About the Authors

Leif Brottem (brotteml@grinnell.edu) is Assistant Professor of Global Development Studies at Grinnell College in Iowa [USA]. He holds a PhD in Geography from the University of Wisconsin-Madison and has been doing grassroots development work, consulting, and scholarly research in West and Central Africa for the past eighteen years.

Andrew McDonnell is Senior Officer with Search for Common Ground.

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Key Findings

This report is a cross-sectoral review of research intended to synthesize the principal debates and trends on conflicts relating to pastoralism across Sudano-Sahelian West and Central Africa. The findings below represent overarching takeaways from this review, which manifest differently across the various contexts included in this study.

- Conflicts involving pastoralist populations are intimately linked to macro-economic and environmental shifts in the Sudano-Sahel. However, **there is not sufficient evidence to suggest that the scarcity of resources or climate pressures are the primary cause of these conflicts.** These pressures are important, but they are unfolding in the background of socioeconomic and political issues that are generally seen to be at the heart of conflicts involving pastoralists.

- In many contexts, **the relationships between mobile pastoralists and sedentary rural communities, who have historically shared landscapes and resources, are degrading** in ways that create conditions for violent conflict. In part, these relations are stressed as individuals and communities adapt to new economic realities by diversifying their livelihoods, settling down, or increasing private ownership of land. However, this deterioration can also be seen as the result of a lack of credible actors or institutions to mediate and manage increasing competition over resources.

- Across the Sudano-Sahel, social relations and especially group membership determine one’s access to resources, and **rural development policies that are seen to privilege or disadvantage one group over others have become flashpoints for conflict.** As governments take steps to control movement or land use, many pastoralists and farmers may fear being dispossessed, and that fear can incite conflict.

- **Existing localized systems of dispute resolution and resource management have proven effective in helping to manage conflict, but they are not necessarily a panacea.** The efficacy of local institutions and authorities (customary or statutory) can be undermined by many of the endemic challenges that affect rural governance across the region broadly (corruption, impunity, politicization, legal pluralism). Further, many of the existing systems that are rooted in longstanding customary practices may not be sufficiently suited to deal with the current scale of violence and criminality.

- Pastoral livelihoods are often closely linked with culture and identity, and ethnic and religious divisions between pastoralist groups and others are sometimes used to justify exclusionary politics and escalate intercommunal conflicts. However, the drivers of conflict should not be essentialized as solely motivated by identity, as tensions between identity groups are shaped by material considerations as well.

- Mobile pastoralists **often exist in positions of political or economic vulnerability** – whether due to historic neglect, the need to move through insecure spaces, or the need to access resources through secondary rights – **and that vulnerability has been frequently exploited by both corrupt or abusive authorities and non-state armed groups.** These experiences may incentivize participation in criminal and insurgent activity or pressure pastoralists to protect themselves in ways that can contribute to conflict (e.g., forming self-protection groups or shifting movements to new areas).
Introduction

Across the African continent, 268 million people practice pastoralism, both as a way of life and a livelihood strategy, contributing between 10 to 44 percent of the GDP of African countries. In recent years, this adaptive animal production system has faced growing external threats due to issues such as climate change, political instability, agricultural expansion, and rural banditry that have transformed the rangelands in which they operate. From Mali to South Sudan, governments, regional bodies, peacebuilders, development agencies, environmentalists, economists, and security forces are actively attempting to address the sources of violence and instability that affect both pastoral communities and the rural societies with whom they share resources and landscapes.

These interventions are often shaped by differing assumptions about the source and nature of these conflicts, despite the availability of extensive research and analysis. Though the local dynamics of conflict vary across different contexts, a number of trends and debates appear throughout the literature on pastoralism and conflict. This review draws on several hundred sources to synthesize the major points of consensus and divergence in the existing literature and identify relevant research gaps. This analysis presents data from across Sudano-Sahelian West and Central Africa, to link comparable findings that are often presented in isolation.

Although conflicts over land and water resources in the Sudano-Sahel have long been a political concern and were a major point of contention in the colonial and post-independence eras, they have gained prominence in recent years due to the ongoing spread of violence, instability, and displacement across the region. Latent tensions over resource access and control, which historically only occasionally led to violence, have now erupted in some cases into cycles of mass killings and reprisals. In Nigeria, escalating rural banditry and reprisal violence between farmers and pastoralists has left thousands dead and many more displaced. In central Mali, the escalation of these conflicts culminated in the massacre of 160 members of the Fulani ethno-linguistic and traditionally pastoralist group in Ogossagou in March of 2019, as well as ensuing reprisal violence. And, across Sudan, South Sudan, and the Central African Republic (CAR), conflicts relating to livestock migration and cattle theft have played a critical and destabilizing role in internal insurgencies and cross-border conflict. For these reasons and more, conflict dynamics relating to pastoralism and pastoral communities have become a shared policy priority throughout the region.

OUTLINE

This review covers the following key trends and debates from existing literature:

- **Resource Competition and Adaptation** – This Section reviews arguments that analyze pastoralism-related conflicts through the lens of competition over resources. The materials cover the major economic and environmental shifts that have reshaped pastoral livestock production in the Sudano-Sahel and how these shifts are changing relationships between pastoralists and farmers.

- **Governance, Law, and Dispute Resolution** – This Section highlights trends on how control over resources have become a conflict flashpoint that existing institutions and authorities often struggle to mediate. Specifically, the Section breaks down key debates on the policies governing land use and pastoral mobility and how these policies may reinforce or mitigate conflict and the efficacy of local authorities and systems in managing resource disputes.

- **“New Fringe Pastoralism”** – This Section explores the intersection between pastoralist populations and illicit activities or insurgent violence. This Section speaks to an ongoing debate in existing scholarship, policy discourse, and public perception about whether or not some pastoral populations should be seen as vectors of violence or criminality. It explores how pastoralist populations have been targeted for recruitment from insurgent movements and how they have been affected by rising banditry and criminality.

- **Areas for Further Research** – This Section identifies topics that were identified as potentially significant in this review, but that have not been the subject of sufficient study.

METHODOLOGY AND SCOPE

The analysis is based on a review of more than 300 sources in English and French, consisting of scholarly research and analysis produced by credible practitioner and policy organizations. This review is intended to provide a snapshot of overarching debates and trends and to identify examples from existing research of how these issues manifest in the region.

Thematic Focus

This review specifically focuses on facets of pastoral livestock production that are linked to conflicts between users of shared resources and landscapes, with an emphasis on ongoing or recent (over the past 5-10 years) research and conflicts. This scope includes disputes or confrontations involving individuals or distinct stakeholder groups over time, ranging from isolated incidents to multi-year struggles. It focuses exclusively on conflict between sedentary farmers and mobile pastoralists or between different pastoral groups, and does not attempt to reflect the research on issues affecting sedentary livestock production, farming, or other resource users in rural communities. Primarily, though not exclusively, most sources focus on the production of cattle. A full analysis of all the local conflict dynamics relevant to pastoral communities in each country or region is beyond the scope of this review. Additionally, while this review touches on contentious policy issues, it is not intended to provide policy recommendations or a summation of broader debates on rural governance in Africa.

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3 Blake D. Ratner et al., “Addressing conflict through collective action in natural resource management,” *International Journal of the Commons* 11, no. 2 (2017), 877–906. Unlike Ratner, our primary focus is on violent conflicts that typically but do not necessarily lead to fatalities as these have the most deleterious effects on inter-group social and political relations.

4 While an extensive body of analysis has focused on conflicts between pastoralists and farmers, similar conflict dynamics are also impacting the relationships with pastoralists and other rural actors. Pastoralists in the CAR, for example, express concern about the incursion of artisanal mining into grazing areas (which can damage the grazing resources and present a danger of cattle falling into pits). Mark Freudenberger and Zephirin Mobga, “The Capture of the Commons: Militarized Pastoralism and Struggles for Control of Surface and Sub-Surface Resources in Southwest Central African Republic,” (presented at Land Governance in an Interconnected World: Annual World Bank Conference on Land and Poverty, Washington, DC, 2018).
Geographic Focus

The Sudano-Sahel is an ecological zone in which pastoral livestock production and the associated value chain plays a central role (Figure 1). This study focuses on four geographical areas or “conflict geographies” where natural resource conflicts relating to pastoralism are most acute and that have been the subject of much of the existing literature on pastoralism and conflict – (i) the Liptako-Gourma triangle at the intersection of Mali, Niger, and Burkina Faso; (ii) Nigeria; (iii) the Central African Republic and surrounding border regions; and (iv) Sudan and South Sudan. Since pastoral livestock production in the Sudano-Sahel relies substantially on seasonal movements into sub-humid areas, it also includes research conducted in neighboring countries such as Benin, Togo, Ghana, and the Ivory Coast. Each of these regions has experienced significant levels of violence associated with pastoralism over the last five years (Figure 2).

Editorial Note: This map reflects data from the Armed Conflict Location and Event Data Project (ACLED), which has been disaggregated for events in which one or more of the parties involved is identified as “pastoralist.” This may not fully represent all conflict events relevant to the scope of this analysis, including violence against marginalized populations, which may be underreported in news sources and therefore not reflected in ACLED’s data.
A NOTE ON TERMINOLOGY

For the sake of brevity, this review uses some umbrella terms in order to discuss trends in the literature at a regional level, recognizing that these terms can be used to describe a broad range of practices and peoples.

- **Pastoralism** – Pastoralism is defined as livestock production that relies on spatial and temporal mobility to access land and water resources. This may include consistent nomadic movement of livestock over long distances or the practice of moving livestock over short distances or only on a seasonal basis. Pastoralism is an adaptive practice, and the timing and the extent of pastoral mobility can vary across different ecological zones. **Transhumance** refers specifically to regular seasonal livestock movements that typically correspond to the region’s rainy and dry seasons.

