoralism to support Billital Maroobé in their advocacy promoting the interests of the Fulani pastoralists.

Since 2008 Oxfam/Novib assists the regional pastoralist network called Billital Maroobé. Billital Maroobé was created in 2003 through the fusion of three pastoralist organizations Tassagh (Mali), CRUS (Burkina Faso) and AREN (Niger). Oxfam/Novib supports Billital Maroobé's conviction that the pastoral way of living is sustainable and economically feasible if the following conditions may be realized: a conclusive legal framework in favor of transhumance, infrastructures in favor of the commercialization of cattle, an improved access to essential services and an equitable representation of pastoralists in political and administrative bodies.

In the process of alliance building and advocacy Billital Maroobé felt that they lack adequate scientifically based knowledge to strengthen their position sufficiently in order to be able to function as advocates for (semi-)nomadic pastoralists in their region.

The underlying ideas for assistance by Oxfam/Novib are mainly in the framework of alliance building and capacity building. The assumption is that if Billital Maroobé will improve its capacities and performance they will gain the support of national alliances in their endeavors to promote pastoralist issues on the regional and national agendas.

This was the reason why Oxfam/Novib asked the African Studies Centre (ASC) to function as a mediator in the process of alliance building on the one hand and generating adequate data to reinforce the development of knowledge networks. Its main objective is thus the creation of information networks in which the outcomes of scientific research lead to capacity building of local universities and research institutes and civil society organizations to reinforce advocacy activities, to initiate and nurture development activities, and to keep up with relevant developments, trends, projects and other dynamics in relation to pastoralism.

In practice, for this network it meant collaboration between the pastoralist network, research institutes in Niger and Nigeria, Oxfam/Novib and research institutes in the Netherlands. The research question was formulated on the basis on the interests of all partners, but it was certainly guided by the need for certain information as formulated by Billital Maroobé. Central in the research question is the understanding of recent social changes in both the environment in which the pastoralists have to operate and in their own society. These are summarized as new insecurities and new mobilities that seem to cause profound changes in Fulbe pastoral society, especially considering the (semi)nomadic groups.

In this report we have two main objectives:

- a- to show the 'working'/process of the KIC set up, and
- b- to give more insight into the situation of pastoralists in Niger-Nigeria related to the need for knowledge as defined in the KIC network.

The presentation of the main actors in this KIC project will be given in section 2. The research was effectuated in the Fulani environment and before we present the set up and research findings in sections 4 to 7, we will first give some general insights into recent developments in this pastoral and nomadic society in section 3. Sections 4, 7 and 8 deal with the KIC as a process; Sections 5, 6, and 7 deal with the content of the study. In section 8 we will draw some general conclusions with regard to the two objectives of this report and especially show how these two are interrelated.



## **2. Main actors in the KIC project**

### *Billital Maroobé*

Billital Maroobé is a network of organizations of farmers and pastoralists in Africa, that works for the advocacy and promotion of its members in economic, political, social and cultural development in seven countries in West Africa: Burkina Faso, Benin, Mali, Mauritania, Niger, Nigeria and Senegal.

Billital Maroobé is operating on three levels: international, national and regional. The head office is located in Dori (Burkina Faso) and the Permanent Secretariat in Niamey (Niger). The responsibility of the latter is the division of tasks, the reinforcement of capacity building at regional level, research and practical implementation of some activities of which the most important are the achievement of strategic plans and the operation of a sub-regional forum. Every day they receive and respond to questions from various sub-regional pastoralist organizations despite the fact that their level of technology has not yet reached an optimum level (especially lack of internet connection).

The Chairman of the Permanent Technical Secretariat of Billital Maroobé is Mr. Dodo Boureima. Since 1990 he takes up the case of pastoralist Fulbe in general and he plays a decisive role within the network of Billital Maroobé in particular since its inception in 2003 in Burkina Faso (Dori). Its foundation stems from the efforts to join the interests of three pastoral organizations namely: the Association pour la Redynamisation de l'Élevage au Niger (AREN) in Niger, Comité Régional Des Unités de production du Sahel (CRUS) in Burkina Faso and Tassaght in Mali. Since the network has started it sees a growing momentum and today many organizations operate under the umbrella of the network of Billital Maroobé. In addition to the three mentioned above, the total of actual associated organizations include: l'Association Nationale des Organisations Professionnelles d'Éleveurs de Ruminants (ANOPER) in Benin; la Fédération des Éleveurs du Burkina (FEB) and the Réseau de Communication des Pasteurs (RECOPA) in Burkina Faso; the Association des Organisations Professionnelles Paysannes (AOPP), la Fédération des Éleveurs pour le Bétail et la Viande au Mali (FEBEVIM) and the Fédération Amadane in Mali; Groupement National des Associations Pastorales de la Mauritanie (GNAP) in Mauritania; Gaina and Gadjé in Niger; Miette Allah in Nigeria; and finally l'Association pour le Développement de Namarel (ADENA), l'Association pour le Développement Intégré et Durable (ADID) and the Fédération pour le Développement du Joloff (FBAJ) in Senegal.

### *Millenium Advanced Initiative (MAI)*

Millenium Advanced Initiative (MAI) is a research institute recently founded in Calabar in Nigeria. Our Nigerian participants that are attached to this institute are: Mr. Oka Obono as Executive Director and Mr. Isang Ofem as a researcher and expert in the domain of transhumant Fulani. Oka is also attached to the Department of Sociology at the University of Ibadan. Twelve students associated to MAI contributed to the collection of data in various parts of southern Nigeria. For a complete list of the participant students see footnote 6.

*Laboratory for Studies and Research on Social Dynamics and Development (LASDEL)*

LASDEL's mission is to conduct qualitative empirical research on issues with scientific and social interest and establish collaborations with national and international partners. In the KIC project LASDEL is represented by its Director Amadou Oumarou, also attached as professor and researcher to the University Abdou Moumouni (UAM), Department of Sociology and Mr. Abdoulaye Mohamadou, who is also attached to the UAM in Niamey as a teacher/anthropology researcher.

*African Studies Centre (ASC)*

The African Studies Centre is a multidisciplinary independent scientific institute that undertakes social-science research on Africa and aims to promote a better understanding and insight into historical, current and future social developments in Sub-Saharan Africa. The institute is located in the building of the Faculty of Social Sciences of the University Leiden in the Netherlands. Its main objectives are to promote and undertake scientific research on Sub-Saharan Africa, particularly in the field of the social sciences and humanities; to function as a national centre in the field of African studies and to contribute to the education and teaching in these sciences, and to promote the dissemination of knowledge and an understanding of African societies in the wider public sphere. In this KIC project the ASC is represented by Prof. Dr. Mirjam de Bruijn and Drs. Kiky van Oostrum.

*Oxfam/Novib*

Oxfam/Novib is a Dutch foundation that aims at standing up for the rights of vulnerable people in the entire world. These rights include access to indispensable resources of water and land to sustain livelihoods; access to the basic social services of quality education and healthcare; the right to social and political participation and the right to identity. Oxfam/Novib's head office is located in The Hague, the Netherlands. Mieke Hartveld, Tom Willems, Saskia Verhagen, Fenke Elskamp have been closely associated by the coming about of the results of this project.

Last but not least, the Fulani (Fulbe, Peul) have played an important role in the KIC project and can be considered significant actors in the KIC network. The problematic that surrounds their present day life, livelihoods is at the core of this KIC initiative. The next section will serve as an introduction to the particularities of the Fulbe mode of live.

### **3. Fulbe pastoralists and recent social change**

The Fulbe, Fulani or Peul people, now mostly sedentarized but originally nomadic herders, are living in Western and Central Africa stretching from Senegal to Ethiopia and from the Sahel to the Sudan zone and today even in the forest areas. Their number is estimated on more than 10 million living in large numbers in Burkina Faso, Chad, Mali, Côte d'Ivoire, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal, Cameroon and Mauritania. The Hausa term Fulani is most widely used, but also the Wolof term Peul, or Fulbe (sing. Pullo), which is the terminology in Fulfulde (the language of the Fulbe) are common. In this section we will discuss some aspects of this Fulbe pastoral culture, how it is embedded in larger Fulbe culture, and some specific elements that are essential for an understanding of today's social changes, new mobilities and new insecurities.

Is there a crisis in Pastoral Ways? Recent debates on the Sahel and pastoralists have concentrated on the diminishing space for the nomads. The droughts of the 1970s, 1980s are still sharp in the memory of the nomads. These were droughts that were really hard for the nomads to cope with. After these periods it seems that the situation has not really improved as nomads are increasingly confronted with lack of space for their lifestyle. However as is argued, droughts and crisis are part and parcel of nomadic life, and their history is full of it. Nevertheless there is a feeling of urgency in the present day situation that needs further exploration. This is exactly the urgency in which the questions of Billital Maroobé were formulated.

To understand present day developments in pastoral and nomadic societies we need to understand more about the society of which these pastoralists are part. Their life and environment has been changing ever since and variety, diversity and flexibility seem to be terms that best cover their livelihoods.

Historically various groups of Fulbe developed: the town Fulbe, the semi-sedentary Fulbe and the nomadic Fulbe (i.e. Mbororo, Wodaabe, Aku'en). From the 17<sup>th</sup> century the Fulbe have established empires in West Africa, of which the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> empires of Futa Djallon, Maasina, Sokoto (which was also Hausa) and Adamawa in today Cameroon are the best known. These empires were based on an Islamic ideology, and as such spread Islam in a wide area of West and Central Africa. Today the Fulbe are associated with Islam, also the nomadic Fulbe although they converted to this religion relatively late (in the course of the 20<sup>th</sup> century).

The Fulbe are divided in various clans, recognizable for their specific clan names. These clans are associated with the various lifestyles, and sometimes in case of the nomadic groups with typical cattle or sheep. They also share a certain itinerary for their pastoral activities. The Fulbe share a common language, though with various dialects. In this study we focus on the pastoralist and (semi) nomadic Fulbe in Niger and Nigeria. The main groups we encountered are the Wodaabe (in Niger) and the Aku (in Nigeria).

The various groups that are considered pastoralist Fulbe are however also very different. They act in different styles of mobility and occupy in various degrees other than pastoral activities, i.e. in urban environments as guards of houses, as jewelry sellers, or farmers in some instances, involved in transport. The recent past of these groups shows that diversification in their activities is part of the pastoral lifestyle as a



response to crisis situations. Thus the present day situation can be seen as a variation on this old strategy.

In literature about the Fulbe an important emphasis is given to the moral codes that guide daily decisions, also in their relations with other people outside and inside their group (common name for this code is *pulaaku*). We should however not forget that they share these codes with other Sahelian people as well. Nevertheless *Pulaaku* has come to be understood as the moral codes and social behavior of the Fulbe, and these codes are especially present among the nomadic Fulbe.

There has been a scientific debate on the origins and the meaning of this system of moral codes *Pulaaku*. It is interesting to notice that the many Fulbe associations (like Billital Maroobé, but as well Taabital Pulaaku) often take this concept of *pulaaku* to show the special difference of Fulbe from other groups. One could say that *pulaaku* has become the 'trade mark' for Fulbe to be able to unite and defend their rights.

In today's practice of nomadism the bulk of the work is done by young men. It is important to understand the position of this group in Fulbe society. They have always occupied a particular position. The system of age groups sets them apart from the rest of society. Young men are defined in relation to their marital status and their freedom to move. From old times they moved far away with the cattle on transhumance and later moved out to rear cattle of others, or to try their luck in the Goldmines; their lifestyles during these travels have a vagabond-like character. It is a period of initiation into male-hood. When they return after these years of travel they are expected to enter life of an adult man, marry and start a family, herding the family cattle together with brothers and father.

To understand the lifestyle of the nomadic Fulbe it is important to keep in mind that their social structure though encapsulated in an idiom of strict relationships (i.e. *pullaku*) is at the same time extremely flexible. This can basically be understood in their mobile lifestyle and the need to be flexible to feed the cattle. This flexibility is recognizable in many other social and cultural domains. The Fulbe are in general extremely flexible in their definition of kinship relations, of relating to other people which can be associated to their mobile lifestyle. Gender relations are equally flexible, although the parameters for the relations between the sexes have undergone changes especially among Islamized Fulbe. Rates of divorce are high, and extramarital relationships are accepted. Although the Fulbe are endogamic in their marriage patterns, their mobile lifestyle also brings them into the relationship with many other groups to whom they also relate in sexual relationships. The Fulbe young men who trek with the herds of big cattle owners are known for their wild lifestyles including drinking, smoking and sexual dissipations.

In the discussions with Billital Maroobé the term new mobilities was referred to, what does this mean?

Although mobility has always been the core element of Fulbe pastoralists way of life, recently it seems to have undergone profound changes. Next to old forms of mobility we see the development of new itineraries that open up new worlds and bring the nomads in a different way than before in contact with the wider environment in the context of modernity. These changes result in increasing diversity in the quality and

quantity of relations of itinerant families/ individuals with their 'home' families and partners on the one hand and perceived "others" on the other hand.