- **Pastoralists** – This term broadly refers to the individuals and populations who practice some form of pastoral livestock production as their only or primary livelihood. This encompasses a diverse population, and the differences among pastoralists can change how they relate to the conflict dynamics outlined in this review. Though a majority of that population in the Sahel is poor, for example, there are also wealthy elites who own large herds and send those herds on transhumance. Similarly, some pastoralists are entirely nomadic while others are sedentary (and may rely on contracted herders to move their livestock).

PASTORALIST ETHNIC GROUPS

This review makes reference to various ethnic groups across the Sudano-Sahel that are often described as “pastoralist,” in the sense that pastoralism is a principle livelihood practice among these groups and plays an influential role in their cultural identity. Examples of these groups include: the Berbers, Moors, and Saharawi in the Saharan regions; the Toubous in Chad, Sudan, Libya, and Niger; the Baggara in the Sudanese regions of Darfur and Kordofan; and the Fulani who are spread from Senegal through Nigeria and the Sahel and into Central Africa. The Fulani – a large ethnic population numbering in the tens of millions with hundreds of sub-clans – feature particularly in the literature in this review.

While much has been written about the role of the Fulani in conflict, particularly in their capacity as nomadic or semi-nomadic pastoralists, any summary of this literature can risk essentializing a large and heterogenous population. The Fulani practice many livelihoods outside of pastoralism, and many who raise livestock are sedentary rather than nomadic. Higazi notes, for example, the significance of distinguishing between nomadic and settled Fulani populations in Nigeria, as each may practice distinct livelihoods, speak different languages/dialects, and follow different cultural norms. Some settled Fulani communities may be more closely intertwined with other neighboring ethnic groups than with nomadic Fulani.

9 Michele Nori, *Herding through Uncertainties – Regional Perspectives. Exploring the interfaces between pastoralists and uncertainty. Results from a literature review*, (Badia Fiesolana: European University Institute, 2019).
SECTION I
Resource Competition and Adaptation

Landscapes across the Sudano-Sahel have dramatically changed over the past half century in ways that substantially impact the practice of nomadic and semi-nomadic pastoralism. Pastoralists who may have been able to operate independently on vast stretches of open rangelands increasingly have to compete with others for access to land and water resources, as exponential population growth leads to expanding urbanization and agricultural cultivation. In some cases, this competition has resulted in disputes and conflicts between pastoral herders and farmers due to livestock migration into new territory as well as agricultural encroachment into areas that historically served as grazing areas or corridors for livestock migration. At the same time, growing urban populations have been driving substantial increases in demand for meat, outpacing the production capacity of some countries and fueling a need to expand livestock production generally.

This phenomenon is sometimes portrayed as a manifestation of population-induced scarcity, which leads some to identify the source of the conflict as people fighting over fewer natural resources. This Section explores findings from the literature on the role of competition over natural resources in conflicts between pastoralists and other resource-users. In particular, this Section focuses on:

- Are either resource scarcity or climate change the fundamental cause of these conflicts?
- How have rural livelihoods evolved in recent decades and how do those adaptations affect competition and conflict over resources?

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SCARCITY

The theory that resource scarcity drives conflict in the region is controversial and has generated a substantial literature of critical responses. The foremost critical response is that farmer–herder conflicts can occur in places of relative abundance of resources, which suggests scarcity is not an essential causal mechanism. In Sudan, some scholars note that resource abundance may be a driver of conflict as governments create large-scale farms on land that once served as communal rangelands. At the same time, many parts of the Sudano-Sahel have experienced acute resource competition among smallholders yet do not experience high levels of violence. It should also be noted that changing patterns of livestock movement – which can create friction with other resource users – are not inherently a response to scarcity. Herders move their livestock to access markets and while they may venture south where pasture is more abundant this does not necessarily indicate that they are being pushed by resource scarcity in the areas they left behind. It may be opportunistic movement to take advantage of attractive grazing areas or expanding urban markets rather than necessity.

A broad agreement does exist among scholars that resource access and control are important underlying sources of conflict between different user groups, especially farmers and pastoralists. Yet analysts and scholars do not agree on whether the ultimate source of that conflict is the competition over resource access or the power relations that shape it. As discussed in Section II, policies that attempt to control resource use and thereby mitigate the impact of scarcity can worsen conflict or even trigger new conflicts by exacerbating the root political causes of the original tension. This remains a critical point of concern as resource competition and the prevention of conflict are increasingly used to justify measures that restrict or roll back pastoral resource access in countries like Benin and Nigeria – such as the hardening of borders or prohibitions against grazing. It will be important to observe closely whether and how these recent policy changes may exacerbate current tensions or even create new forms of resource-based conflict in the region.

CLIMATE CHANGE AND SHIFTING MOVEMENTS

Pastoralism-related resource conflicts are often associated with broad regional environmental trends, including climate change. The notion that climate change is linked to conflict is pervasive, yet even analyses that support an empirical relationship between climate change and violent armed conflict in Africa acknowledge a lack of clarity on the specific mechanisms that trigger violence and their directionality. The relationship between climate change and the conflicts spreading across the Sudano-Sahel remains a controversial topic among analysts, but this review finds that there are no claims in the scholarly literature that climate has an inherently causal relationship to pastoral conflict. In other words, while environmental changes are an important contextual factor, socioeconomic and political dynamics are widely cited among scholars as being at the center of resource conflicts. Nonetheless, climate change can influence pastoralism-related conflict dynamics by affecting the distribution of water and grazing resources. Despite the resilience of pastoralism to environmental variability, these changes can act as a medium to long-term factor in conflict as some strategies that pastoralists adopt to diversify their livelihoods can increase competition with other resource users.

Shifting patterns of movement are noted by some as a key part of the explanation for the increase in pastoralism-related conflicts, as it is observed that pastoralists are now going “where they have never travelled before” and thereby driving their livestock into farming lands. As demonstrated by various studies included in this review, pastoral movement patterns have

significantly changed in recent decades both geographically and in terms of timing. Drought – which is affected by regional climate change – has been shown to cause changes in livestock movements that can lead to local-level conflict. Other environmental events and patterns have also been associated with shifting movements, as well. In South Sudan, flooding has also played a significant role in shifting the movement of pastoralist populations; as has been observed in 2019 with the internal displacement of cattle camps into Equatoria. In the CAR, the expansion of pastoralism livestock production has continued to the country’s southern border with the DRC, driven in part by insecurity in the north but also by the attractive of abundant grazing resources.

Shifting pastoral movements can cause friction and sometimes conflict but it should be noted that these shifts are not always a sudden response to climate shocks, and may be related to longer-term adaptations, as pastoralism is an inherently adaptive practice. Transhumance movements and livestock production more generally can shift southward as pastoral groups seek new grazing opportunities in sub-humid areas or new markets, and through livelihood diversification into trading and agriculture. In places like Cote d’Ivoire, Nigeria, and the CAR, the introduction of pastoral livestock into sub-humid frontier areas dates back several decades and was driven by market demand and government policy to promote domestic livestock production.

In other areas, including Mali, Guinea, and the Gambia, the southward shift is associated with the mid-1980s and, specifically, the Sahelian drought of 1984. Although the 1984 drought greatly damaged pastoral livelihoods and contributed substantially to this shift, there is evidence that this is not as much a sudden shift as it is a much longer and incremental process of adaptation by pastoralists. In Sudan, as in the western Sahel, the 1984 drought triggered a mass migration of Zaghawa pastoralists

31 Augustine A. Ayantunde et al., “Transhumant pastoralism, sustainable management of natural resources and endemic ruminant livestock in the sub-humid zone of West Africa,” Environment, Development and Sustainability 16, no. 5 (2014); Brottem, “Environmental change and farmer-herder conflict in agro-pastoral West Africa.”
37 Ayantunde et al., “Transhumant pastoralism, sustainable management of natural resources and endemic ruminant livestock in the sub-humid zone of West Africa,” Brottem, “Environmental change and farmer-herder conflict in agro-pastoral West Africa.”
from northern to southern Darfur, where they ultimately came into conflict with the areas’ sedentary tribes over land rights and political power.\textsuperscript{39} The case of Darfur also demonstrates the limited power of environmental shocks as a \textit{push} factor that triggers conflict—other pastoralist groups, the Zayadia and Meidob, stayed and adapted to new conditions in their home region while the Zaghawa migrated \textit{en masse}.\textsuperscript{40}

**ADAPTATION AND EROSION OF FARMER-HERDER SYMBIOSIS**

A frequently cited cause of resource conflict across the Sudano-Sahel is the erosion of the social and economic fabric that binds together farmers and pastoralists (see examples from Nigeria,\textsuperscript{41} South Sudan,\textsuperscript{42} and Chad).\textsuperscript{43} Individuals and communities that self-identify as farmers or pastoralists typically maintain everyday social relations, frequently live in close proximity, and depend on one another economically. Farming and herding complement each other in productive terms through monetary transactions for grain, animal products (milk, cheese, etc.) or trade goods, animal power, crop residue as animal feed, and the use of manure for soil fertility.\textsuperscript{44}

**NEED FOR MORE RESEARCH ON WOMEN IN RURAL VALUE CHAINS**

Any discussion of the economic intersection between agriculture and livestock production should note that while pastoralist women often play very distinctive roles in producing and selling animal products, there has been very little analysis conducted on their economic role in the context of conflict. The disruption of trade and marketing caused by conflict between farmers and pastoralists disproportionately affects women from pastoral and farming communities due to their direct role in buying and selling farm products.\textsuperscript{45} Women play a key role in household economic production so they are directly impacted by damaged fields and especially the disruption of market activities. The loss of dairy product marketing (milk and cheese) among pastoralist women has been of particular concern given the limited options their households possess to ensure their food security in times of crisis and displacement.\textsuperscript{46} Despite the recognition of the impact of conflict, little has still been written about the distinctive economic role of women in the relationship between pastoralists and farmers.