The past decades, droughts, diminishing pasture areas and increase in urban farming and cattle rearing have influenced the lifestyle of the nomads who increasingly move into a life of dependent herdsmen and workers in the city. These moves that may be the consequence of a 'crisis' in pastoral societies, have however also opened up a new world, where schooling, other forms of labor and the confrontation with urban life have led the pastoralists into 'modernity'. Nevertheless, nomads are considered "non-fit" to the schedules of the State. Being mobile is essential in their search for a decent livelihood in which animals play a big role. Crossing of borders is part of this search. These particularities of the nomadic culture have also kept them outside development schemes and control of the state.

That nomadic pastoralists are not only engaged in mobility that has to do with their pastoral lifestyle is well known. Studies on their urban pastoralism, or their involvement in trade, are increasing and of old age. In the huge diversity in mobility we can discern different forms of mobility:

- Mobility related to gender: women who move for selling medicine in town; or men who move for their herding jobs over increasingly larger distances;
- Mobility in relation to ecological variation;
- Mobility in relation to conflict, often nomads avoid conflict; or mobility in relation to adventure of young men and women;
- Mobility in relation to crisis in general

In relation to these new mobilities nomads face new risks in their lives, for instance: health risks, criminality/conflicts, economic risks, etc.

What is already known about these so called new risks? What are the first indications of new insecurities related to new mobilities of pastoralists West Africa?

The best described conflict in West Africa is the herder-farmer conflicts. Many researchers have delved into this phenomenon and it is stated that these conflicts are only increasing in number. Although the relation between these conflicts and the immediate resource crisis is disputed, the reality today is that increasingly conflicts over territory occur, even leading to the expulsion of nomadic pastoralists from national territory, for example in northern Ghana and northern Nigeria. Now nomads increasingly discover long distance itineraries (toward Nigerian forest zones for instance, see publications Blench in the list of literature), the problems of land conflicts are increasing in width. Land conflicts are intimately related to discussions on strangerhood and the prime rights to land; in these discourses on autochthony and allochthony the nomads are always considered strangers and their rights are difficult to be recognized before national laws. The acceptance of Fulbe as indigenous peoples has so far not really changed the situation. These conflicts lead to economic uncertainties for the nomads and push them into urban areas, etcetera.

The position of young men has come under pressure so it seems. They have no longer a fulfilling position in society as the herds are often not large enough to enable them to continue a pastoral lifestyle, and further the work as herder is no longer the only horizon for these youth. At present these young men find new occupations. They are in many cases truck drivers, taxi drivers, or they herd the cattle of urban businessmen.

Increasingly they also seem to be engaged in armed robbery, which for them is an easy way to earn a living. The phase of youthfulness seems to be extended into adulthood in this new situation in which young men do not always return to their (cattle) families.

The young people tend to turn to city life in search for a new livelihood. In some cases this may be prostitution, and other forms of low status labor. Poor families have a difficult time in Fulbe culture and mutual help is not very abundant in societies where everybody is at risk. It is therefore a question what kind of relationships these itinerant families have with their 'home' families. One reason for delayed or even non return may be that their family has lost their cattle and are too poor to take the youngsters back in after their "adventures".

Other Fulbe (of various backgrounds) managed to become extremely rich. Of old the Fulbe were engaged in trade, often alongside Hausa men and women. The trade networks have been enlarged and diversified in the course of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Today many Fulbe engage in trade with China, some even have businesses in South Africa. Some of these big men started their business very young and have become important wealthy people in their community. They may be the hosts of the itinerant (poor) families/individuals we mentioned above, because they are in most cases urban based. As such new forms of fosterage and clientelism emerged. Furthermore the actions, ideas etc. of this elite influences mobility patterns of others, for instance because of their occupation of the land or their big herds. They may also be influential men when the relations with the outside world are concerned, like the world of the NGOs, the State or other governance structures. They do not necessarily represent their nomadic brothers. Decisions taken on their behalf may not lead to a better life of the nomadic groups, in many cases the contrary. On the other hand they may become part of the aspiration of young men in nomadic groups. They have become the emblems of modernity.

Criminality seems to be an increasing phenomenon in Africa, and nomads are prime victims. Fulbe nomads increasingly are prey to banditry or gangsterism, criminality but as well to sexual diseases. These are considered by the nomads as new insecurities in their lives. Examples are the situation of Fulbe in the Central African Republic who are increasingly victim to bandits or criminal bands roaming the area. As the Fulbe are considered wealthy they are easy victims for these groups. On the other hand Isa Saibou, a researcher at Maroua/Ngaoundere University, reports that Fulbe male youth are increasingly involved in criminal acts themselves. This is a new situation that we should situate in a broader frame of new mobilities and new insecurities as being faced by nomadic people in Africa.

This research proposes to delve into these new mobilities and new insecurities that accompany these for two specific areas: one in the 'home area' of nomadic pastoralism, i.e. the Sahel in Niger, and one in the new zones where the nomads go to: the forest zone in southern Nigeria. In both areas nomadic Fulbe are confronted with insecurities that vary from drought to lack of security, to non-protection of the state; or the reverse..... Ethnographic detail of these situations is an urgent necessity to get more insight in recent developments.

#### **4. The four phases of the KIC project with LASDEL, MAI and Billital Maroobé**

Setting up a knowledge network cannot do without knowledge. Collecting data and sharing knowledge is imperative in order to create or extend existing networks. The process of developing knowledge networks is a form of capacity building. In this case the intention was not only to reinforce the capacity of Billital Maroobé as a local NGO defending the rights of the Fulbe in several West African countries but also to reinforce the capacity of local research institutes.

The ASC agreed with Oxfam/Novib that the ideas and needs linked to the capacity building of Billital Maroobé should form the point of departure for the scientific queries that guide the research. The actual data was to be gathered by students (PhD or MA) of local professional research institutes.

In the first phase the ASC formulated and signed cooperation agreements with two West African research institutes:

- “Laboratoire d’Etudes et de Recherche sur les Dynamiques Sociales et le Développement local” (LASDEL) situated in Niamey, that has close ties with the Abdou Moumouni University of Niamey (Niger).
- “Millennium Advanced Initiative” (MAI) situated in Ugep (Cross River State in north-east Nigeria) closely linked to the Ibadan University (Nigeria).

Collaboration between researchers from Niger and Nigeria is not common because of different languages and scientific approaches. However, the new migration routes of the Fulani, that we thought to link the North of Niger all the way through Nigeria to southern Nigeria, were a good reason to collaborate.

Each institute brought in one or two representatives and proposed a number of students. LASDEL is represented by Dr. Amadou Oumarou and Dr. Abdoulay Mohamadou and MAI is represented by Dr. Oka Obono. The students were responsible for the execution of the data collection and the generation of the research reports. The representatives of the research institutes took care of the supervision of the students and the overall monitoring of the project. Billital Maroobé was represented by its Permanent Secretary Dodo Boureima and his assistant Blamah Jalloh.

The kick-off took about two months including the (roughly) scheduling of the project; the formulating, signing and scanning of all the contracts; the further specification of the budget<sup>3</sup>; and the logistic planning of the first workshop in Niamey with all the participants.

The essence of the second phase was the acquaintance of all parties concerned and the set up of the research and its operationalization. The first workshop was held 10 and 11 may 2010 in Niamey<sup>4</sup>. Apart from introducing ourselves and our institutes/organizations the aim of this workshop was threefold:

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<sup>3</sup> For a detailed budget see annex.

<sup>4</sup> For a complete list of all participants see annex.

- identify together with Billital Maroobé the major problems with which the Fulbe are currently confronted and what kind of scientific information they suggest would help them to reinforce their advocacy activities
- define a research topic that is important and relevant for the execution of a research and for the establishment of a sustainable and operational network
- formulate research questions as a point of departure for the students in their fieldwork, and to agree on a shared methodology and planning

The third phase was the actual execution of the research. Two research teams started to prepare a research proposition based on the research questions formulated and methodology taught in the workshop. Part of the preparation phase included also the reading of a collection of relatively recent English and French literature on the topic that Mirjam and Kiky gathered from the African Studies library and news articles<sup>5</sup>. We also included the making of a film as part of the process.

Safia Soumana Sambo and Harouna Madou from LASDEL prepared their research in the south east region of Niger in the Gadabédji area about 100 km north of Maradi. From half July to half September they moved to the research area and stayed for a two month period in various remote Fulbe transhumant camps. From time to time they retreated to Maradi to analyze and write their findings.

In Nigeria a large group of twelve students<sup>6</sup> being part of MAI divided the research tasks and each contributed a part of the study. The main part of the study was held in Itigidi and Ugep and a smaller part was executed in the Lagos area. The results of the data that the two research teams found are presented in section 5.

#### *Film*

We included film in the project both as a dissemination strategy, and as being part of the process. Due to theft of a computer in Nigeria and to the underscore of the team of the technique of the filming, we decided to finally involve a good camera man for this part of the project. The result is a short documentary in which we predominantly present the Nigeria research. In a follow up we intend to both ‘use’ this film for various purposes and we would suggest to also make a film of the Niger case which then both can be used for the activities of the networks, for the capacity building within the research institutes and for further dissemination of the results of this project.

#### *Some comments on the process*

In practice it appeared that the process of the research itself was indeed very challenging and instructive. An impression: The study was situated in south and south east Nigeria (Calabar/Ugep in the Cross River State area and Lagos/Ogun/Ondo State area) and in south east Niger (Maradi/Dakoro area). This choice for two neighbouring countries was based on the assumption that pastoral networks and itineraries would be found across these borders. This was indeed the case, however these two countries have a different colonial history which is expressed in the official languages, in Nigeria this is English and in Niger French. Probably this language barrier is one of

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<sup>5</sup> For a list of literature see annex.

<sup>6</sup> Precious Ofem, Ebri Abam Ebri, Isang Ofem, Kate John, Sylvanos, Maria Ofem, Omenka Obono, Christopher Obono, Alice, Obono, Abaloke Lekem, Lionel Ibiang and Ballo Arikpo.

the reasons why relatively little common research is undertaken between institutes of these countries. In this project the bilingual aspect of the collaboration was rather a challenge than an obstacle. Our French-speaking participants dedicated quite some time to the English written articles and the English speakers ameliorated their French during the heated discussions held in French. The processing of reports both in English and in French proved very time-consuming though. For the pastoral networks that are found cross borders, the language barrier is not such an obstacle as they share Hausa and Fulani languages. Next to this bilingualism we were confronted with another interesting division between the two countries. It appeared that it was not possible to travel by air directly between Nigeria and Niger. The only connection between Kano and Niamey had been stopped a year ago. Thus the alternative was a long flight via one of the other West African capital cities, or the travel by land, which has become increasingly dangerous during the period of the project due to increasing criminality and violence in the region. These experiences however contributed to our knowledge of the problems pastoralists are confronted with.

## **5 Scope of study, formulation of a research plan and research questions**

The workshop took two days. The first day was dedicated to the discussion between all participants to inform and exchange on the current situation and problems of the Fulbe. The next day we formulated the research plan and questions based on the discussion of the day before.

Dodo and Blamah, representing Billital Maroobé, were leading in the discussion and best informed to present Fulbe's current major problems. According to them currently the Fulbe are confronted with different kinds of insecurity. Recently, conflicts have arisen in Nigeria and Benin where certain groups of pastoralists have attacked others robbing them of their cattle. These raiders seem to be well organized transporting the stolen animals by trucks crossing the frontier. Also a massacre has taken place among the residents of the Jos Plateau in Nigeria of which the aggressors are thought of being Fulbe from Niger. In these still on-going conflicts the Fulbe may either be the victims or the aggressors.

One of Billital Maroobé's activities is establishing agreements between countries to facilitate cross-border transhumance. The violent attacks however have caused limitations on transport of livestock (no longer allowed between 21h and 8h), and form an obstacle to the realization of cross-border agreements for transhumant Fulbe.

The long distance itineraries that require crossing of borders form a risk to animal health. Also, mobility on the one hand and modernity on the other, have resulted in new types of risks for human health. The freedom to engage in sexual relationships of young male migrants in foreign areas promotes the transfer of sexually transmitted diseases and the progressive display of prostitution.

The representatives of Billital Maroobé stress that above all they need a scientific basis to strengthen their role of advocacy with neighbouring states and to strengthen their position in the discussion with civil services in the context of modernity and mobility, risks to health and socio-political and economic insecurities.

According to Oka the situation in Nigeria in terms of human health is that people are mostly very poorly informed about the risks for their health and that for that reason people rarely take precautions. In terms of conflict and violence regularly conflicts occur between pastoralists and farmers because they do not share the same concept of space. The nomadic pastoralists have been using territories and spaces over generations and have mentally "appropriated" them. And then suddenly, one day they may arrive in such "appropriated" territories and be confronted with new obstacles that prevent them from continuing their traditional modes of life. A certain level of understanding of these mental maps that exist in the minds of these migrants is a prerequisite for doing research in this area.

We discussed the approach and feasibility of the proposed research in which all the issues that Fulbe are dealing with nowadays have been taken into account:

\* The pastoral economy, that is to say the breeding system as well as access to markets, payment of taxes, etcetera.

\* New forms of mobility: new itineraries, new technologies (e.g. in transport of animals as part of a new form of mobility)

\* Innovative strategies, for example: selling cattle to obtain new, better adapted varieties from neighbouring countries

To ensure an identical methodological approach, the proposed research methods have been explained extensively by Oka. Oka has explained his "OEM" model (Ontology - Epistemology - Methodology) to make the researchers aware of the influence their presence and personality might have on the outcomes of the study and how to optimize the results by a division of tasks according to individual strengths. The research is qualitative in nature and based on three different types of interviews: individual in-depth interviews and group in-depth interviews and interviews with key informants. Furthermore life histories are to be collected. Participatory observation is an important element of the methodology.

Eventually we agreed on the following plan:

The focus will be on different groups of nomadic pastoralists following each different pathways along a similar itinerary from Niger to Nigeria. Distinction will be made between semi-nomadic Wodaabe families that travel all together and other groups represented by herdsmen who left their families behind and undertake the route detached from their families. The researchers will discern between traditional strategies and the exploitation of new pathways and/or techniques. We also proposed to figure out the settlements of Fulani in the forest areas and in Cross river state in Nigeria, Ugep.

Therefore we planned a comparison between two sites: Ugep (Nigeria) and Maradi (Niger) and try to identify the connections between these. The sites are chosen for their different ways of integration of the nomadic styles, and for their interrelation as a consequence of new mobilities. Furthermore, the relation between the rural areas and urban centers, the demographic differences with regard to the ratio Fulbe-non-Fulbe in the area, will be taken into account as well as the context of modernity and the government policies vis-à-vis these groups.

The first case is in the Maradi/Dakoro area of south east Niger. This zone is known for long distance nomadism of mainly groups of Wodaabe and Uda'en, already dating from the 17<sup>th</sup> century onward. The focus of this case will be on:

- specific types of mobility (temporal migrations) of women and young man in order to search and sell (traditional) medicine (see Boessen 2007; Loftsdottir 2004 and 2008)
- the severe consequences of the droughts: pasture areas that are diminishing and the risk of losing important numbers of cattle in severe famines
- conflicts with neighboring groups and more specifically farmer-herdsmen conflicts

The second case is in the forest zones of the Cross River State in south east Nigeria, in Calabar and Ugep. This is the homeland of the Yakurr people (though they migrated into the area in waves). The phenomenal growth in the Yakurr population from the middle part of the last century has led to an unanticipated expansion in the original



residential areas, converting former farmlands, and encroaching on land belonging to neighboring peoples and often stimulating violent conflicts.

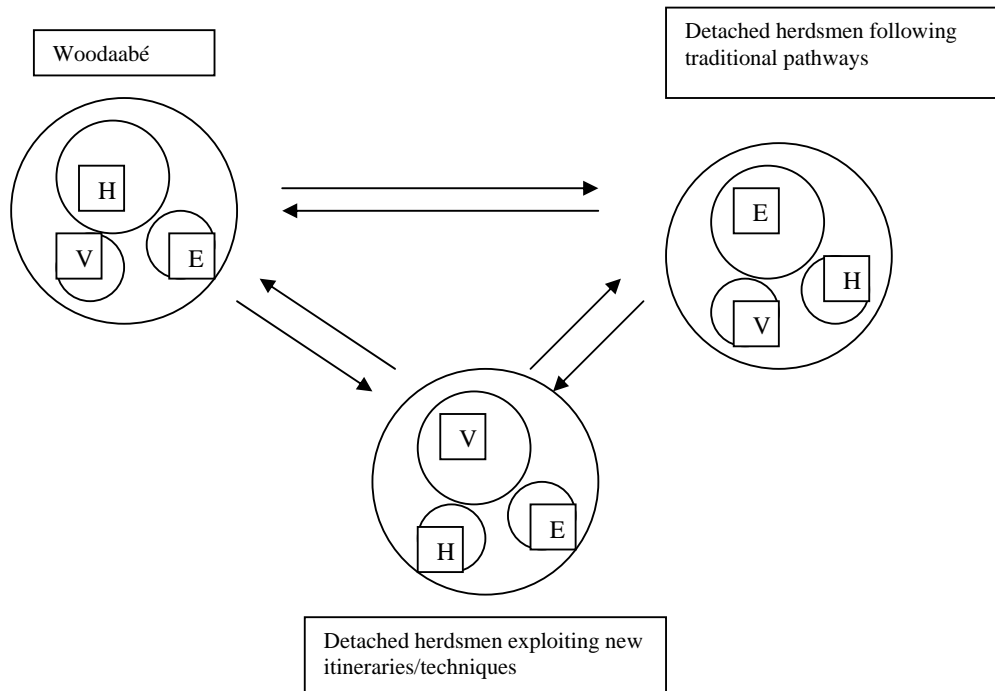
Fulbe and Hausa have similar lifestyles and will both be part of the study. They have arrived late in the environment of Ugep. Young men with herds camp outside Ugep. Ugep is one of the places where they settled very recently. In this area, there is not a long tradition of Fulbe cattle keepers in contact with the sedentary societies but the monopoly over cattle trade ensures a steady supply of beef to the indigenous population and a context for temporary residence by the itinerant pastoralists.

The entries to the research have been translated in terms of “insecurities”. The insecurities under investigation have been defined as **health, economy and violence**. It is assumed that all groups are confronted with all of the defined insecurities, but that we focus on a group for which health poses the biggest problem, for another economy forms the major insecurity and for the third violence.

In the diagram below the interrelationships between the defined insecurities have been outlined as follows:

H: Health V: Violence

E: Economy



The interrelationships between the various insecurities will be explored in the context of memories and reconstruction of Fulbe nomads' lifestyle and in terms of new forms of mobility.

We have defined the central problem of research as follows:

**"What new forms of insecurity do Fulbe pastoralists (both semi-nomadic and transhumant) face in their current dynamic mobility?"**

The research questions are developed in three dimensions:

1. Context: Ethnography (sexuality included) - Economy - Socio-politics
2. Route: mobility in the past linked to memories – forms of pastoralism
3. Insecurity and mobility: various subgroups will be distinguished, e.g. groups of age, sex, etc.

The next phase then was that each team of researchers started with literature study and designed their research proposition. The preparation phase for the actual fieldwork took between six to eight weeks including the transfer of financial means, obtaining the necessary research permits and organizing temporary accommodation.

The actual fieldwork period took about two months. In the next section summaries of the research reports of the students researchers are presented.

## 6 Results of the research

The research set up included the idea that there are extensive linkages between Niger and Nigeria. This is indeed the case, especially between nomads in Niger and northern Nigeria. However as the study will show due to insecurity problems this is no longer the case as it was before. We also expected to find a clear linkage between the nomads in southern Nigeria and Niger, expecting the herders and cattle in southern Nigeria to come at least partly from Niger. We did not find this linkage at present, but only stepwise in history. Fulbe from Niger and northern Nigeria have migrated to central Nigeria and from there they go to the south. The expected linkage between the research sites was thus quite different from what we expected. The idea to follow families from Niger to Nigeria and vice versa has therefore not been part of the research methodology. The two presented studies can be read therefore as two separate case studies, though lifestyles and even (far) family lines do link the groups.

### **A Study of Mobility and Vulnerability among the Pastoralist Fulani in Ugep, Cross River State, Nigeria** (author: Oka Obono)

#### *Study Area*

The Lokurr-speaking Yakurr of the Middle Cross River have a common non-autochthonous tradition that they migrated from the hilly country to the south of the river, in the regions of Lekanakpakpa (or the Etara hills), located in Ikom local government area. Their last major settlement was some 58 kilometres from their present location in present day Yakurr territory, up the Cross River (Forde, 1964: 1). Earlier settlements, which are thought to throw more light on their current cultural attitudes, have been theorized and are the subject of an ongoing investigation (Obono, 2010).

The prototypical settlement was known as Umoen (translated “Little Ugep”). It was a composite settlement that was also the ancestral home of the Nsofang, Mkpota, Agbotai, Nkome, Olulumo, Netim, Obung and Etara peoples. In the language of these Ejagham-speaking peoples, Umoen was referred to as Onughi and Okimaya (Onor, 1994). Thus, historiography of the Yakurr identifies mobility as a major cause and source of their ethnic history and cultural attitudes. It provides a context for understanding the hospitality they traditionally extend to strangers since their allochthonous traditions show that they themselves have been strangers for a greater part of their history.

The Yakurr were not a river people and migrated overland and hinterland in several parties over many years (Obono, 2000). A distinction is usually made between those Yakurr towns in which the original migrants settled and those that were formed a generation or two later by local migrations, following dissensions, from Ugep. The first category comprises three towns, namely Idomi (where a section of the main group, which founded Ugep, remained), Ugep itself, and the separately settled community of Nko. The second group is made up of Ekori and Mkpani. Assiga, Inyima, Agoi Ibami and Agoi Ekpo are neighbouring villages that speak Lokurr as a second language (Iwara, 1988), but their unity with the Yakurr people followed a progressive course of cultural diffusion and enduring trade relations. According to Forde,

The tradition with regard to the wards [in Ugep] was that two settlement areas, Idjiman and Mkpani, were established when Yakö first settled in Umor. Separate wards were subsequently established by groups separating from Idjiman to form Idjum and Ukpakapi, and two generations ago a new ward, Biko-Biko, was established mainly by migrants from Ukpakapi. Meanwhile early in the history of Umor growing friction between Nkpani and another ward flared up into serious fighting, which ended by the migration of Nkpani to found a separate village of that name (Forde, 1964: 169).

The largest of the Yakurr settlements, Ugep has a long history of migration and an accommodating attitude towards strangers. In the past 30 years, the region has witnessed growing numbers of Fulani herdsmen and their cattle within and around Ugep, notably Itigidi to its northwest.

A camp settlement has been negotiated with the local authorities in Itigidi and the Fulani have a lease, which expires in 2012. Changing climate conditions and alterations in rainfall patterns have led the Fulani to migrate further south and more frequently than used to be the case. They also stay longer owing to the late return of rains in northern Nigeria. Pressures of modern living, accentuated by the urbanizing status of Ugep, its rapid population growth, and the private ownership of land has consolidated the conditions that make the traditional Fulani lifestyle of herding fairly precarious.

The study investigated the mutual vulnerabilities that result from inevitable encounters between these different economic systems – one pastoralist and mobile and the other farming and sedentary. It uncovered tension points and areas of prospective cooperation between the two kinds of communities. Using a combination of research strategy, which included group discussions, personal interviews, and photographic techniques, it identified the health impacts of a mobile economy and its implications for sedentary hosts. It established the fin which conflicts occur and described the typical mechanisms available for resolving them. The study shows that the Fulani found in southern Nigeria predominantly originate from the Lokoja area and constitute a broken detachment from the aboriginal stock. They are forever mobile and return Lokoja annually or at moments of crisis, for reasons of solidarity and security. Fieldwork was conducted in 2010.

### *Collaboration*

The study was based on collaboration between the African Studies Centre (ASC), Leiden, the Netherlands, the Ugep-based Millennium Advancement Initiative (MAI), Nigeria, and the Niamey-based LASDEL Institute, Niger. This partnership was practical because it enabled follow on investigation of cross-border mobilities.

### *Methodology*

The study used a qualitative design for the investigation for two reasons: first, on account of the mobile and highly fluid populations we investigated and, second, the fact that a survey design did not lend itself to relatively unstable systems. A combination of observation, in-depth interview, focus group discussions and key

informant interviews was held with both Ugep farmers and Fulani pastoralists. Photographic techniques helped capture the psychological dimensions of the study findings.

### *Activities*

The main activities of the research included a methodology workshop in Niamey in which two members of MAI participated. A step down workshop was subsequently organized for other MAI researchers. Instruments were developed and pretested. They were employed in a continuous monitoring of cattle movement into and out of Ugep community and its environs. A group of Fulani settlers in Itigidi formed a focus of the research. Repeated visits were held with this group and durable ties have been formed between it and the research team. It is expected that further investigation can be conducted with the cooperation of this group on grounds of the rapport and trust that has been established between it and the investigation.