\textsuperscript{40} Takana, Rahim, and Mohamed Adam, \textit{Darfur Pastoralists Groups: New Opportunities for Change and Peace Building}.

\textsuperscript{41} Higazi and Yousuf, \textit{From cooperation to contention: Political unsettlement and farmer-pastoralist conflicts in Nigeria}.


\textsuperscript{44} Marie J. Ducrotoy et al., «Patterns of passage into protected areas: Drivers and outcomes of Fulani immigration, settlement and integration into the Kachia Grazing Reserve, northwest Nigeria.» \textit{Pastoralism} 8, no. 1 (2018); Patrick Dugué et al., «Evolution des relations entre l’agriculture et l’élevage dans les savanes d’Afrique de l’Ouest et du Centre: un nouveau cadre d’analyse pour améliorer les modes d’intervention et favoriser les processus d’innovation.» \textit{Oléagineux Corps gras Lipides} 11, no. 4-5 (2004); Guillaume Duteurtre and A Atteyeh, «Le lait à Moundou, témoin de l’intégration marchande des systèmes pastoraux au sud du Tchad.» \textit{Revue d’élevage et de médecine vétérinaire des pays tropicaux} 53, no. 3 (2000).


\textsuperscript{46} Nikola Rass, \textit{Policies and strategies to address the vulnerability of pastoralists in sub-Saharan Africa.} (Rome: Food and Agriculture Organization, 2006). (in Central Africa, see: Ankogui-Mpoko et al., «Insécurité, mobilité et migration des éleveurs dans les savanes d’Afrique centrale.»)
However, the relationship between sedentary farmers and pastoralist herders has long been characterized by both complementarity and conflict.47 Farmers, for example, occasionally put their fields (sometimes intentionally) in established livestock corridors, leaving herders feeling marginalized.48 Furthermore, uncompensated crop damage by livestock creates grievances among farmers, who tend to perceive pastoralists as wealthier than they are.49 These situations can result in acute violence, but can also be characterized by a high degree of latent conflict involving long-standing struggles over the inadequate systems of resource tenure — wherein farmers often hold direct control over land resources and many pastoralists have to access resources through secondary rights.50 While these longstanding tensions over resources remain, substantial shifts in the way rural livelihoods are practiced have also changed the dynamic between resource users.

At its core, pastoralism is a dynamic and adaptive livelihood strategy, and the practice continues to evolve to respond to new pressures and market opportunities. Various studies51 have highlighted the ways in which pastoralism is evolving and may no longer look the same as it has in the past — see cases ranging from Nigeria52 to Burkina Faso53 to Benin.54 In some cases, these adaptations have radically reshaped the interplay between crop and livestock production, and the relationships between pastoralists and farmers. In terms of conflict dynamics, two of the most significant adaptation strategies have been sedentarization — the transition from a mobile to a settled lifestyle — and diversification — the adoption of new livelihood practices. These strategies can increase competition for control of land and degrade the traditional symbiosis between farmers and pastoralists who share resources.

Growing cities and the need to be closer to urban markets affect decisions around crop and livestock production, and this need has driven some pastoralists to settle down to augment their livestock husbandry with crop production and commerce.55 This process of sedentarization can enmesh pastoralists into new commercial and political networks that defy the way they have con-
ventionally been described. While in some cases, settlement can involve the transition from pastoralism to less mobile livestock production systems (like ranching), that is not always the case. Even settled pastoralists may continue to send their animals on transhumance, which can increase the need to hire herders and complicate resource access in distant areas; all of which can contribute to conflicts, including with other pastoralists.

As some pastoralist households settle permanently, the need to ensure access to grazing resources can also lead to increasingly exclusive arrangements for managing and even purchasing land, which may contravene customary tenure relations. This trend is one part of a larger, continent-wide pattern of privatization that has been described as exacerbating tensions over the control of land resources. The increasing private acquisition and development of rangelands can further restrict the available space for pastoralists to migrate and graze their herds. Some analysts particularly highlight the adverse impact of the privatization of wetlands, which are a critical grazing resource for livestock during dry seasons and times of drought. This trend has been observed in Sudan and throughout the Sahel.

Relatedly, market demands, climate change, and other forces have driven pastoralists and farmers alike to diversify their livelihoods, including by practicing a mix of both crop and livestock production. It has been credibly argued by some that livelihood convergence – farmers raising livestock and pastoralists settling to cultivate farmland – increases the risk of local conflict as each group increases its demands for the same land resources. In Burkina Faso, for example, some pastoralist groups have contributed to agricultural expansion when settling down to cultivate, which has incited conflict with sedentary groups. Furthermore, they tend to settle in pastoral corridors, which block their use by other pastoralists and create another source of conflict.

One of the direct and oft-cited examples of how livelihood convergence leads to conflict is the loss of the manure contract – the understanding that pastoralists’ livestock would fertilize farmers’ harvested fields in exchange for the rights to graze remaining crop residue. Since at least the 1980s, farmers began excluding pastoralists from their fields as they acquired their own livestock. One study supported by the Forum on Farmer-Herder Relations in Nigeria in 2019, for example, highlights how some farmers in Adamawa state have been burning their post-harvest crop residue to discourage herders from grazing on their lands.

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59 Berry, *Who owns the land? Social relations and conflict over resources in Africa."
60 Mustafa Babiker, “Resource Competition and Conflict_Herder/Farmer or Pastoralism/Agriculture?”
Although this change has clearly strained farmer-herder relations in certain localities, this type of interdependence is not universal across the Sudano-Sahel. Manure contracts are largely limited to semi-arid zones with sandy soils and therefore cannot explain pastoral conflicts in the sub-humid zones, where such contracts have never existed on a large scale (see Figure 3). Livelihood convergence may not be sparking a shift from symbiosis to competition in such cases. In sub-humid areas south of the Sudano-Sahel, including the coastal countries of West Africa, certain studies attribute conflict to the very absence of such productive complementarity and accompanying social relations (as well as the relatively recent arrival of Fulani herders).^{66}

Analysts have also noted social stressors that adversely impact the interconnection between nomadic and host communities. The lack of local hosts for transhumant pastoralists in coastal countries or a common language to address minor disputes between pastoralists and farmers have been cited as causes for the escalation of conflicts.^{67} Similarly, in northern Ghana, Tonah describes how village elites, especially chiefs and land owners, tend to maintain good relations with herders while less powerful community members, including youth and non-stock owning farmers, are hostile to their presence.^{68} However, these examples are not indicative of a universal breakdown in host-nomad relationships across the Sudano-Sahel. Research in Mali, for example, has found that even young herders with few obvious social ties along their migration routes will make friends, seek hosts, and find clients where they hope to sojourn or otherwise graze their cattle.^{69}

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^{67} Michel Ange, Bekpu Kinhou, and Sinsin Brice, “Transhumance et conflicts management on Agonlin plateau in Zou department (Benin),” *Journal of Biodiversity and Environmental Sciences (JBES)* 4, no. 5 (2014).


^{69} Leif Brottem, “Hosts, strangers and the tenure politics of livestock corridors in Mali,” *Africa* 84, no. 4 (2014).
The absence of social and economic interdependence may also be a factor in conflict between pastoral communities themselves. This has been the underlying logic for some peacebuilding interventions in the contested Abyei Administrative Area, where there have been ongoing struggles between the Ngok Dinka and Misseriya over the sharing of grazing land, water, and market access. While these communities were intentionally separated by a line of disengagement by peacekeeping forces in 2013, various initiatives were supported to create regular economic interaction, including the establishment of the Amiet “peace market” in 2016.

The success of peace markets and other interventions to support economic integration, though, is still a point of contention within scholarship. A 2020 assessment conducted by Search for Common Ground found that while respondents in Abyei felt that violence in the region writ large was trending upward, they believed that migration-related resource conflicts specifically were being handled more peacefully than the previous years. Critics, however, have noted that the kinds of interactions happening in markets like Amiet are only possible because of security guarantees negotiated by political actors and thus may be an effect rather than a cause of stability.

Overall, further research is needed to examine whether increasing economic integration would decrease pastoralism-related conflict. There is, though, some evidence that integrated systems may be more resilient to conflict than strict separation between communities. In one 2006 comparison study, Dafinger and Pelican argue that Burkina Faso’s vision of shared, integrated landscapes has caused “permanent but low-level” conflict, while in Cameroon, a legal system of strict territorial separation between herding and farming has led to more violent conflict between the two groups.

ERODING SOCIAL RELATIONS

Across the Sudano-Sahel, social relations and especially group membership determine one’s access to resources, which translate into situations in which exclusionary identity politics play a prominent role in conflict dynamics. The practice of portraying mobile pastoralists as cohesive groups of strangers has long been and continues to be an important basis for their exclusion and expulsion during periods of conflict escalation. Mobility-based livelihoods practiced by many pastoralists create social and political distance from sedentary host communities. Avoiding village politics – except to maintain good relations with hosts – has historically been advantageous for pastoralists who depended on flexible and seasonal resource access rather than territorial control. However, under conditions of increasing resource competition, this
social and political distance can shift towards mutual intimidation, and, in times of crisis, become a more hostile “foreigner”, ethnicized discourse. 