### *Results*

The investigation shows that the southward migration of the Fulani attracts hostile reactions from host (usually farming) southern communities. This is the result of the mutual conflict of economic systems and the absence of proactive productive approaches that can merge the disparate economic practices into a single productive whole. The response of Nigerian pastoralists has been to maintain a sedentary base on the outskirts of communities, which can be swiftly dismantled to take advantage of grazing opportunities elsewhere or to avert attacks.

1. Grazing lands are threatened by desertification and other environmental forces, intensified by climate change. The regular pastoralist response has been to migrate.
2. Migration presents challenges that undermine the very reason for moving through encounters with sedentary communities that may be hostile to cattle that destroy crops or compromise biodiversity. Conflict could result.
3. Nigerian pastoralists have devised new patterns of migration that has a basic downward, i.e. southern trajectory, but with an annual return to a central base at Lokoja for the expression of solidarity and review of challenges confronting the mobile Fulani.

### *Geographical Spread*

1. The pastoralist Fulani in Ugep/Itigidi belong to a group of pastoralists traceable to Lokoja in Kogi State. They originally moved from the north central and western zones, but have settled in time in the south of Nigeria. While on the move, they retain strong ties with Lokoja. They have moved as far south as the belt of the Niger down to Enugu, Abia, Abakaliki and parts of Akwa Ibom and Cross River States. Sometimes when crises or violent conflict erupts, they relocate to Lokoja, remaining there till the crisis subsides.
2. The main language is Fulfulde but they also speak pidgin and English. Prolonged stay has fostered this ability although the research team found a tendency for the herdsmen to feign an inability to speak anything but Fulfulde. This is part of a bundle of strategic skills intended to douse tension during moments of conflict.

### *Patterns of Movement*

The movement patterns of the Nigerian Fulbe are governed by the search on their part for nourishment, safety and markets.

1. Lokoja in Kogi State is the base from which pastoralists in southern Nigeria launch out to deeper southern territory, in an easterly direction. The southwest is excluded from this movement because the River Niger does not flow in that direction. The Fulani and their cattle follow the river down to the Delta, which is a region already prone to violence and community conflict related to resource control.
2. Mobile pastoralists in Nigeria organize their interests through Miyetti Allah, an umbrella network that addresses the vulnerability associated with a mobile and pastoralist lifestyle. Much progress has been made by the organization in arbitration and dispute resolution on behalf of members.
3. The patterns of pastoralist movement in southern Nigeria are focused, strategic and predictable. They are governed by three considerations.
  - a. The first is the need for grazing during the dry season when there is food shortage for the cattle. At this time, the pastoralists move along the banks of the Niger in search of water and fresh vegetation for their cattle. They settle occasionally strike camp for upwards of two weeks before moving again.
  - b. The second consideration is the need to avoid conflict with host communities through strategic action. Grazing within the territory of host community is potentially dangerous for pastoralists during the rainy season. To avoid straying into farmlands during rainy season, they move their cattle away from the community during this period to graze on open fields owned by the government. A case in point is the military zone in Abakaliki, Ebonyi State where most cattle within the geographical area are kept until the farming season is over.

- c. The third consideration is related to inter-ethnic or religious conflict in the northern states of the country. During such conflicts, pastoralists move their cattle en-mass to Lokoja.

Thus, the movement from Lokoja is precipitated by the need to graze; the need to avoid conflict; and pressures imposed by inter-ethnic or religious conflict in Northern Nigeria. The movements are not haphazard. They are focused and predictable. The first two are initiated by natural climatological factors while the last has political motivations.

### *Community Perception*

1. The Ugep community has a positive perception of the Fulani. In Lokoja and its environs, the perception is less positive. Here, the Fulani are seen as a clannish people who prefer to keep to themselves and do not wish to integrate with other people. In Ugep, they are viewed as peaceful and business minded, frugal and rich. This perception comes from the long relationship that exists between the community and the pastoralist
2. The Fulani are perceived by the community as peaceful and business minded people although younger people viewed their presence as undermining indigenous farming economy. They see the herdsmen and their cattle as signalling bad business for the farmer.
3. Many community members find it difficult to differentiate between the pastoral Fulani and the Hausa who also live among them.
4. Cattle dung is thought to be responsible for a particularly stubborn type of weed that is very hostile to crops. Cattle are reported to be responsible for the damage of crops in the field.

### *Economic Cooperation*

Economic cooperation between pastoralists and their host community centres around the beef trade with the Hausa serve as middlemen. The pastoralists need land in which to settle and to graze and host communities require beef as a leading source of protein.

1. Once a peaceful environment is identified, the pastoralists meet with youth and community leaders to develop a Memorandum of Understanding that specifies the terms and conditions of their stay and operations, which are most likely to minimize conflict and ensure mutual economic benefit. The pastoralists are sometimes invited to community meetings on security matters.
2. Economic cooperation exists in the sale of meat and dairy products, between the pastoralist Fulani and their host communities.

3. Female pastoralists sell cheese to community members. They may move outside the immediate community for this purpose. Beyond the sale of cheese, the female sellers apparently have no other dealings with community members.
4. The youth of host communities are more important in the agreements they reach than the community elders and official because of their presence on the farms and their role as a mobilizable for conflict or war.
5. The MOU describes the financial obligations of the pastoralists and the responsibility of host community to provide protection for their families and cattle. Payment is on an annual basis and may change with varying situations.
6. The Hausa are the middlemen in the beef exchange economy. They are more adaptive and buy young cows from the pastoralists which they sell at future dates.

#### *Conflict of Values*

1. Pastoralist values are different from those of their host communities. Although willing to settle down if they found permanent grazing for their cattle, prospects of such settlement are slim. As the leader in Itigidi explained, 'why would one decide to move about if there is grass for the cattle?'
2. It is unlikely that local communities will grant the pastoralists permanent residence in light of the 'cattle menace' and the nature of farming practices in the local communities.
3. Although the Fulani are willing to settle down permanently, it is difficult to do so either in the centre of communities or on their peripheries. They settle on the outskirts of communities, in a camp of about 10 round shaped mud huts with thatch roofs, close to rivers or other natural water sources – another frequent reason for tensions with the host communities.
4. Interaction between the Fulani and the host community is restricted to economic cooperation. The relationships have not extended to cultural cooperation. Intermarriage with the host community is discouraged.
5. The pastoralist values of self preservation and protection of an established way of life are similar to those of host communities and it is by dint of this similarity that conflict occurs.
6. Intermarriage between the pastoralists and their host community is forbidden.

#### *Types of Conflicts*

1. The conflicts to which pastoralist are prone are of four types.
  - a. The first is conflict encountered on the move. Communities are uncomfortable with pastoralist passing through with cattle owing to the



risk of damage to crops. Their roads may also be soiled with cattle dung. These events can lead to physical attacks against the passing pastoralists.

- b. The second type of conflict arises from grazing in unauthorized spaces. It is seasonal owing to its link with the planting cycle. The Memorandum of Understanding helps specify grazing areas for the pastoralists, especially during farm season, and the length of stay in the host community as means of preventing conflict. The MOU states the monetary implications of the contract. Conflict occurs when other pastoralists who are not aware of the agreement stray into the community and graze on unauthorized fields or areas. In such cases, the settled pastoralists may become targets of community assault.
- c. The third type of conflict relates with the actions of community youths who organize to steal cattle or shoot them dead out of resentment, such as in Biase community, or in retaliation for destroyed crops.
- d. The fourth type of conflict, which is perhaps the most dangerous, has to do with reprisal attacks associated with violence against southerners who live in northern Nigeria. The north-south ethnic violence in Nigeria is well documented. Whenever there is religious or political conflict or violence in the north, pastoralists in the south feel themselves in danger of reprisal attacks. They may become targets of youth violence and the cattle may be killed or injured. In their assessment, this is the worst type of conflict they experience.

### *Conclusion*

A network of pastoralists known as Miyetti Allah has been established to reduce the vulnerability that comes with an itinerant and threatened lifestyle. However, conflict and vulnerability can be reduced only if pastoralists and host communities adopt a model that combines the crop and cattle farming within a single frame of reference. The conflicts that occur are collisions of productive systems. They are not rooted in ethnicity *per se* although, clearly, over time, this could become a driver or marker of conflict. The peaceful coexistence of the culture bearers of these productive systems is a matter for diligent programme and policy development. The Fulani are inclined to settle down if their cattle can graze. The nomadic lifestyle appears to be in decline among younger segments of the Fulani population. Some would like to join the military forces; others would like to receive an education. It is a fragile and volatile mix of aspirations. The solution to the conflicts between herdsmen and host communities lies in a merger of their economic activities that takes cognizance of seasonal variations in that single productive process.

## **New forms of insecurities related to pastoral cross border mobility in the Maradi/Dakoro area in Niger**

**(author: Ahmadou Adamou)**

### *Introduction*

In Niger, livestock farming is the second largest economic activity of the country. It is the most popular type of farming for the population of the administrative area of Bermo (northern Dakoro). But in recent years, this activity has faced various difficulties: series of droughts, scarcity of water resources and vegetation, growing insecurity in the pastoral areas, deterioration of moral standards, etc. This paper summarizes the analysis of data collected as part of the ongoing KIC research on "*the new forms of insecurity related to pastoral cross-border mobility in West Africa*".

From a methodological point of view, the investigation took place in two main stages. A first exploratory phase led the team in multiple locations around the Gadabedji reserve. This research phase took two weeks and has allowed to identify areas of concentration of seasonal migrants and to determine the time of their passage for a better preparation of the phase for a more detailed research.

The second phase was that of a more detailed study. It covered the area north of the Gadabedji reserve. The main sites selected are Aminata and Akadany. Secondary sites were selected because of the influx of seasonal migrants and their proximity to the first sites. This concerns essentially Bammo, Tiguitout and Tamago. On all sites, semi-directive interviews and direct observations were conducted. In several cases, the interviews could not be recorded because of the wariness of the respondents. However, refined data could be collected and processed.

### *Characteristics of the pastoral area of northern Dakoro*

The pastoral area, target of the present study, lies in the administrative post of Bermo. There are two rural districts in this post: the rural districts of Bermo and Gadabedji. It is located in the northern department of Dakoro. It is an area of climatic transition located at the interface of the Sahara and the Sahel, making of it a pastoral area par excellence. A review of the physical and human characteristics of these two districts will allow a better definition of the area.

### *The district of Bermo*

The rural district of Bermo is bordered to the north by the district of Tchirozérine (Agadez), to the south by the districts of Roumbou Azagor and to the east by the districts of Roumbou and Gadabedji, to the west by the rural district of Tamaya (Abalak). It covers an area of approximately 15,000 km<sup>2</sup>. The relief is characterized by the Tarka Valley in the centre with its many tributaries that are Eliki, Korin and Affaguay Adowa. These fossil networks have "a width that varies from 3 to 5 km" (OUMAROU, 2008: 6). As for the Tarka Valley, it is still a visible sign "*of the Quaternary pluvial periods, when important flows flooded the area*" (Rey, 1989: 12). Dunes and shallows make up the bulk of the landscape of the district. As for the hydrological situation, the rural district of Bermo has a permanent pond in Akadany, in the extreme north of the district. This pond has given its name to the village of Akadany, one of the sites selected for detailed study. Nowadays, this pond has

expanded, becoming one with the pond of Intaguel. It is even difficult for outsiders to make the difference between the two. Several other semi-permanent ponds are water resources during much of the year. However, all these ponds are subject to the vagaries of the annual rainfall.

In addition, the district has operational bore-hole in Bermo and several cemented traditional wells spread throughout the whole district. Unfortunately these wells collapse whenever rainfall is important, as was the case in 2010.. The water table level varies between 30 and 50 meters according to information gathered on the spot. As for the vegetation, it is characterized “*by the existence of many varieties of timber consisting of acacia raddiana, Sclérocarría Birrer, and Procera Colpotris Balanites aegyptiaca*” (Rey, 1989) unevenly distributed over the district. It is important to note that the area of Bermo has a large grass cover, which varies depending on the size of the annual rainfall.

The main economic activities of the inhabitants of the area are farming, agro-livestock farming and trade. The livestock of the residents of this area consist of cattle, goats, camels and sheep. Livestock farming remains by far the dominant activity and occupies almost all the inhabitants. It generates the bulk of their income. In addition to livestock farming, people also occupied with agriculture in the southern boundary of the administrative post. This is true of the inhabitants of Tacha Ibrahim and Oly (district of Bermo) in the South. Besides livestock farming and agriculture, trade is also an income generating activity for people in the area. Indeed, there are three weekly markets in Bermo (every tuesday), Akadany (every wednesday) and Oly (every saturday). These markets are driven both by local people as by traders from the cities of Dakoro, Maradi and Kano (Nigeria). Various products are sold in these markets: cereals, clothing, sugar, tea, household appliances, etc.

The health infrastructures in the district include two integrated health centres (one in Bermo and another in Akadany) and some health huts little or not operational due to lack of staff. The main means of transportation in the administrative post of Bermo are essentially the bush taxis (Toyota, Land Rover, Land-Cruiser four-wheel drive vehicles), “Kasea, Royal” motorbikes, etc... and mount animals (camels, donkeys and oxen). The large number of vehicles for public transportation and motorbikes facilitates traffic in the area including easier access to the markets.

The population is composed mainly of Fulani (*FulBe raneebe and Wodaabe*), Tuareg, Hausa, and a very small proportion of Arabs. In order to effectively administer the area, the State relies on traditional leaders such as heads of (*LamiiBe*) and heads of tribes or (*Ardo*). The *Ardo* are designated by the community leaders and appointed by prefectural decree. As for the *LamiiBe*, they are appointed by ministerial decree. It is worth noting that the *Wodaabe* community is very hierarchical. The authority of the *Lamida*, the *Ardo* and the birthright are fairly well respected. They take precedence in the ordinary life of the community.

#### *The district of Gadabédji*

Located at 75 kilometres from Dakoro (chef-lieu of department), the district of Gadabedji is bordered to the north by the district of Aderbissanat (Agadez), to the north-west by the district of Bermo, to the east by the district of Belbédji (Tanout) and to the south by the district of Goula. The district of Gadabedji covers an area of 2865

km<sup>2</sup>. Its name comes from this landscape that the Fulani seasonal migrants used to call in Fulani "*Ga djibedjè* (or hilly landscape with lots of termites' nest). A further transformation of this expression led to the name Gadabedji. Indeed, the relief of this area consists of a rugged landscape with dunes and shallows. Some temporary ponds exist in the shallows. There is no permanent pond in the district. For their water consumption and that of their animals, the inhabitants use cemented and traditional wells. The depth of the water table varies between 40 and 60 meters. In this district there are two bore-holes that are used by the populations of the surrounding areas as drinking water.

The climate is of Sahelian-Saharan type. Rainfall is generally low: 200 to 300 mm per year. The vegetation consists mainly of thorny species and a large grass cover which constitutes a true magnet for farmers from the regions of Agadez, Tahoua and Zinder. It is a farming area par excellence. Agriculture is almost non-existent except in the extreme south (Affagay) and in the southeast (Wourseyna) where the inhabitants practice more and more agro-livestock farming, trying to adapt to the climatic and seasonal vagaries.

The district of Gadabedji has a reserve of fauna and flora which covers an area of 76,000 hectares. This reserve has a significant potential for renewable natural resources, making of the area a reservoir of biodiversity in the Sahel-Saharan Niger. The district of Gadabedji has a population estimated at 3818 people of which 2002 are men and 1816 women (RENACOM, 2006). With a density of 10 inhabitants per km<sup>2</sup>, the district has 4579 households spread in 115 villages and tribes, including 111 administrative villages<sup>7</sup>.

Three ethnic groups share this pastoral space: the Fulani (*Wodaabe and Doyi'en or Fulbe raneebe*), the Tuareg and the Hausa which are a minority. According to data collected on the ground, settlement of the area is fairly recent. Outside the Tuaregs who are supposed to have come from the regions of Agadez (in the north) and Tahoua (in the northwest), all other communities have moved from the south to settle in the area.

As in the rural district of Bermo, in Gadabedji the main economic activities are livestock farming among the Fulani and Tuareg, and trade among the Hausa and a few nomads. Three weekly rural markets take place in the district. These are the markets of Wourseyna (on Tuesday), Gadabedji (on Wednesday), and recently of Tiguitout (on Saturday).

In terms of educational infrastructure, the district has 18 primary schools and literacy centres as well as a college of general education (in Gadabedji). Health infrastructures consist of an integrated health centre (CSI in French) and two (non functional) health centres. Beyond these health centres, the people of the district visit traditional healers (arborists, marabou and zimma) in case of illness. Also in terms of infrastructure, the district has a community radio. Similarly, as in Bermo, the district of Gadabedji is connected to the mobile phone network "Airtel".

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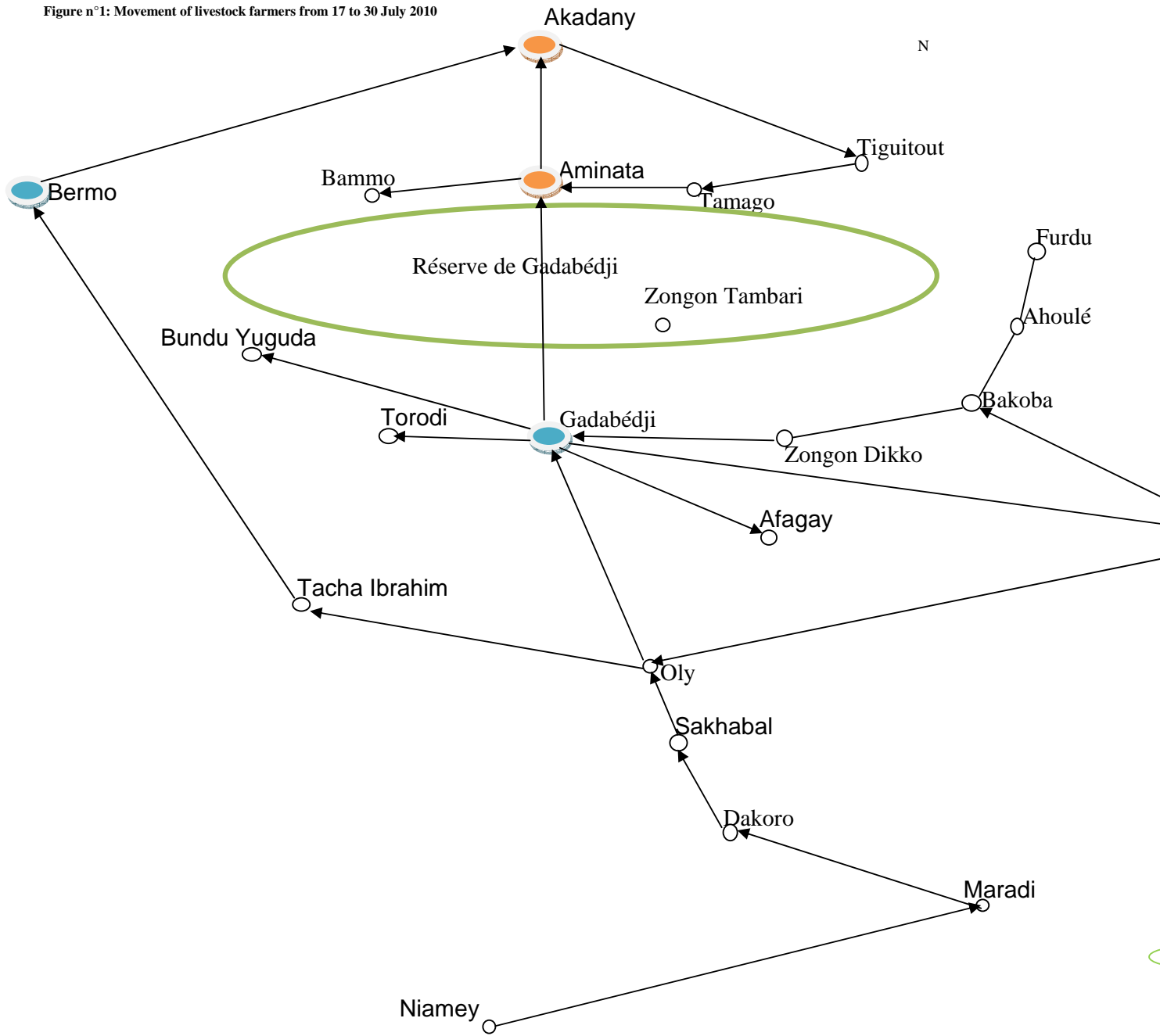
<sup>7</sup> Monographie de la commune rurale de Gadabedji.

Let's note that in this area of north Dakoro, the population is unevenly spread. Migrant livestock farmers (target group for the present study) are found in several places, with a strong concentration in the north and northeast. This is one of the reasons why the region of Akadany has been chosen as main supply site of our detailed research in the district of Bermo and Aminata in the district of Gadabedji.

*The study sites*

During the fieldwork, several sites were visited in two phases. During the first phase of exploration, apart from Oly, mainly the sites located directly around the reserve of Gadabedji have been visited given the influx of livestock farmers into this district in the beginning of the rainy season. The sites are: Gadabedji, the surroundings of Gadabedji, Afagay Bunda Liman, Tachar Ahma, Bakoba, the area between Bakoba and Ourseyna, between Ourseyna and Zongo Dicko, Torodi, Bundu Yougoudai, Zongo Tambara, Aminata, Fourdou and Ahoulé. It is a busy period of seasonal migration (all converge towards the reserve where the grass begins to grow).

Figure n°1: Movement of livestock farmers from 17 to 30 July 2010



### *Aminata, "wuro bi Hamma' en"*

The area of Aminata was chosen because it is a place of convergence of livestock farmers during the rainy season. Administratively, Aminata is linked to the district of Gadabedji. But the people living there are registered in the district of Bermo. The area is mainly inhabited by a single family line of *Wodaabe Bi Hamma'en*.

The site is at a distance of 25 kilometres to the north of Gadabedji, on the northern boundary of the reserve, and at 19 kilometres to the south of Akadany. The vegetation is rich with respect to grass and relatively many trees (mostly acacias). The encampment is also located east of Bammo near a shallow along the reserve. All wells are located in this shallow, which is also the boundary of the reserve. The encampment is located at about four hundred meters from the well that bears the name Aminata. This well belonged to a Tuareg woman, from the Imagrawane group. She "*came from Amouas. Because the area is favourable for livestock farming, she settled there. She was an only child. She provided accommodation for white people who came into the area. The latter helped her get an authorization to dig the well that bears her name. When she died, her children sold the well to our grandfather Djaouga who comes originally from Kebi (Nigeria) via Maradi and Sakhabal*" (Interview with Bakatara Mata, September 7, 2010). Thus it was the children of Aminata who have sold the well to the grandfather of Bakatara Mata, who was also at this time already pasturing in the area.

In this encampment of *Bi Hamma'en*, the arrangement of the houses contributes to perpetuate a very ancient social order, namely one inherited from the ancestors and which is based on the respect of ancestral values and the law of primogeniture. In this encampment of about fifteen houses people live modestly and one feels that there is a hierarchical behaviour whenever a member wishes to speak, even in simple conversations. Also, in a *cudu* of the *Bodaado Bi Hamma'en*, people are classified from north to south: children are always housed in the north, then comes the last woman to have been member of the household, and finally the first woman in the south. To the west is housed the *daddo*, "*a place where men gather to discuss common issues, away from the ears of women*" (Interview with Ardo Douchi Maoudé, September 11, 2010).

During the rainy season, between the *cudu* and the *daado* lie the *dudal* (the space reserved for cows) and the *dangol* (which is the rope around which there are knots used to tie calves).

### *Akadany*

Located in a shallow at 41 km north of Bermo, the village of Akadany is established on the edges of the Akadany and Intaguel ponds. Almost all houses are built of mud and the population is mostly nomadic. The history of the area is intimately linked to the pond which bears the name Akadany. The population is composed mainly of Tuareg, Hausa and Fulani *Wodaabe* of the *Kabaw* subgroup (a name that refers to their origin). Indeed, according to Tambaya Djouls, the ancestors of the Kabawa came from Kebi (Nigeria), hence the name Kabaw that bears the ethnic subgroup. They went through Sokoto (Nigeria), before settling some time in Madaoua (Niger) and in the north of Maradi namely in Amoulas, then finally in Akadany. According to the same informant, Akadany is derived from the name "*belelle be kaddaki*" which literally means «*stream of those who are not dressed*» in reference to the stream around which hunters annually came to set their traps. It seems that these hunters have only G-strings as clothing and came there on a regular basis. It is worth noting that in

the past, Akadany was a dense shallow rich in wildlife species (giraffes, lions, hyenas, deer, etc.).

The Wodaabe who live in the area come originally from the south, in particular from Amoulas. During the drought of 1982-1983 and 1984, these people, who were considered to be victims of the drought, were encouraged by the State to stay together so that that aid could reach them more effectively. Thus the nomadic school of Amoulas was transferred to Akadany. From then on follows the gradual settlement of the area. Nowadays there are several hundred people in Akadany and there is a weekly market besides a few shops that are open every day.

Apart from these important characteristics (flourishing rural market, shallow water table, plenty of space and herbaceous species), Akadany is also par excellence a cultural meeting place of farmers mainly through its annual festival: the *Worso* that is held at the end of each rainy season. This festival celebrates the baptism of children aged two, which then represents the end of the “family maternity” for their mothers. After spending two years in the parental home, without the right to speak to anyone outside the immediate family, and dressed only in a black cloth, these women now find after the *worso* all their rights and place in the community. This cultural aspect is one of the undeniable assets that make of Akadany a must for many livestock farmers.