This dynamic is not universal across the region but appears particularly in contexts in which there is a seasonal influx of livestock from outside the country. Sources in this review highlight this discourse not only in conflict-affected countries such as the CAR and Nigeria but also in comparatively stable countries such as Ghana. In the CAR, for example, this exclusionary discourse has been applied to pastoralists who come from or are connected to Arabic herding communities in Chad or Sudan. As both a sender and receiver of “foreign” livestock herds, this is also a particular point of tension in Nigeria. Transhumant pastoralists in Nigeria originating from Sahelian countries, including Burkina Faso, Mali, and Niger, have been implicated in violent altercations. But Nigerian herds also increasingly cross into coastal countries, including Benin and Togo, where they are involved in conflicts and whose residents readily deploy the “foreign invasion” discourse. Ironically, Benin and Togo attract Nigerian herders because they are safer, particularly from cattle rustlers, than in Nigeria.

Even in lands where pastoralist ethnic populations have long been settled, they can still be treated in both policy and public discourse as “foreign” and subject to exclusion or violence. Amadou highlights how the Mbororo in the CAR who had maintained a presence in the country for decades were intentionally targeted in violent or criminal acts beginning in the 1990s. In Nigeria, this dynamic can be substantially shaped by accordance of certain rights and privileges based on indigeneity – whether or not someone belongs to a community by birth or ancestry. Indigeneity laws can result in situations in which ethnic Fulani herders face legal barriers to resource access because they are frequently not considered to be indigenes.

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81 Oppong, *Moving through and passing on: Fulani mobility, survival and identity in Ghana.
84 Leonhardt, *Regional Policies and Response to Manage Pastoral Movements within the ECOWAS Region.*
85 The Mbororo are a predominately pastoralist ethnic group related to the Fulani, who primarily reside in Cameroon, CAR, Chad, and DRC.
86 Amadou, “Bonee and Fitina: Mbororo Nomads Facing and Adapting to Conflict in Central Africa.”
SECTION II
Governance, Law, and Dispute Resolution

Across the sources in this review, the governance of rural communities is widely and frequently associated with conflict involving pastoralists. Some have noted that conflicts may escalate in frequency or severity due to limitations in local capacity to address resource disputes or crime. However, various analysts have also argued that resource conflicts have been exacerbated by rural development policies that privilege or marginalize one community or another. Specifically, there is a pervasive contention that pastoralist communities have long been marginalized by institutions and policies that do not serve their interests or support their livelihoods, and this marginalization is the epicenter of these conflicts.88

This Section focuses on:

- How have policies governing livestock mobility, land tenure, and resource access affected conflict dynamics among rural communities?
- What are the key sources of tension between pastoralists and state authorities or governing institutions?
- Why are conflicts not being addressed through existing customary or statutory mechanisms?

Any discussion on the role of state institutions and policies should acknowledge that there are fundamental tensions over the role of the state in controlling the rural periphery. As Moritz describes, constructively addressing the governance of pastoralism means reconsidering “the dichotomy between what Meir has labeled the centripetal forces of the state and the centrifugal forces of nomadic pastoralists (Meir, 1988), in which ‘states’ seek the encapsulation of nomadic pastoralists, while the latter seek to maintain their autonomy.”89 In other words, we should not assume that the issue at question is solely whether or not state institutions have the necessary capacity or the most equitable policies for resolving resource conflicts or administering the rangelands in which pastoralists operate.

Policy-oriented analyses often frame resource conflicts as amenable to more inclusive governance that state actors could provide as long as they reform their policies and enhance their capacity.90 However, interventions that work through public institutions in places where certain groups have been marginalized or have low levels of trust in the institutions can risk reinforcing the same drivers of conflict that these interventions are trying to transform. In terms of both security and rural development, scholars have argued that foreign assistance may be worsening the crisis by enabling governments to avoid meaningful reforms91 or to continue perpetuating predatory policies.92 This argument has been made regarding elite politics in Mali,93 sub-national administration in the Central African Republic,94 and the micropolitics of everyday law enforcement in Cameroon.95

**REVIEW OF REGIONAL AND NATIONAL POLICIES**

Historically, as non-sedentary populations and the dominant pre-colonial political power in many places, pastoral groups of the Sudano-Sahel fell under the suspicion of colonial administrators seeking to establish control over territory and political subjects. Colonial-era laws and policies that were inimical to pastoral livelihoods, such as land tenure regimes that excluded them, ensured that many pastoral communities and individuals operated on the margins of the law. This trend continued through the 1970s and 1980s, as various economic, political, and ecological crises perpetuated the marginalization of pastoral communities and the hinterland regions they tended to inhabit.

Around the turn of the 21st century, a growing number of national governments and regional institutions began to express support for the legitimacy of pastoral mobility as a dryland production system and livelihood, and established laws and policies aiming to protect pastoral mobility and resource access. These measures typically include some mix of the following provisions: corridors to promote livestock mobility, regulations for the movement of cattle across borders, land use planning, and some pastoralism-oriented legal reforms. Taken together, these various laws and strategies represent greater consideration of the needs of pastoral communities than in decades past. At a multilateral level this trend has culminated in documents like the African Union’s 2010 Policy Framework for Pastoralism in Africa, and the Declarations of N’Djamena (2013) and Nouakchott (2013) that are intended to promote a shared commitment to supporting pastoral livelihoods. However, the existing approaches are geographically uneven, as each country and region relies on different policies and practices, despite the fact that livestock movement frequently crosses borders and has been cited as a key driver of regional economic and political integration.

At a regional level, West African countries have enacted the most wide-reaching laws and policies concerning pastoralism and transhumance, beginning with the 1998 Transhumance Protocol developed by the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) that called for the formal management of transboundary livestock movements between member states. Each of the countries in Sudano-Sahelian West Africa has ratified laws that provide some recognition of pastoral mobility and resource rights, which represents an important break from older policies that imposed strong state control over land tenure and

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mobility. In Central Africa, cross-border transhumance is regulated by a less-formalized system through the Central African Economic and Monetary Community, though there has been some interest in developing a protocol comparable to ECOWAS. In East Africa, a regional framework on transhumance has been drafted for the members of the Intergovernmental Agency on Development (IGAD), but has not been officially ratified or reflected in national level legislation.

Regional and bilateral agreements have been a growing conflict management priority as borderlands – including the Liptako-Gourma region (Burkina-Niger-Mali), Lake Chad, and the disputed areas between Sudan and South Sudan – are key sites of this nexus between armed insurgency, criminality, and pastoralism. Borders become an important vector of pastoral resource conflict because seasonal migrations frequently cross borders, especially as pastoralists increasingly rely on sub-humid destinations. Crossing borders can make pastoralists vulnerable to extortion and scapegoating, as it changes their political status and rights. The establishment of the border between Sudan and South Sudan, for example, cut through existing livestock migration routes, separating pastoralists living north of the border from favored dry season pastures south of the border, which has become a potential source of tension during each migration season.

While regional and bilateral agreements represent steps toward resolving tensions over cross-border movement, the implementation of any such regional framework largely falls on individual states. Across the region, national legislation around pastoralism remains varied. Some states explicitly outline protection for resource rights for pastoralists, including recognizing mobility as a right. Other states maintain legislation that is hostile or unsupportive of pastoral mobility or the customary rights that pastoralists have relied on. And still others maintain policies that vary at the state or local level. The textbox below briefly summarizes some of the distinct elements of different national legislation.

104 As of July 2020.
106 Alidou, “Couloirs de transhumance transfrontalière en l’Afrique de l’Ouest.”
107 Davies et al., Crossing Boundaries: Legal and Policy Arrangements for Cross-Border Pastoralism.
National Pastoral Legislation

Legislation from Past Eras – As noted above, many laws and policies were initially developed during colonial and post-independence eras and were not designed to support pastoral livelihoods. In some cases, these laws have persisted to the present without being replaced by new legislation, despite the emergence of various regional frameworks and statements that reflect a new set of norms about pastoralism. In Chad, no national legislation dealing with pastoralism has been approved since the post-independence period; a Pastoral Code was passed by Parliament in 2014 but was blocked by the government.109

Mobility as a Right – Some states have established pastoral mobility as a fundamental right, which may ensure more formal legal protection for customary rights and practices. Niger’s 2010 pastoral code, for example, explicitly recognizes mobility as a fundamental right, building on the Rural Code of 1993 that supported pastoral tenure rights by elevating customary systems to the same legal status as statutory land property, which substantially strengthened pastoralists’ control of resources in their home areas (zone d’attache).110 Mali adopted a rights-based approach in its own 2001 pastoral charter, though implementation through local governments has been uneven and dependent on customary land tenure relations.111 In Sudan, the protection of livestock corridors and cross-border mobility is specifically referenced in the Darfur Peace Agreement (2006) and the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (2005), but these agreements have not necessarily provided a clear and robust framework to support these protections in practice.112

Additional Forms of Support – In addition to outlining rights for mobility or land use, some laws and policies outline specific provisions for investing in pastoral livelihoods and infrastructure. Burkina Faso, for example, adopted a more technocratic approach compared to its Sahelian neighbors, focusing on integrated land use planning that includes novel provisions for the establishment of pastoral grazing reserves.113

Sub-National Regulation – Although Nigeria is a party to the ECOWAS transhumance protocol, its legal approach to pastoralism has differed from its Francophone neighbors. There is no national law or framework for implementing the ECOWAS protocol — though a provision in its national constitution of 1999 that recognizes the free movement of people — and many of the key conditions are often not enforced in practice.114 Land rights, however, are controlled at the state or local council level, and at least four states (Ekiti, Edo, Benue and Taraba) have enacted laws restricting open-grazing in 2016 and 2017.115 In 2019, the federal government launched a ten-year National Livestock Transformation Plan, which focuses on modernization and intensification rather than supporting pastoral production systems.