#### *Presence of the State, associations and NGOs*

The presence of the State in these areas is expressed through schools, health centres, public infrastructures such as rural water supply and the maintenance of the roads. On the other hand, this presence remains somewhat limited in the field of security. Indeed, outside market days or on explicit request of the people, the security forces are very absent in the area where there is a lot of insecurity. The only detachment of the Defence and Security Forces that exists in the area is based in Bermo. This same detachment is responsible for the security of the entire area of the administrative post. This mission is a priori difficult given the vastness of the area.

As for associations and non-governmental organizations, they are present in the area and their actions are differently appreciated. They operate mainly in the field of human and animal health, education and the distribution of emergency aid.

External partners involved in northern Dakoro are essentially international organizations such as CADEV, Care International, Oxfam, WFP, SNV, as well as Christian missions as CRS and SIM. To these players must be added the massive presence of local NGOs involved in the area. They are in many ways dependent on international NGOs and associations which provide the bulk of the funding for their actions. They are in direct contact with the people, to the point that they are becoming almost unavoidable intermediaries for investments and operations for distribution of food and cattle feed. Despite the fact that some of our informants complained about the predominant ethnic focus in the actions of some organizations (Timidria and AREN for the most part), one must emphasize that these local actors contribute greatly to the development of the area through their multiple interventions in sectors such as education and human and animal health. These associations are well known for their knowledge of the movements of the shepherds who are their target groups. Indeed, in northern Dakoro, the Wodaabe are famous for their mobility.

#### **Forms of mobility in the pastoral area**

##### *Short and long seasonal migration*



The shepherds in the north area of Dakoro are highly mobile. Even if they all have home areas, all of them are directly or indirectly involved in seasonal migration. This seasonal migration is organized around the routes that reflect the seasons, the needs of the cattle. In this mobility of seasonal migrants, it is important to distinguish two forms of seasonal migration:

- The long seasonal migration: it implies a longer or shorter stay of the seasonal migrants outside their home area. This is the case of livestock farmers who leave for the north of Agadez in the north or for the south, in Nigeria. The farmer who chooses for this form of seasonal migration has as objective to make the most of the opportunities offered by the pastoral space.
- The short seasonal migration: it means a movement of the farmers within the same home area, thus not far from the sites where they have wells. This form of seasonal migration is getting popular in the area in recent years due to the scarcity of rainfall and the development of insecurity in the Sahel and in Nigeria. It takes place mostly around the reserve of Gadabedji because of the availability of hay.

The reasons for the movements in the northern and southern directions are mainly the search of good fodder (in the north and in the south), of nourishing and salty grass (in the north); remnants of harvest in the fields (south) and the reconstitution of a stock feed at the sites. To these reasons, one can add the fact that it is a prestige for a livestock farmer to be mobile, to let his flock graze good quality grass, « *in ko men doni* » which means “this is what we are used to”. Mobility is a consistency among nomadic livestock farmers of northern Dakoro. It is an answer to the permanent concern regarding the availability of water and hay for the cattle.

To this concern one can add the one consisting of gathering a reserve of hay on the site. But on that there is no guarantee as the farmer who leaves his area hoping to find the fodder unchanged when he returns back can be in for some surprises. The same way as he migrates to other areas, other livestock farmers will come to the site that he pretends to protect.

The site selection is based on security concerns, the availability of space for grazing and of a hay stock. That is why before each transhumance the *Garsoo*, who are "masters of pastoral knowledge" (OUMAROU, 2004), make a reconnaissance mission in the area in order to learn about the availability and accessibility of pastoral resources (pasture and water) and probable risks (types of animal diseases, the presence or not of bandits, etc.).

In addition, many farmers whose cows are accustomed to seasonal migration are forced to go in the early rainy season (to the north) and after harvest (to the south). As explained by Gnalé Maoudé dit Maï Samari, a farmer from the area of Aminata: "*Taking multiple paths during the seasonal migration can lead to the risk of losing many animals when they get lost. When you always take the same path, the animals can always find their way and get home. They follow the same path to return to Aminata, since they do not know of other ways. Animals have this intelligence: they always find their way back*».

### *Different paths of the seasonal migration*

The transhumance routes that emerge from our interviews always start at the home area and lead either to the north or the south depending on two major periods of the year, namely the beginning of the rainy season (usually from May to June), and the end of it (October-November). Thus the farmers leave their home area at the beginning of the rainy season to go further north with their cattle. At the end of the rainy season, they return to their home area where they stay for some time pending the end of the harvest in the fields. After the harvest, almost all farmers move towards the south and do not return until the middle or the end of the dry season. Then everyone stays in the home area waiting for the new rainy season before resuming the cycle.

In every direction there are several routes to be followed by the farmers. The choice of a route by a shepherd is strongly related to the characteristics of the season, the constraints and opportunities it offers. The choice of a route also depends on the destination. Thus, at the beginning of the rainy season, farmers have four corridors.

- Going to the north, there are two main routes: the first route goes through Guel Tiredji, Ga gadade, Chimagotal, Ga Bulon, Zarambi, Agali, Gambo, Abotal, Chintaborak, Loubbe, Marandat et Azawak. And the second, which is to the west of the first (although they overlap in places), goes through Akadany, Mazababou, Idjadar, Chimogotal, Ga Pali, Akawel, Ga solli, Agoumaga, Amataltal, Inzagarat, Marereba-Ingali, Fidik, Agaré-garé, Tiggar, Taguerwett, Assawas et Panawatt.

These routes intersect all the time, and sometimes the names of areas differ more in pronunciation of the places than in reality.

Generally, seasonal migrants stop depending on the availability of water and pasture. This transhumance to the north ends at the end of the rainy season. At that time the seasonal migrants return most often along the same route, as they don't want the cattle to be used to different routes, for fear of losing them along the way. Towards the south, the seasonal migrants leave their home area taking care to go around the reserve of Gadabedji to the west or east, depending on the area they want to visit at the end of the harvest. Each farmer chooses his route according to the facilities it offers and the constraints he wishes to avoid. But there are farmers who return from the south after the sowing period or who go there before the end of the rainy season. This concerns mainly herders of camels and sheep (Ouda). For them and for all those who go or come back from that direction, there are four official transhumance routes. These routes are marked between the fields and give the farmers the possibility to pass, to give water to the cattle and even to camp temporarily. These areas are created specially for this by the authorities.

If it is true that the destination is essential, it is also true that the reserve of Gadabedji determines in many respects the path that needs to be taken. Thus, farmers wishing to pass through the route number 1 or 2, from west to east with regard to the reserve, go around it by the west side. Consequently, by taking the route No. 1, they go through Bermo or Amoulas, then Eggo, Moulouk, matoya, Ourahan, Guidan Roudji west, Tsouloulou, before entering Nigeria. The route No. 2 goes through Bermo or Amoulas, Eggo Dawadawa, Dakoro, Birni Lallé, Kornaka, Sabon Machi, Kouroungoussaw, Tibiri, Maradi west, Dan Issa, Douhoum Bara (border Niger – Nigeria) Katsina, Guidan Gowari, Jigawa and Kano. For the farmers who go around

the Gadabedji reserve through the east, they usually take the route No. 3 or 4. The route number 3 is the one which goes through Oly, Sakhabal, Kouggou, Ga yayapi, Djadja. Regarding the route number 4, it goes through Woursseyna, Nahantsawa, Garin Saddi, Dan koulou, Tagriss, Tchaki, Mayahi west, Tchadoua and Dan Goma before entering Nigeria.

### **Insecurities faced by seasonal migrant: complicated problems**

On different transhumance routes and sometimes even in their home areas, farmers face various forms of insecurity. Based on interviews conducted with farmers, the following types of insecurity have been identified: theft, robbery, water problems, health problems for people and cattle, drought, problem with the collection of straw, conflicts between livestock farmers and farmers and problems related to the Gadabedji reserve. These problems relate to the model set out by the study in terms of economic, conflict/violence and health insecurities. The study clearly adds another type of insecurity, that is ecological problems.

### ***Conflict/Violence***

#### ***Robberies and armed raids***

Insecurity due to robberies and armed raids is a major concern among livestock farmers. They complain about this situation because they are victims of it all the time, even when they return to their home areas. This form of insecurity happens in both directions of the transhumance, with robbers mostly armed with rifles. In the north, theft and armed robberies are too common and are the work of Tuareg who are infiltrated by Fulani and Hausas as evidenced by the latest attack during our stay in the region. Indeed, on September 14, 2010, there was an attack in Akadany by six robbers armed with assault rifles and who were in a four-wheel drive vehicle and two motorcycles. Their team consisted of four Tuareg, one Fulani Bororo and one Hausa.

In addition to money and other valuables, camels, bulls and sheep are the main targets of robbers in the north. Livestock farmers complain about the situation and say they do not know which way to turn. In the south, seasonal migrants claim to be victims of robbery on the whole route, with an intensity of armed attacks in Nigeria. Animals and goods are the targets. According to several sources, the robbers in Nigeria are most of the time Fulani. In all the areas visited, farmers complain of increased robberies and armed raids.

The farmers admit that there are thieves in all ethnic groups. In this area, weapons are common in the hands of bandits who ride “Kasea” motorbikes or camels. Insecurity is so permanent in this area that it is the main topic of public debate. Livestock farmers are obliged to look always after their cattle, even though they cannot defend themselves in case of armed raid. This has led to a real circulation of weapons within the region. Indeed, several respondents stated that the inhabitants of the area also acquire weapons in order to protect themselves. Another strategy for farmers is to sell their camels (which are the main targets of robbers) in order to buy motorbikes or other animals such as cows and small ruminants. This strategy has been adopted by several residents of the Aminata area.

*"As I say, we have camels that we use as means of transportation. But the Tuaregs hassle us a lot and rob our camels. This led us to sell most of our camels in*

*exchange for motorbikes* (Interview, September 6, 2010 with an inhabitant of Aminata).

#### *Conflicts between farmers and livestock farmers*

Conflicts between farmers and livestock farmers are recurrent, especially in the south, but are almost nonexistent in the north. This situation, combined with problems related to water, lead some livestock farmers to refuse going south during the dry season. They just go around the boundary of the pastoral area and return to the camp. The growing number of the population in the south makes it necessary to produce more and more food. As a result the yields are lower. Farmers perform this activity even in the pastoral area south of Gadabedji, although rainfall conditions aren't favourable. At the same time, this activity degrades the environment (through various forms of clearances) and is also progressively a source of conflict between farmers and herders.

#### ***Insecurities in relation to natural resources/ecology***

##### *Access to water*

As part of their seasonal migration to the south, farmers face regularly problems of access to water. The cost of access to wells varies between two and ten thousand CFA Francs per cycle of cattle watering. This variation of the cost of water depends on the size of the herd/flock. Nevertheless, some farmers say they use their personal relations at times to gain free access to water.

Seasonal migration to the north is often cut short by the lack of water. Thus, at the end of the rainy season, each farmer tries to return before the ponds dry up. Staying longer in these areas after the rainy season is becoming too expensive at this time of the year. The wells in the area belong mainly to Tuaregs and Arabs. In the collective consciousness of the farmers, it is abnormal to pay for access to the wells because water belongs to God, they argue. *"We think it is not wrong to pay something, as a contribution to the maintenance of the wells in a village. But this should not be compulsory and the price should not be too high"*. (Interview with a seasonal migrant)

##### *Drought*

Drought has become almost a chronic phenomenon in this part of Niger. It results from the combination of natural and human factors. The natural factors are related to poor rainfall in the regions of Maradi, Tahoua and Agadez. This lack of rainfall causes scarcity of grass and a retreat of livestock farmers on the Gadabedji reserve. Human factors are:

- *Overgrazing*: When there is shortage of fodder in the regions of Tahoua, Zinder and Agadez (Gouré and Tanout areas), farmers converge on the pastoral area of Dakoro. This creates a situation of overgrazing on the Gadabedji reserve.
- *The collection of fodder*: This phenomenon is gaining momentum in recent years. In the past, the fodder, which was collected in small amount and just for the needs of a few domestics, has now become a booming business. The sedentary inhabitants of the periphery of the area no longer hesitate to collect and store large amounts of fodder in order to sell it when the fodder becomes

scarce. The case of a resident of Zongon Tanko (located at about 4 km from Wourseyna) is a good example. Indeed, it seems that this resident has earned in one season one million CFA Francs by selling fodder. The collection of straw diminishes the feed stock and accelerates drought. The Hausa who are the main collectors of straw justify their actions by the fact that the production from their land is no longer enough to feed them. This means that it is for them a strategy of survival. But livestock farmers are already complaining and threaten to prevent the practice by any means. This can be a source of conflict between livestock farmers (Fulani and Tuareg) and farmers (Hausa).