*More in-depth summaries of national legislation and cross-border agreements on transhumance have already been compiled by other authors.*116

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111 Brottem, “Hosts, strangers and the tenure politics of livestock corridors in Mali.”
112 Young, Pastoralism in Practice: Monitoring Livestock Mobility. Craze, Dividing lines: Grazing and conflict along the Sudan-South Sudan border.
114 Leonhardt, Regional Policies and Response to Manage Pastoral Movements within the ECOWAS Region.
115 Kwaja and Ademola-Adelehin, The Implications of the Open Grazing Prohibition & Ranches Establishment Law on Farmer-Herder Relations in the Middle Belt of Nigeria.
Even where policies have been designed based on sound economic and agronomic rationales, they have not always been supported by the necessary investments or political will to work as intended. Though local governments have taken active measures to protect pastoral mobility through the establishment of transhumance corridors in Mali, these corridors require but rarely include local grazing reserves. In Burkina Faso, despite the successful establishment of pastoral areas, Sanou et al. describes the need for grazing reserves to be equipped with adequate and continuous water supply. These are just a few small examples of a more pervasive gap in rural governance across the Sudano-Sahel. Studies from countries such as Mali, the CAR, and South Sudan reveal that states across the region arguably appear to perform their functions more than actually execute them, often masking lack of capacity, legitimacy, and accountability.

**FLEXIBILITY AND TERRITORIAL CONTROL**

The design of pastoral legislation reflects a long-standing tension between the need to provide flexibility for mobile herds seeking resources that are variable in space and time and the need to regulate herd movements and access to territory. A frequent criticism of many existing policies is that they have been overly focused on controlling herd movements rather than promoting their flexibility. Promoting flexibility, generally speaking, would focus on reciprocal resource access and eschew strict territorial management. One example of this approach is Niger’s statutory recognition of home zones — lands where livestock spend the dry season after returning from periods of transhumance.

Flexibility, it should be noted, is more of an environmental necessity in some regions than in others. Semi-arid rangelands are subject to more ecological variability and may therefore require a more flexible approach than sub-humid areas that are more stable and where a large number of pastoral livestock spend the majority of the year. In these more stable sub-humid areas, it may be more appropriate to adopt regulations that are somewhat less variable, such as the territorial protection of grazing resources or the regulation of pastoral movements through livestock migration corridors, grazing zones, and entry/exit calendars.

have unforeseen or negative impacts on the relationships that govern access to shared resource access.\(^{129}\) **This can be a particular concern when the establishment of these systems is disconnected from the interests or concerns of affected communities.**\(^ {130}\)

- In Sudan, Egemi argues that because livestock corridors are seen as a way to reduce the risk of conflict through territorial separation, rather than as a way to facilitate resource access for pastoralists, corridors may be established without addressing the fundamental concerns of affected populations.\(^ {131}\)
- Burkina Faso’s pastoral laws, which call for a territorial approach, were designed in a top-down process that could undermine local control and erode the governance of resources it seeks to protect.
- In Nigeria, state legislation to establish “cattle colonies” and limit the open grazing of livestock was justified as a step to reduce farmer-herder conflict, but was met with strong resistance from farming communities.\(^ {132}\) Although grazing reserves have been part of Nigerian livestock management since 1965, their establishment in the current political climate has been fraught because they are perceived by sedentary farming communities to be land giveaways to Fulani pastoralists who sometimes have connections with urban elites.\(^ {133}\)

This is not to say that grazing reserves, livestock corridors, or other forms of territorial control are fundamentally anathema to the prevention of conflict. Further research is needed to assess whether and how these approaches to rural development may have positive effects on conflict dynamics, particularly when they are implemented as part of a holistic strategy with strong local buy-in. As just one example, SOS Sahel Sudan describes how the demarcation of corridors has contributed to the reduction of violent conflict in Sudan’s North and South Kordofan in part because those corridors were established and maintained by the local farming and herding communities themselves and complemented by efforts to mediate resource conflicts that occurred as a secondary effect of those corridors.\(^ {134}\)

**LOCAL CONFLICT MANAGEMENT**

When conflicts do erupt between pastoralists and other resource users, the systems for dealing with these conflicts are usually highly localized. Local traditional leaders (e.g., pastoralist leaders or “ardos”) are often the first responders to everyday resource disputes and can play a key role in both mediating conflicts and preventing their escalation.\(^ {135}\) Tribal leaders in Sudan operating within the official Native Administration, for example, have played a major role in regulating the timing or scale of pastoral movements to ensure that herds did not overwhelm local resources.\(^ {136}\) These kinds of flexible and adaptive practices can be

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131 Egemi, Pastoralist Peoples, Their Institutions and Related Policies.

132 Kwaja and Ademola-Adelehin, The Implications of the Open Grazing Prohibition & Ranches Establishment Law on Farmer-Herder Relations in the Middle Belt of Nigeria.

133 Ducrot et al., “Patterns of passage into protected areas: Drivers and outcomes of Fulani immigration, settlement and integration into the Kachia Grazing Reserve, northwest Nigeria.”

134 “Best Practice on Natural Resources Management, Lessons learnt from SOS Sahel Sudan on livestock corridor management” (unpublished manuscript; SOS Sudan Sahel).


particularly useful in dealing with pastoralism, which is a fundamentally dynamic practice. There are numerous examples from across the region of how the trajectory of conflicts involving pastoralist communities is differently shaped by the specific local mechanisms in place:

- In north-central Nigeria, Vinson observes that inter-communal violence can be avoided when local religious authorities agree to power sharing at the local level.¹³⁷ Vinson argues that informal power-sharing measures at the level of local government, in which political positions are divided or rotated between cultural groups, can explain why some communities face recurrent outbursts of violence while others do not.
- In an analysis of local responses to conflict in Lakes region in South Sudan, Ryle and Amoum describe the divergent trajectories of conflict between Eastern and Western Lakes States partly in terms of different responses by community leaders.¹³⁸ While both states experienced similar sources of conflict relating to cattle theft, the constructive response of community leaders in Eastern Lakes state allowed for a greater level of peace than in neighboring Western Lakes state.

As the comparison between Eastern and Western Lakes States illustrates, the efficacy of local systems can vary depending on the behavior, attitude, and capacity of local authorities. Local authorities can help prevent conflicts from escalating by eschewing exclusionary practices or language that cast conflicts explicitly in terms of religion, ethnicity, or foreignness.¹³⁹ However, analysts have also noted that the efficacy of local leaders in mediating conflict can also be diminished when they engage in blatant partisanship or self-serving behavior such as private land sales to community outsiders, which has been reported throughout the region.¹⁴⁰ As rural economies evolve and demand for land or animal products increases (see Section I), there are new opportunities for enrichment that may break down traditional institutions. A 2020 analysis by the UN Food and Agriculture Organization of the Liptako-Gourma region highlighted land sales and property speculation as a principal reason why traditional conflict resolution mechanisms have broken down in the area.¹⁴¹

**GENDER DIMENSIONS OF GOVERNANCE**

The reliance on traditional leaders or local systems can also present an acute risk to groups with less political power, including rural women. Under customary laws, women’s rights to manage land may be weak or nonexistent and they may have few opportunities for representation within existing resource management or conflict resolution institutions.¹⁴² Studies on the role of pastoralist women highlight that many still lack decision-making authority even within their own households.¹⁴³ Women can face disadvantages in both customary and statutory judicial systems, as Kircher argues in the case of South Sudan.¹⁴⁴

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¹³⁸ J. Ryle and Machot Amoum, *Peace is the Name of Our Cattle-Camp: Local responses to conflict in Eastern Lakes State, South Sudan*, (Nairobi: Rift Valley Institute, 2018).
In one study on responses to gender-based violence in the DRC, for example, Search found that only 39% of respondents thought that formal and customary judicial systems treat the male and female victims of violence equally.145

Despite these inequities, women do still play social and economic roles in leadership. In a review on the role of women in pastoral societies, Flintan cites examples across the Sahel for how pastoralist women have power within their households and rights within their communities that they use effectively to meet their households needs.146 Badejo describes how self-help groups led to positive empowerment changes for pastoralist women in Nigeria and Ibrahim argues that pastoralist women in Chad play dynamic, empowered roles in redefining Mbororo cultural identity.147 Women in pastoralist communities do in some cases form and participate in economic associations or cooperatives (as has been noted in Guinea148 and East Africa149). To a minor degree, women pastoralists have even begun organizing at an international level – best exemplified by the 2010 Mera Declaration of the Global Gathering of Women Pastoralists, which included participants from Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Mali, and Niger among others.

Local responses to conflict have also been critically shaped by the tension between customary and statutory systems. Since the colonial era, the authority of traditional leaders and institutions has been weakened or transformed in many parts of the Sudano-Sahel as states adopt land use policies that supersede customary practice or establish new governing authorities or institutions in rural areas. That expansion of state authority, though, does not mean that in practice individuals are turning to state officials to deal with conflicts. Studies from Niger and Cameroon have found that rural populations often prefer to work through interpersonal dispute resolution, rather than turning to officials.150 In the case of Chad, a longstanding system rooted in tribal law has remained an active channel for addressing pastoral conflicts because it acts as a buffer against the weakness and instability of national authorities.151 Despite the fact that this system in Chad has long been subject to local criticism, the official justice system may still be disregarded as inept or corrupt.152

The line between state and traditional law is not always clearly distinct. Many pastoral and farming communities operate within legally plural administrative systems, in which multiple sources of authority (including state and traditional authorities) exercise political power.153 At times, these authorities may even be merged, as some traditional leaders maintain officially recognized roles in local governance. In South Sudan, Ryle and Amoum describe how local chiefs were integrated into formal governance roles in both the colonial system and through later postcolonial governments, though their authority may be diminished.154 In Burkina Faso, though the Agrarian and Land Reform Act of 1984 officially superseded existing pastoral customary laws, later decentralization policies delegated authority over land management to local bodies, which may include traditional leaders.155

149 Flintan, Women’s Empowerment in Pastoral Societies.
152 Group, The Security Challenges of Pastoralism in Central Africa.
154 Ryle and Amoum, Peace is the Name of Our Cattle-Camp Local responses to conflict in Eastern Lakes State, South Sudan.
Statutory policies in several states – including Mali, Niger, and South Sudan – even officially legitimize customary rights and institutions.\textsuperscript{156}

In the best case, legal pluralism allows governance systems to be more context-sensitive and fosters constructive synergy between state and traditional authorities.\textsuperscript{157} Traditional authorities may serve as a credible first line of defense to mediate disputes or help to regulate community usage of resources, before turning to state authorities when enforcement is beyond their capacity.\textsuperscript{158} Functionally, customary institutions may be more accessible to citizens, particularly in peripheral rural areas. At the same time, there are inherent limitations to any traditional system. Among the western Dinka in South Sudan, for example, Pendle argues that traditional compensation mechanisms for acts of theft or homicide have broken down as elites have accumulated such large herds that the usual cattle payments no longer have the same impact.\textsuperscript{159} It has also been argued that customary modes of conflict resolution may immediately quell short-term risks for conflicts to escalate without providing for deeper reconciliation, which may allow long-standing intercommunal grievances to fester.\textsuperscript{160}

The existence of legally plural systems, however, also creates risks for conflict. Legal pluralism may give rise to political splintering and “forum shopping,” in which parties to conflict seek favor through competing centers of authority (e.g., a traditional chief and a mayor). This can be a particular risk for conflict when local authorities choose to manipulate or exploit conflict resolution mechanisms for their own gain.\textsuperscript{161} Forum shopping can reinforce the cycle of everyday corruption and conflict escalation that erodes local legitimacy.\textsuperscript{162} In Nigeria, contradictory laws on pastoral mobility and grazing has arguably worsened farmer-herder conflicts by giving each group a different legal basis for their grievances and actions.

Though some have hoped that tensions between competing legal systems could be resolved by devolving power from the center to the local level, various scholars have argued that decentralization can have secondary affects that contribute to conflict. In Sudan, Siddig et. al. makes the case that devolution of authority has contributed to resource conflicts by undermining customary land tenure institutions.\textsuperscript{163} In Mali, Benjamin and Ba argue that democratic decentralization has created a power vacuum that worsened the problem of agricultural encroachment into areas historically used for pastoralism.\textsuperscript{164} During the 1990s, traditional, unelected Fulani elites in central Mali co-opted the country’s process of democratic decentralization to retain their positions of power, which contributed to the rise of the current militia-base rebellion as marginalized groups were shut out of a reform process that ostensibly should have included them.\textsuperscript{165} Dowd and Tranchant similarly argue that political devolution increases the probability of militia-based violence in Mali and Nigeria.\textsuperscript{166}

\begin{itemize}
  \item[\textsuperscript{156}] See the Niger's Rural Land Code (1993), Mali’s Pastoral Charter (2001), and the South Sudan's Land Act (2009).
  \item[\textsuperscript{159}] N. Pendle, "The dead are just to drink from: recycling ideas of revenge among the western Dinka, South Sudan," Africa 88, 1 (2018): 99-121.
  \item[\textsuperscript{160}] Ladiba Gondeu, Valeurs républicaines et vivre-ensemble au Tchad: Appartenances religieuses (L'Harmattan, 2020).
  \item[\textsuperscript{162}] Moritz, “Understanding Herder-Farmer Conflicts in West Africa: Outline of a Processual Approach.”
  \item[\textsuperscript{163}] El Farith Ali Siddig, Khalid El-Harizi, and Bettina Prato, Managing Conflict Over Natural Resources in Greater Kordofan, Sudan: Some Recurrent Patterns and Governance Implications, (Washington, DC: International Food Research Institute, 2007).
  \item[\textsuperscript{164}] Benjamin and Ba, “Farmer-Herder Conflicts, Pastoral Marginalisation and Corruption: A Case Study from the Inland Niger Delta of Mali.”
  \item[\textsuperscript{166}] Caitriona Dowd and Jean-Pierre Tranchant, Decentralisation, Devolution, and Dynamics of Violence in Africa (IDS, 2018).
\end{itemize}
PREDATORY PRACTICES AND MARGINALIZATION

Control over resources and resource access can also be manipulated by actors in positions of authority, fueling anti-state grievances and aggravating resource competition. There is an important distinction herein between institutions that seek to govern inclusively but lack the resources to do so and state actors that consistently target rural resource users to extract financial or political gain, the latter of which is the focus of this sub-section. This issue is significant beyond its impact on individual pastoralists, as the participation of pastoralists in insurgent groups may in some cases be a direct result of their experience of past marginalization and the everyday predatory behavior of state agents, as Benjaminsen and Ba argue in the case of Mali (see also Section III). 167 It is worth reiterating that pastoralists are not a homogenous population, and pastoralist elites – including those livestock owners who are sedentary and hire others to take their livestock on transhumance – may have a different experience of predation.

Examples of predatory practices that specifically target pastoralist communities or resource management abound across the region. These behaviors range from border posts where fees are collected to excessive fines or punishment to physical violence in response to real or fabricated acts of resource law violations, including illegal grazing and tree branch cutting. 168 Past studies on Mali 169 and Cameroon 170 even show that local and district authorities often profit financially from their role in conflict mediation (e.g., through bribery), which can transform everyday disputes into examples of state-sanctioned injustice. An act of crop damage can take on much greater significance in the way it is handled.

Failure to adequately and impartially administer justice can fuel cycles of violence. Between 2017 and 2018 in Nigeria, pastoralist associations claimed that officials failed to make arrests in response to the killings of 1,000 pastoralists and theft of 2 million cattle. 171 In one such case in Adamawa state, the failure of a state investigative panel to respond to an attack by local Bachama youth militias resulted in a series of reprisal attacks against Bachama villages. 172 The absence of accountability in cases of cattle theft in South Sudan has similarly been cited as a source of reprisal violence, as individuals take justice into their own hands. 173 Such injustice can become a recurrent, structural element of local politics with the potential to cause sudden outbreaks of violent conflict, as noted by some scholars in the case of Ghana. 174 Similarly, as the military and other security agencies have become more active in addressing conflicts involving pastoralists in Nigeria, human rights advocates have noted with concern the prevalent use of abusive tactics. 175 The heavily militarized response in some parts of Nigeria has been criticized for potentially undermining community trust in the state system, further increasing the risks that conflicts will escalate. 176

169 Benjaminsen and Ba, “Farmer-Herder Conflicts, Pastoral Marginalisation and Corruption: A Case Study from the Inland Niger Delta of Mali.”
170 Moritz, “Changing Contexts and Dynamics of Farmer–Herder Conflicts across West Africa.”
172 Ibid.
173 Ryle and Amoum, Peace is the Name of Our Cattle-Camp Local responses to conflict in Eastern Lakes State, South Sudan.
In addition to more direct forms of corruption, other governance practices may be perceived as exploitative and reinforce grievances against authorities. The legitimacy of local governments in the eyes of pastoralists can be undermined when officials are seen to capture rents from passing livestock through taxation—legal or otherwise—without necessarily investing in pastoral infrastructure or resource management. Similarly, real or perceived complicity between political elites and the state agents who prey on pastoralists aggravates these tensions and the likelihood that young pastoralists will side with non-state armed groups that attempt to legitimize their actions through calls for justice and equality. In the face of these trends, pastoralists have often lacked the political power needed to ensure the protection of pastoral resources through the enforcement of existing laws or other means. While various civil society groups have emerged across the region to advocate for the collective interest of pastoralist communities, these groups do not always possess the necessary technical capacity or may have been co-opted by elites.

**SECTION III**

“New Fringe Pastoralism”

The intersection between pastoralist populations and organized violence has been an essential source of debate within existing literature and policy discourse. As expressed by the UN Economic Commission for Africa, this debate generally centers around the “small number of pastoralists who have become increasingly involved in… illegal international migration, human trafficking and trading in arms, drugs and contraband… [and] insurgencies and transnational religious extremism or indirectly facilitate the activities of these groups.” The major point of contention is the extent to which this phenomenon—which UNECA labels “new fringe pastoralism”—should inform policies toward pastoralism and pastoralist ethnic groups broadly.

The real or perceived involvement of pastoralists in illicit activity or insurgency has a critical impact on exclusionary identity politics. In the CAR and northern DRC, pastoralists’ participation in or support for armed groups has been noted as source of tension between host communities and pastoralist ethnic groups, and serves as part of the justification for militia violence against the Mbororo. In the Sahel, framing state responses to conflict in a counter-terrorism lens (which may be seen as a tactic to invalidate political grievances) has been argued to further deepen pastoralist distrust of the state. Concerns that pastoralists will serve as vectors of violence or criminal activity have contributed to the hardening of borders and thus further marginalization of pastoralists.