- *Bushfires*: These fires devastate by times vast expanses of space and thus contribute to the breakdown of the feed stock. They are the result of the carelessness of some drivers or passengers who smoke and throw the rest of their cigarettes; or from the action of some farmers who temporarily camp at some place and abandon the remains of smoking firewood; or the carelessness of some travellers who make tea and leave the charcoals without completely extinguishing them. To deal with these fires, NGOs and the State make firewalls in the area at the end of the rainy season. The effectiveness of these firewalls is limited as they are built long after the end of the rainy season.

#### *The Gadabédji reserve: a necessary evil*

The Gadabedji reserve is a state reserve that covers an area of 76,000 ha. Its main role is to be a hay loft for farmers during the dry season. It is forbidden to pasture there from the first rainfall until late December. At all times it is forbidden for farmers to camp there and dig wells. Spread over several dunes, this reserve is bordered from west to east through the north by large shallows scattered with wells and camps, plus the fact that it is not fenced. Livestock farmers who venture into this area when it is closed get a fine.

The Woodabe livestock farmers believe that the Gadabedji reserve hinders their mobility, and is said to be primarily aimed at Tuareg, although they admit that it helps them during times of scarcity in the area. They complain that the Tuaregs can always let their animals graze there and never receive fines; while they (the woddabe) receive a fine even when they cross the reserve, without cattle, by foot or on a bike. They complain that the fines are not legal because they never get a receipt after paying. Moreover, they claim never to know when the reserve is closed and when it is open. It is worth noting that there are several camps and wells scattered along it. This explains why some farmers have their cattle in this unfenced area.

## **Health**

### *Animal health*

Our respondents complained of the existence in recent years of many diseases among their cattle. They think that these are recent diseases for which there is no treatment. The diseases are the *shiwon souffe* or pasterolose which is a lung disease that can hit all animals at any time, or the *bouguaïou* that makes animals fall down. It hits mainly sheep and little camels in the rainy season. There is also the *daguai-daguai* in Hausa

and *Balahol* in Fulani or the piroplasmosis that hits mainly cattle. It is a parasitic disease. There is also the *loossil* or *the apperee*.

These diseases can infect human being when the meat is undercooked. Apart from these diseases, there are also internal and external parasites in animals that are quite common.

According to officers from the local livestock farming department, the most common diseases are essentially the pastrolose and anthrax-bacteridal. These are well-known diseases for which vaccines are available. But the problem is that farmers do not vaccinate their animals, or they do it very late without using the necessary additional vaccines. In most cases they wait for the free vaccination campaigns organized by the State. One other problem is that many are not in the area during these campaigns. In addition, there is a high concentration of farmers from different areas during the dry season.

#### *Human health*

Livestock farmers do not care much about their own health. Yet, they complaint all the time, among others, of diseases such as: itching in the lower abdomen, difficulty of urinating, articulatory pains, myopia, sores in the mouth, "Zahi". According to the senior nursing officer of the Health Centre (MIC) of Akadany, these diseases are mostly due to the negligence of farmers who do not visit in time the health centre. And even when they come, they rarely take into account doctor's instructions or respect the follow-up appointments.

The most common diseases among these livestock farmers are sexually transmitted infections (STD) such as gonorrhoea, syphilis, herpes, etc... which are poorly or not treated and lead to bladder stones in case of complications. In addition to the STI, there are oral infections such as the stomatitis and dental caries resulting from the lack of hygiene and the excessive consumption of sweet food. To these infections must be added diarrhoeal diseases that are usually due to the consumption of water from the ponds. As for the "Zahi", it is nothing else than a word designating a range of infections that they do not know or that they refuse to name. Joint pains may be related to the long distances that seasonal migrant have to travel, sometimes with open wounds and untreated abrasions. In short, health is an acute issue in this pastoral area.

#### ***Economic insecurities: Economy, collaboration and the search for labour***

##### *The reduction of the herd*

From the interviews it appears that farmers have a lot trouble with the reduction of their herds. They only sell their animals when they are in dire need of food, clothing, and money for medical treatment. It is a kind of "contemplation" livestock farming. In fact, the size of the herd is a source of pride among the farmers. This consideration is an obstacle to the reduction of the herd which is very much advocated by the authorities. The situation leads to dramatic consequences during droughts.

##### *The migration of women*

Among the Wodaabe, the migration of women is a recurrent phenomenon. Almost all adult women have made such a migration at least once in their lifetime. True, for some, the phenomenon is a matter of habit and the perpetuation of a tradition of

seasonal "mobility"; for others it is the results of a number of constraints related to how households are managed in the area.

Several of our informants admitted that many husbands do not support the basic needs of their family members. Consequently, women are obliged to face insecurities by going to big cities in Niger and other African countries in order to gain money for clothing, food, preparation of weddings, etc... Traffic accidents, diseases, rapes, robberies and the risk of being corrupted by other men are some of the insecurities related to the mobility of women.

This migration of women can be seen as an excuse for many husbands not to pay for the basic needs of their wives throughout the year. It should be noted that there is an increasing number of men and women who complain that the migration of these women has no positive result, and brings a lot of suffering, especially when one considers that women usually have to do two trips between the end of the rainy season and the end of the dry season in order to sell traditional medicines and work as hairdressers.

#### *Some strategies developed by livestock farmers*

For the Wodaabe, the most difficult times are the dry season "*cedu*" and the period of drought "*Kitanga*". These are difficult times, especially in recent years where the herds have decreased from year to year. To address the problems, some farmers defy social barriers by reducing the size of their herds and buy livestock feed in order to save the remaining animals. Some of these farmers even try to crossbreed species in order to get resistant and easy to maintain cattle.

But these cases are not very widespread. To meet the multiple needs of the family, in addition to the migration of women, the Wodaabe have also began to grow their own food and exercise retail trade in the camps. In order to diversify the activities, they make a division of tasks in the family: while some take care of the animals, others are busy with agriculture in the fields whereas yet others travel to big cities for trade (selling tea, ground coffee, turbans, artisanal objects) or work as security guards.

#### *Increasing number of strays: a subtle rip-off*

In the research area, there exist more and more cases of rip-off which is detrimental to the solidarity between farmers. Indeed, in the past, a stray could be quickly found. When a farmer found a stray in his herd, he would retain it until he finds the legitimate owner.

But nowadays, according to the respondents, everything has changed. An animal found in a herd is brought directly to the authorities. Sometimes the owner may claim more than he has lost. This new situation breaks the trust that existed between the owner of a stray and the one who finds it. For example, a farmer of the area had found a sheep in his herd. He has seen fit to bring the stray to the market of Akadany on Wednesday, September 1, 2010 to find the owner. Unfortunately, the latter claimed to have lost a flock of fifty sheep that the farmer has been ordered to pay. The alleged "thief" has been arrested immediately by the police and faced charges.

This attitude is very detrimental to the organization of farmers. Ultimately, a stray in a herd is more a problem than an opportunity to render service to the neighbour. Thus,

no one dares to keep a stray. People tend to make it disappear as quickly as possible. This is contrary to the moral standards among the Fulani.

#### *Begging as a seasonal activity*

In the pastoral area of Dakoro, there are an increasing number of people who beg in the streets. People are so used to receive aid from the State, pastoral associations and NGOs that they always expect something from foreigners. One of the main difficulties faced in the field was undoubtedly the fact that people mistook us for project officers. Despite the many explanations that we gave about the purpose of our research, people pressed us with demands for assistance by giving us details about the animals they lost during the last drought and their wells that had collapsed. Similarly, health centres, the headquarters of NGOs and local councils are constantly pressed by people in search of assistance. It is not uncommon for fathers to spend a night or two before a health centre just to receive a few kilograms of rice.

One finds it increasingly difficult to distinguish between those who are really in need and those who are not. Better still, older people are willing to claim that they are hungry and have lost everything. In short, what we have witnessed is the establishment of a begging habit as a result of the activities of NGOs and associations on the field. Such actions are certainly contrary to the values of Pulaku (the Fulani rules of polite society).

#### **The new means of communication: revitalization or deterioration of the system of livestock farming**

An interesting and non-expected development in this study is related to the presence of new communication technology in the area. This is worth being presented in this separate section as we think it has a large implication for the future organisation of pastoralism and nomadism in Niger in the future. These new developments criss-cross the development of the variant insecurities we discussed; from violence to economic migration.

The intervention and the rapid expansion of mobile phones in Niger have transformed the lifestyle of farmers. Indeed, few are the farmers who do not use a mobile phone. Is it a trend or a necessity? All say to be satisfied with what they can achieve thanks to the phone: exchange of information with parents and friends, possibility to quickly contact the authorities and health workers, information on the routes of the seasonal migration (their opportunities and constraints).

In the pastoral areas, in addition to the mobile phone, another means of communication is growing more and more, namely the bike "Made in China". These "new" means of communication are replacing other means, without making them obsolete. Those traditional means of transportation are the donkey, the horse, the camel, the ox; and of course not to forget the word of mouth or messages conveyed by people. Although they are not very widespread, one can say that these new media are a tool for the revitalization and modernization of livestock farming in the pastoral area of northern Dakoro.

These new methods have the capacity to reduce the concept of distance and at the same time contribute to making the farmers feel close to their parents during seasonal



migration. One respondent explains: *"I have no trouble reaching my two children during the seasonal migration in the north. When they have a problem, they call me and tell me where they are and I can reach them if necessary"* (interview with Bakatara Mata).

On the other hand, although the phone is facilitating communication between farmers, it is also used by robbers in the area. Indeed, it allows all kinds of criminals to exchange information that can help hide stolen goods, for example by indicating where the owners of stolen animals are heading when they are on the track of potential criminals.

Regarding the motorbike, its use requires a regular maintenance which entails more costs. Often, there are also serious accidents due to the use of motorbikes given the bad state of the paths (if people bother to take them), excessive speed, lack of knowledge of the rules for riding a motorbike and the fact that these bikes are in high esteem by thieves operating in the area. The bikes are helping the criminals organize successfully the robbery of small ruminants. And given the speed of these bikes, it is very easy to make the animals disappear for good.

All in all, beyond the fact that they revitalize the living conditions of livestock farmers, these new means of communication are also real obstacles to this system of farming as they are increasingly a destabilizing element of the system. Livestock farming therefore faces a lot of constraints that are major obstacles to its development. This activity remains a vital sector of the rural districts of Gadabedji and Bermo. Indeed, in this area, natural resources are an important issue for the various stakeholders: sometimes between livestock farmers among themselves, sometimes between farmers and livestock farmers.

## 7. Comparison of the cases

This collaborative research identified three insecurities that will intensify with the changes in mobility patterns of the pastoralist Fulani. These are aggravated conflict, worsening economy and poor health. The two case studies provide interesting insights into the security situation of nomads in different regions. The Niger case has added a fourth domain of insecurity that is ecology. Changes in the ecological environment, either induced by climate change or political measures (installation of a reserve) confront the nomadic pastoralists with new challenges. The model we developed in our proposal at the start of the study did not give explicit attention to this ecological element, though it was included in the economic insecurities the nomads were expected to encounter.

With regard to insecurities in general, it seems that the nomadic Fulbe in the Sahelian zone are under greater pressure than the nomadic Fulbe in the forest zones. This could be the result of changing attitudes of the farmers in the forest region, i.e. the incorporation of pastoralism into their own livelihoods and in relation to the increasing insecurity in the area. The new mobility for the group in Niger is better explained as new immobility. The Wodaabe have departed from past trajectories by decreasing distances covered during the transhumance. Reduced arable lands, increasing human numbers and increasing insecurity (banditry) are among the primary reason for the current immobility. On the other hand for the same reasons nomadic pastoralists decide to leave the area in search for pastures further south. These decisions are at the base of the former migration of nomads toward Northern Nigeria and from Northern Nigeria to the south.

The Wodaabe we met in Niger, however seem to have abandoned this far distance migration (for the moment). They no longer pasture their cattle in Northern Nigeria owing to the combination of border insecurity and access restriction that have come with changing government policy. In the zone north of Maradi, insecurity keeps them in place as well. One question arising from this is: how do nomads become less mobile in a changing world and how does this increase the pressures and stress of their traditional lifestyles and livelihood?

In Nigeria, to the contrary, the groups are mobile. They originate from an area in the central part of the country, where the south meets the north, strategize their mobility around the need for improved personal and corporate security of human and animal life and the goal of establishing solidarity frameworks to guarantee their cultural survival. Their mobility is indeed new mobility as they have never gone this far into the forest zone. It is in part stimulated by climate change and worsening grazing conditions in the northern parts of the country. Being mobile helps them to avoid the insecurities of conflict, criminality and the health threats of urban settlement although their mobility attracts its own special form of insecurities.