One challenge in analyzing this phenomenon is that “new fringe pastoralism” encompasses both ideologically-motivated violence and criminal activity, as the lines between the two can often been obscured. Groups and individuals operate in both

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177 Bonnet and Hérault, “Governance of pastoral tenure and climate change in the Sahel. Reinforce capacities of actors to secure mobility and fair access to pastoral resources.”
179 Hesse and Thébaud, Will pastoral legislation disempower pastoralists in the Sahel?, Egemi, Pastoralist Peoples, Their Institutions and Related Policies.
182 This term is intended to distinguish this small number of “fringe” actors from the majority of pastoralists and situate their practices as a “new” way of practicing pastoralism that diverges from tradition.
183 The Security Challenges of Pastoralism in Central Africa.
spheres, either simultaneously or concurrently, as exemplified in Nigeria, the CAR, and Mali. The reasons for participation in “new fringe pastoralism” are often equally blurred between political grievances, criminal opportunism, and self-protection, as will be explored in this Section.

This Section focuses on three key points:

- What is the link between pastoralism and ideologically-motivated insurgent movements?
- How have insurgent groups and organized criminal networks affected the behavior of pastoralists writ large, and their relationship with host communities?

**GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE**

Across the region, there have been some reports that pastoralism-related conflicts are intimately linked to gender-based violence (GBV). In South Sudan, for example, Kircher argues that GBV is inherently linked to systems of polygamous marriage and bridewealth that is paid in livestock and which has been an incentivizing factor in cattle raiding, though she notes the dearth of research on the subject. Similarly, a 2018 study from Search in Adamawa, Gombe, and Plateau states in Nigeria identified reported cases in which women were victims of GBV specifically in the context of cycles of retaliatory violence between pastoralist and farming communities. A separate study by Search in northern CAR also found local reports of sexual assault committed by pastoralists. These studies, however, rely on anecdotal evidence, and further research is needed to verify and understand the possible links between GBV and pastoralism-related conflicts.

**EXTREMISM AND INSURGENCY**

Scholarly and policy narratives on the role of pastoralists in insurgencies are often split between one narrative that represents pastoralists, especially ethnic Fulani, as religiously-motivated terrorists and another that portrays these insurgencies as an outcome of pastoralist marginalization from mainstream politics. Section II of this review outlines some of the reasons that are often cited for why pastoralist populations may maintain political grievances, but to what extent have pastoralists become involved in extremism or insurgent activity? While individual pastoralists may join one or another insurgent group for a variety of personal motivations, this sub-section focuses on the perceived systemic link between the ethno-religious identity of some pastoralist groups and insurgent violence.

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189 Kircher, *Challenges to security, livelihoods, and gender justice in South Sudan: The situation of Dinka agro-pastoralist communities in Lakes and Warrap States.*
Various insurgent movements have built support by appealing to pastoralist grievances or ethno-religious identity, from the Katiba Macina in central Mali to the Islamic State in the Greater Sahara in the Liptako Gourma region to the Unité pour la paix en Centrafrique (UPC) in the CAR. The ideology of the Katiba Macina, for example, is deeply rooted in Fulani grievances concerning the erosion of pastoral resource access in the inland delta region and the marginalization of pastoral communities from national political power and administration. A principal part of the group's platform is free access to the rich grazing resources of the inland Niger Delta, which had become subject to extortionary fees in recent years. These appeals have resonated among Fulani pastoralists, who make up a significant portion of the group's membership.

Despite the importance of ethnic identity or specific livelihood grievances among certain insurgent movements, some sources have raised concerns that this link has been overinflated or misconstrued. One prominent example is the oft-cited statistic that “Fulani militants” were the fourth deadliest terrorist organization in the world in 2014, according to the Global Terrorism Index. Though widely cited in media, this claim has been criticized for lumping together data from attacks that were not verifiably connected to a unified group or agenda. This is one piece of a broader trend in framing a range of violence involving Fulani communities as part of an organized movement, even where that may not be the case.

The participation of Fulani communities in both organized insurgencies and intercommunal violence in West Africa is portrayed in some public and policy discourse as a step toward “Fulanization” or “Islamicization,” rather than a function of resource competition or socio-political grievances. While pastoralist ethnic groups are generally a demographic minority on a national scale, some populations — notably the Fulani — constitute an influential demographic power in certain regions. In northern Nigeria, Hausa-Fulani elites associated with pastoralism have historically held dominant socio-political positions over sedentary farming groups. These power dynamics have historic roots in the political legacy of Islamic conquests of the Sahel and northern Nigeria in the 19th century that inform current conflict dynamics. In Mali, for example, the tensions between traditional Fulani ruling elites and subordinate groups have been identified by various scholars as an important root cause of the insurgency in the central part of the country.

As argued by Chukwuma, the narrative of “Fulanization” de-links pastoralism-related conflicts from other causal factors (such as those outlined in Sections I and II), and creates a public perception of Fulani pastoralists as an objective security threat. This perception has led to an increase in anti-Fulani sentiment in some corners, and may, in turn, bolster Fulani ethnic solidarity, which can be instrumentalized in discourses on conflict. In the CAR, de Vries highlights how self-defense militias that were originally organized to protect against bandit groups (who included Chadian and Central African Mbororo members), began more widely targeting Muslim and Mbororo populations who were seen to be guilty by association. As a result, a greater number of pastoralists may be drawn into militia-based violence out of the need for self-protection or intercommunal retribution.

RELIGIOUS MOTIVATIONS IN NIGERIA?

In Nigeria, conflicts between pastoralists and farmers frequently manifest across religious lines (between Muslim pastoralists and Christian farmers) leading some to identify religious motivations as a causal factor. Among policymakers and public observers, there has been some debate as to whether violence between pastoralists and farmers is one part of a persecution of Christians or “Islamization,” particularly in the Middle Belt. Across the sources in this review, there is broad consensus that while religious divisions are a contributing source of conflict between pastoralist and non-pastoralist ethnic groups, they are not the sole or primary cause. Research conducted by Mercy Corps in Plateau state from 2014-2016, for example, found that most religion was not identified by respondents to be a primary cause of conflict, but that ethnic and religious divisions were seen to contribute to a general environment of conflict. Similarly, an evaluation of Search for Common Ground programming in the Middle Belt rated the relationship between Muslims and Christians more positively than the relationship between farmers and pastoralists, suggesting that conflict between these groups was not necessarily synonymous with interreligious conflict.

SELF-PROTECTION

While some “new fringe pastoralist” activity is a response to ideological motivations, some sources highlight that the participation of pastoralists in illicit and insurgent activity is also driven by the need for protection and security. This may include protection from intercommunal violence but also from theft or exploitation of pastoralist livelihoods. As livestock are a major source

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204 Chukwuma, “Constructing the Herder–Farmer Conflict as (in)Security in Nigeria.”
206 de Vries, “Navigating violence and exclusion: The Mbororo’s claim to the Central African Republic’s margins.”
of wealth in rural areas, cattle theft is an ever-present risk and is perpetuated by actors ranging from young pastoralists looking for quick cash to highly-organized criminal operations and armed groups. While cattle theft is not an inherently new phenomenon, cattle raiding practices in some regions have increased in frequency or intensity as it is a lucrative source of income for non-state armed groups:

- In the CAR, livestock markets have been a prime target for armed groups, particularly in the border regions near Chad and Sudan that have suffered from endemic violence. The International Peace Information Service (IPIS) estimated that ex-Seleka rebel groups earn 3.6 million euros per year through extra-legal and extortionary taxation on flows of livestock.
- In Mali, fighting has been reported between the Katiba Maacina and members of the Islamic State of Greater Sahara (ISGS) over control of resources and the right to impose the traditional Islamic tax, the zakat, on livestock herds in the area. Pastoralists in certain regions have historically paid tribute to local traditional authorities via the zakat in exchange for protection, resource access, and conflict mediation. It has been reported that armed groups have also tried to co-opt zakat payments in the CAR (where it was replaced by a payment called the sofaal).
- In northern Nigeria, the massive growth of cattle rustling within the last decade has become a major threat to pastoralist livelihoods and has been reported as a lucrative source of funding for Boko Haram and criminal groups.

Pastoralists can be particularly vulnerable to exploitation as transhumance routes frequently cross dryland borders where state presence has diminished with the rise of various insurgent groups. Insecurity along the Chad-CAR border, for example, has impacted pastoral mobility by making long-distance transhumance dangerous and expensive. Due to the need to move safely through these spaces, pastoralists sometimes avoid the legally-recognized migration corridors that are surveilled by armed groups and adopt other routes, which has reportedly led to an increased frequency of crop damage.

212 Catley, Livestock and livelihoods in South Sudan; Guillaume Duteurtre and Bernard Faye, L’èlevage, richesse des pauvres (Versailles (France): Quæ, 2009); The Economic Costs of Conflict and the Benefits of Peace: Effects of Farmer-Pastoralist Conflict in Nigeria’s Middle Belt on Households, (Portland: Mercy Corps, 2015).
216 International Crisis Group, Speaking with the bad guys: toward dialogue with Central Mali’s jihadists. Rupesinghe and Boäs, Local Drivers of Violent Extremism in Central Mali; Thiam, “Centre du Mali: enjeux et dangers d’une crise négligée.”
219 Charline Range, Boko Haram, révélateur des insécurités foncières au lac Tchad (Cameroon)?, (Paris: Institut de Recherche pour le Développement, 2018); Walther and Miles, African Border Disorders: Addressing Transnational Extremist Organizations.
220 Tomery, “Analyse de la dimension transfrontalière des conflits ruraux dans l’Est de la République Centrafricaine.”
221 Catley, Livestock and livelihoods in South Sudan; Iflat Idris, Livestock and Conflict in South Sudan (Brighton, UK: Institute of Development Studies, 2018).
### MOVEMENT THROUGH PROTECTED LAND

The Chad-Central African border also implicates land designated for conservation in pastoral conflict as both sites of contested resource access and as “ungoverned spaces” where state authority is weak or non-existent.\(^{222}\) In the border regions connecting the CAR, DRC, and South Sudan, resource pressure and security threats increasingly force herders to rely on resources found within protected areas.\(^{223}\) Whether or not a herder camping inside a protected forest is engaged in a crime or not, he is assumed by many to be doing so simply based on where he resides. The movement of pastoralists into protected land is often seen in a particularly negative light by conservation actors because the influx of livestock herds has been cited as a cause of ecological degradation and adverse impacts on endangered wildlife populations.\(^{224}\) The movement of pastoralists in protected land has been cited as a source of conflict in studies on Nigeria,\(^{225}\) Cameroon,\(^{226}\) and Central Africa.\(^{227}\)

Additionally, the need for protection informs pastoralists’ relationships with insurgent and criminal groups. In the CAR, groups like the Unité pour la paix en Centrafrique (UPC) and Retour, Reclamation et Réhabilitation (3R) have sought to build support from Mbororo pastoralists by promising to protect their cattle from theft.\(^{228}\) And even if these offers of help are unsolicited, they can reinforce perceived ties between pastoralists and armed groups. There have been limited reports of pastoralist collaboration with Boko Haram in exchange for protection or access to pasture in parts of the Western Sahel, though pastoralists’ interactions with the group are often hostile.\(^{229}\)

In Sudan and South Sudan, cattle raiding and defensive militias have been key drivers of intercommunal conflict amidst the broader context of civil war. Over time, cattle raiding practices have become more professionalized,\(^{230}\) and various militia forces backed by political elites have exacerbated cyclical intercommunal conflicts among pastoralist populations and between pastoralists and farmers.\(^{231}\) Jok et. al. describes the process by which militia groups of ‘cattle guards’ in South Sudan gained prominence since the 1980s to protect the livelihoods of herding communities against theft and destruction, sometimes with devastating secondary impacts on the communities in which they operated.\(^{232}\)

The threat from non-state armed groups has also radically transformed long-distance herding practices in ways that contribute to the perception of pastoralists as a security threat. Even pastoralists who are not affiliated with armed groups may carry

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226 Fabian C Ntangti et al., “Land Cover Changes, Protected Areas And Agro-Pastoral Conflicts In Menchum, North West Cameroon,” *American Journal of Humanities and Social Sciences Research* 3, no. 9 (2019).


228 de Vries, “Navigating violence and exclusion: The Mbororo’s claim to the Central African Republic’s margins.”


231 Catley, *Livestock and livelihoods in South Sudan.* Idris, *Livestock and Conflict in South Sudan*.

232 Madut Jok Jok et al., *Informal armies: Community defence groups in South Sudan’s civil war.* Saferworld (2017).
weapons for protection, which can blur the perceived distinction between legitimate herders and armed assailants.\textsuperscript{233} The risk has also led to a greater reliance on armed escorts, a costly need that may only be feasible for elites who own large herds and can afford to contract herders to take their cattle on transhumance.\textsuperscript{234} Although elite investment in livestock and absentee ownership are not new phenomena, certain cattle drivers and security personnel have been especially brazen in their use of force and impunity as they move through landscapes in search of resources.\textsuperscript{235} This trend has been highlighted in Nigeria, South Sudan,\textsuperscript{236} and the Central African Republic,\textsuperscript{237} but also linked to changing mobility patterns in sub-humid areas.\textsuperscript{238}

**GENDER NORMS IN CATTLE RAIDING AND PASTORALISM-RELATED CONFLICT**

Gender norms may also play a contributing role in motivating participation in cattle raiding or other forms of armed militia violence. According to a joint analysis conducted by UN FAO, UNDP, and UNMISS in South Sudan, owning a gun and participating in cattle raids is seen as a rite of passage for adolescent boys in many communities and for men these are symbols of manhood and virility, which confer social status.\textsuperscript{239} Communities and families celebrate young men for their participation in raids and shame those who cannot get married (e.g., if they cannot pay the brideprice in livestock due to theft).\textsuperscript{240} In one study of inter-communal conflict in Jos [Nigeria], Krause similarly argues that notions of masculinity affect whether people are mobilized or constrained from participating in violent conflict.\textsuperscript{241}

The significance of gender norms is also echoed in the findings of a Search study on the impact of farmer-herder conflict on women in Nigeria's Adamawa, Gombe, and Plateau States, where it was found that women are parties to conflict on multiple levels: they might directly take part or they may work behind the scenes to influence the conflict's outcome.\textsuperscript{242} Similarly, while the Katiba Macina organization in Mali uses gender relations as an instrument of authority, women also actively participate through the same sorts of supportive roles noted in Search's study on Nigeria.\textsuperscript{243} There is scarce research to support wider claims about the intersection between gender norms and pastoralism-related conflicts, though these studies suggest that this may be a fruitful area for further analysis.

\textsuperscript{234} Luizza, *Transhumant Pastoralism in Central Africa: Emerging Impacts on Conservation and Security*.
\textsuperscript{236} Idris, *Livestock and Conflict in South Sudan*.
\textsuperscript{238} Ange, Kinhou, and Brice, “Transhumance and conflicts management on Agonlin plateau in Zou department (Benin).”
\textsuperscript{239} Joint Analysis on Cattle- and Migration-Related Conflict in the Tri-State Border Areas of Wau, Tonj, and Gogrial, (unpublished manuscript, Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, United Nations Development Programme, UNMISS Rule of Law Advisory Section).
\textsuperscript{240} David Deng, *Challenges of Accountability: An Assessment of Dispute Resolution Processes in Rural South Sudan*, South Sudan Law Society (Juba, South Sudan, 2013).
\textsuperscript{241} Jana Krause, “Gender Dimensions of (Non) Violence in Communal Conflict: The Case of Jos, Nigeria,” *Comparative Political Studies* 52, no. 10 (2019).
\textsuperscript{242} Ademola-Adelehin et al., *The Impact of Farmer–Herder Conflict on Women in Adamawa, Gombe, and Plateau States of Nigeria*.
\textsuperscript{243} Natasja Rupesinghe, *Women and the Katiba Macina in Central Mali*, Norwegian Institute for International Affairs (Oslo, 2019).
SECTION IV

Areas for Further Research

This review aims to broadly capture the current state of knowledge on pastoralism and conflict in the Sudano-Sahel. However, there remain gaps in existing research and analysis that are critical in assessing the needs and opportunities for conflict transformation, which should be the subject of additional work:

- **Tracking the evolution and adaptation of pastoralism**
  - As pastoral and agricultural livelihoods across the region continue to shift and adapt, the economic and social interplay between sedentary farming communities and mobile herders will continue to evolve. Restoring or establishing symbiosis between communities will require reimagining what interconnected markets and value chains can look like, as well as addressing the new challenges that are straining social relationships. More research is needed to identify these opportunities for interconnection and how we can establish a modern social contract between mobile and sedentary communities.

- **Community buy-in for rural development**
  - As noted in this review, rather than “competition,” it may be a fear of loss of control (i.e. dispossession) that drives tenure-holding groups to oppose what are otherwise urgently needed measures, such as pastoral grazing reserves. Policies governing rural development and land tenure can be significant factors in conflict, but more research is needed to systematically understand how communities across the Sudano-Sahel perceive land reforms and what measures could be established to ensure that reforms are not a source of conflict.

- **The intersection of customary and statutory law at the local level**
  - The role of local government institutions is under-represented in the scholarly literature on the issues covered in this report. Although local capacity to administer justice and manage tensions over land use is often inadequate, it is difficult to imagine progress towards durable peace and reconciliation without local leaders to act as bridges between national governments and local populations. As decentralization measures and development programs continue to reshape the relationship between customary and statutory authorities, additional research is needed to identify the appropriate model to meet the adaptive needs of pastoral and farming communities.

- **Improving access to justice**
  - When aggrieved groups do not have access to viable, peaceful alternatives for expressing grievances, they may use violence to do so if the opportunity presents itself. Meaningful justice is a fragile and elusive social good that is unfortunately overlooked or taken for granted by interventions to address pastoralism-related conflict. If the actors and institutions tasked with providing justice are avoided by ordinary people, then there can be little chance of durable stability in the Sudano-Sahel. Further study is needed on how to strengthen justice systems and cultivate trust in justice institutions and actors.

- **Role of gender norms and women**
  - Despite the significant impact that pastoralism-related conflicts can have on women’s security or economic livelihoods, very little research exists on the roles that women can play in either fueling or transforming these conflicts. Women have a dynamic political and social influence in pastoral and farming communities, even where they do not have opportunities for full and equal participation, but more research is needed to determine how to best catalyze this potential. Similarly, more analysis is needed on the intersection between notions of masculinity (or femininity) and participation in violence to preserve livelihoods.

- **Intersection between pastoralists and illicit or insurgent activity**
  - As noted in this report, the relationship between pastoralists and insurgent groups or other forms of criminality has become a key point of tension that shapes policy responses, often in ways that reinforce conflict dynamics. While UNECA and others have noted that this phenomenon appears to be increasing, there
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is still a lack of systematic analysis on the scope of the problem: how often are pastoralists involved in fringe activities, and is that involvement increasing over time? While there exists a growing body of analysis on this subject, there is a need for a data-driven approach to study so that policymakers can avoid responses that reinforce harmful identity politics.

Regional and cross-border dynamics – One of the fundamental challenges in addressing pastoralism-related conflicts is that these conflicts cut across borders and across regions, necessitating a response that is simultaneously localized and transnational. There will continue to be a pressing need for state actors and multilateral organizations to think in transnational terms if they are to address the systemic challenges that are fueling conflict. Future research should continue to adopt a cross-border or transnational lens, where appropriate, to help in setting a shared regional agenda.

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