At inception, the investigation had not anticipated the severity of violence and insecurity in Niger. Its protocols therefore did not make provisions for these. The situation rendered many parts of the country inaccessible. In Nigeria, the level of violence and insecurity is also high, but its dynamics are far more predictable. In Niger today kidnapping, attacks, cattle theft can happen to everybody. It seems that the Wodaabe, who are considered wealthy (and who cannot move on) are especially

vulnerable to these forms of violence. The traditional reaction of nomads to conflict situation is to move but, for these Wodaabe, this no longer seems to be a practical option. Protection to this type of violence by the state is difficult, it is also not clear what the role of state institutions are in these. Their Nigerian counterparts, on the other hand, have learned to negotiate their security within the ambits and provisions of the law. They resort often to the police and, in Biase, it was by police intervention that they obtain compensation for their cattle which were killed by irate youths. They have become sophisticated in the use of memoranda of understanding as an instrument for negotiating both access to grazing fields and for establishing common understanding of mutual roles. Nevertheless, these measures count on the stability of the sedentary population that hosts them and their condition presents a contrasting profile of insecurity from that encountered by the Nigerien Wodaabe.

It is possible to see an increase in the number of nomads who venture out into new ecological zones. As noted above, the challenges that cattle herders face in forest zones are different from those in the Sahelian zone. In that former zone, they are not part of the histories of origin and settlement and are compelled to carve new niches for themselves. In the process, they are confronted with hostilities of the host population that have to do with the conflictual livelihood of farmers and herders, that in the case of Nigeria have a clear political aspect. In response, they have developed strong negotiation skills and strategically employ conflict averting and resolution resources found within the host environment, although the option of inviting support from their kin via networks established for that purpose is always open to them should the need arise.

### ***Economy***

It is clear that this insecurity and violence have important consequences for the economy of the pastoralists. Combined with the new strategies of farmers it seems that the Wodaabe pastoral economy is really in danger. For the people in the forest zone it seems that this is not the case, at least to the extent that cattle are a highly valued commodities both with regard to status affirmation and as a cultural symbol of affluence, the nutritional requirements of the host communities depend on it. Fulani women combine trading in milk products with hair plaiting, which is a nexus for interaction between women from both types of communities. In time, dynamics of this sort can foster inter-group understanding and reduce conflict.

Thus, nomadic pastoralists in Nigeria have been exposed to the need to diversify their livelihoods, perhaps as a result of earlier onset and later progression of urbanization in Nigeria, relative to Niger. They have learnt to combine temporary jobs in towns, or living as impoverished herders, in order to rebuild their herd. Such social forces like these have helped strengthens the capacity for adaptation to urban and mobile lifestyles among the Nigerian Fulani. By contrast, contemporary Wodaabe seem unable to escape the inherent poverty trap. The move from camels to motor-cycles is promising and an innovation in their economy.

The case of the Fulbe in the forest zones seems different. Although we have not enough exact data on their economy it was clear from the observations that these nomads do have enough income from both milk and cattle to live a good life. The herdsmen who herd the cattle for the butchers and cattle traders in town do also earn enough to make remittances home. They report themselves to be satisfied with the

economic profit they were making. In general, in terms of economy, it seems easier to build a good household economy/livelihood in the south than nowadays in the northern regions. This is a hypothesis that needs further investigation...

### ***Conflicts/violence***

Conflicts are everywhere. The insecurity issue raised above goes beyond the negotiations of the herdsman themselves. Another level of conflict is that which occurs between herders and farmers. These have been discussed at length in numerous academic publications, and are figuring very high in the analysis of conflict on the local level in the media. An example is the Jos Plateau conflict that emerged during the period of this study and that the Nigerian press analysed as a farmer-herder conflict related to access to land, pasture and fields, although the religious and political undertones of that prolonged conflict are unmistakable.

The herders who are in the forest zones have difficulties in accessing enough pasture areas. These herders who know about the Jos Plateau did not exclude similar situations in this area. The two reported incidents where herders were wounded and cattle killed need however to be followed up in research. In the Nigeria case we should separate the cases of families who move to the South and make a new living and the herdsman who follow cattle for rich urbanites. It seems that the cattle herds of the urbanites stay around town and trample there the rice fields, introduce new grasses etc. that are a nuisance for the urban farmers. This has as well reinforced a culture of pesticides in town.

In the Niger case, the land issue surfaced in a different scenario. In an apparent reversal of the Nigeria pattern, farmers' encroachment on what were always considered pasture areas, for grass harvests, were grounds for conflict. This issue of local conflict and violence has become politicized. In a follow up of this research we should include a much broader coverage of the regions involved and try to get to understand the 'ampleur' of these incidents. Since the economic precursors of these conflicts resonate across both studies with respect to farmer-pastoralist relations, it is logical to infer that peaceful coexistence between the representatives of these contrasting systems must be preceded by a synthesis of the production systems.

### ***Health***

In Nigeria, the investigators found unexpected health issues related to the presence of cattle in the host communities. Cattle were said to bring water-related diseases by defecating in water sources but this is an assertion that requires further systematic verification. Whether these stories are true or not, they comprise popular perceptions in Ugep and reinforce frictional ideas and images that the urban people have of nomads and their cattle. They should be taken seriously, not dismissed, because they can serve as the basis for all forms of avoidable actions, including unwarranted attacks.

The research team had expected to find more evidence of diseases related to sexuality. Although there are indications that the nomadic population in Southern Nigeria do have high-risk sexual encounters with the local population, further work needs to be done on this feature to establish the mechanisms and implications of that risk, if it exists. Research into sexuality and related diseases should take place, but could not be done in the short period of this research project. However it is clear that both in Niger

and in Nigeria there is hardly any information on these health related issues among nomadic people. It is therefore an issue we should pursue further.

In particular, the following issues are significant enough for subsequent systematic study.

1. The expectation that there were long distance itineraries between Niger and Nigeria was not proven. Where such itineraries existed previously, they might have been altered by the insecurities and uncertainty that the study does in fact establish as capable of altering. This historical or contemporary element requires elaboration in order to identify the contexts within which strategic nomadic behaviour may change and as a means of promoting robust advocacy programmes and the acquisition of modern nomadic strategic skills (MNSS).
2. Urban pastoralism seems to be one niche in Southern Nigeria
3. New communication technologies, especially the mobile phone, do play an important role both in Niger as in Nigeria nomadic communities. It seems to be a natural ally in these mobile societies. There is a need for a discussion about how these new technologies can be used in interventions with regard to conflicts, in the form of early warning systems.
4. The replacement of camels by motorbikes in Niger is also a remarkable move with important consequences for the livelihood of the nomads.
5. The presence of pastoralist networks did not appear in the interviews in Niger, however in Nigeria Myetti Allah was mentioned as an intermediary in the conflicts. Here is still more to be sorted out.
6. In Niger the involvement of development NGOs in the life of the nomads is much more present than in Nigeria where it seems that the nomads are left on their own, except for some support in the state security institutes like the police and justice.
7. This leads to question the role of local government structures and how they view the nomads, both in Niger and Nigeria. Their role is crucial in the solution of local conflict and in the image building around nomads.
8. One of the most important conclusions is that discourse and image building/creation in media and government structures play a crucial role in the perception of nomadic populations both in the areas where they have for long been pasturing their animals and in the areas where they are relative newcomers.
9. A very worrying conclusion of this pilot study is that the nomadic societies in both the Sahel and Forest zones of West Africa are really under pressure. A situation that increases with the advent of insecurity in the areas. There were indications of coming unrest that one herdsman describes as capable of making the Jos incidents seem 'like child's play'. In Niger there are indications of systematic attacks of nomadic pastoralists (information Billital Maroobe). It is urgent to get more insight into the ampleur of the problem before it is too late.

10. In our analysis we should not forget that the old discussions on nomadic societies and their specific relation to ecology are probably even more relevant today now these ecological risks are joined by the other risks and uncertainties as they are discussed in this report.

## 8. Discussion of the KIC process

The first conclusion on the process of building a KIC should be that it is not yet done. It is impossible to build a knowledge structure in the time and funding constraints that were set to this project. To make this KIC around pastoralism into a success more time is needed. Let's first relate the successes of the 8 months project so far:

1. The first workshop held in Niger was a crucial moment in the process
2. Collaboration between Niger and Nigeria was unique and turned out well
3. With regard to capacity building in the research institutes: most remarkable is the fact that the researchers have discovered the Fulbe nomadic pastoralists as an interesting group (awareness)
4. The research capacity of the researchers at the two institutes has certainly increased
5. The potential of film in the project is high: as a presentation of the data, as a communication tool within the network (still to be elaborated during the next workshop in June), and as a potential means to discuss the problems in a wider audience.

The less successful part of the project were

1. NOVIB advised us to work with Billital Maroobé, but during the process of research and discussions we had the impression that it would have been good to involve more networks, which we will certainly do during the last meeting to be organized in June where we will discuss the findings of this first phase. More time and resources are required to mobilize and engage nonacademic pastoralist networks for the research than were available to the team. It appeared that research institutes and pastoral networks are no natural partners. This is a concern that should as well be discussed during the meeting to be organized in June;
2. It was challenging to work in the Niger-Nigeria axis because of purely practical reasons (transport, language, distance). This difficulty can be overcome through a comprehensive research and planning strategy that takes account of the need to track the movements;
3. The security issue is not only a serious problem for the population in the regions where we did the research, but they were as well a serious setback for the project and are a concern for the future. One setback was that we could not realize the last workshop in time;
4. The discussion with the NOVIB team has been rather limited, and should intensify in the next phase.

This research is a first step towards the establishment of a KIC in the field of pastoralism. We will use the outcomes of this research as an important step towards the further building of the KIC. We should include more networks in the process, probably more research groups. We can proceed under the umbrella of a larger research network: CDP (Consortium for Development Partnership) that includes a research project oriented towards Fulbe society and the new problems they envisage in Ghana (based at Legon University) with strong linkages with MAI and LASDEL. The aim of CDP is to link research immediately to policy, which makes KIC a very good and feasible structure for CDP. The advantage of this is that our small KIC will

become integrated into a larger research problematic of conflict and mobility in West Africa, in which for instance ECOWAS is already involved. It would be ideal if NOVIB will continue its financial contribution to this initiative to set up a KIC in the field of pastoralism that will have more impact in the CDP structure.



## 9. Conclusion

The knowledge produced by the KIC pastoralism is useful, but only a beginning. (still to be elaborated after the workshop in June). The ‘discovery’ of the pastoral nomad problematic needs follow-up. It is unethical to leave this knowledge at this stage whereas we think action is needed!

The aim to link local research institutes to pastoral networks has been partly successful but needs elaboration. The aim to create awareness for the pastoral problematic however has been very successful, and needs a follow-up (see suggestion on link to CDP).

KIC structures are needed in Africa.

The process of building a KIC needs to crystallize. From our experience we can conclude that a KIC can only be built in an atmosphere of mutual trust; that the starting phase including a workshop is crucial; but to really consolidate a KIC more time than 8 months is needed, and a lot of investment in meeting, etc. To consolidate a KIC the problem around which it is formulated should also have a certain urgency, which in our case has proven to be the case!

The June workshop should result in:

1. a proposal for the continuation of the process of KIC in the realm of nomadic pastoralism (with whom to cooperate, which countries should be involved?)
2. new research questions (for instance related to sexuality; to the use of mobile phones; to internet networks in which Fulbe are organizing themselves over the region; more knowledge about the ‘ampleur’ of the problematic, and more knowledge about the embeddedness of the Fulani in the forest zones)
3. proposal for a discussion on actions to be undertaken on the basis of these first research results.

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## **KIC workshop in Niamey (LASDEL) 10 and 11 May 2010**

### **Monday 10 May 2010**

Attendants:

Mohamadou Abdoulaye, director LASDEL, researcher/lecturer at the Abdou Moumouni University (Niamey)

Amadou Oumarou, researcher LASDEL, sociologist at the Abdou Moumouni University (Niamey)

Mirjam de Bruijn, ASC

Kiky van Oostrum, ASC

Hama Ali, translator

Dodo Boureima, permanent secretary Billital Maroobé

Blamah Jalloh, assistant Billital Maroobé

Oka Obono, executive director of MAI and researcher/lecturer at the Department of Sociology of Ibadan University

Isang Ofem, researcher MAI

### **Tuesday 11 May 2010**

Attendants:

Mohamadou Abdoulaye, director LASDEL, researcher/lecturer at the Abdou Moumouni University (Niamey)

Amadou Oumarou, researcher LASDEL sociologist at the Abdou Moumouni University (Niamey)

Mirjam de Bruijn, ASC

Kiky van Oostrum, ASC

Blamah Jalloh, assistant Billital Maroobé

Oka Obono, executive director of MAI and researcher/lecturer at the Department of Sociology of Ibadan University

Isang Ofem, researcher MAI

Madou Harouna, researcher philosophy at Abdou Moumouni University (Niamey)

Soumana Sambou Saphia, researcher geography at Abdou Moumouni University (Niamey)