



# **NO TRIBE IN CRIME**

## **Changing Pastoralism and Conflict in Nigeria's Middle Belt**

Chitra Nagarajan

July 2019

# Table of Contents

<b>1.0 Executive Summary</b> .....	4
<b>2.0 Introduction</b> .....	7
<b>3.0 Methodology</b> .....	8
<b>4.0 Pastoralism in Nigeria today</b> .....	12
<i>4.1 Group identification</i> .....	12
4.1.1 Occupation.....	12
4.1.2 Lineage and clan (leyyi) .....	12
4.1.3 The settled/ nomadic spectrum.....	12
4.1.4 Location.....	13
4.1.5 Influence and decision-making.....	13
<i>4.2 An era of challenges</i> .....	15
4.2.1 Practices of pastoralism in the past.....	15
4.2.2 Changing climate.....	16
4.2.3 Expansion of farming areas and insufficient pasture.....	16
4.2.4 Reduced social cohesion and increased fear of violence.....	17
4.2.5 Increased livestock disease and death.....	17
<i>4.3 Adapting to new realities</i> .....	18
4.3.1 Changing grazing patterns and finding new ways to feed cattle.....	18
4.3.2 Settlement.....	19
4.3.3 Increasing burdens on younger men and reduced power of the patriarchs....	20
4.3.4 Pursuing new livelihoods.....	22
<b>5.0 Intra-pastoralist relations</b> .....	24
<i>5.1 Interactions between pastoralist groups</i> .....	24
5.1.1 Inter-leyyi relations.....	24
5.1.2 Support and solidarity? .....	24
5.1.3 Inter-marriage as an indicator of cohesion.....	25
<i>5.2 Conflict dynamics between pastoralist groups</i> .....	25
5.2.1 The Rimndooibe vs Joodiibe dichotomy.....	26
5.2.2 The ‘troublemakers’.....	29
<b>6.0 Relations between farmers and pastoralists</b> .....	32
<i>6.1 Putting violence conflict into perspective</i> .....	32
6.1.1 A history of (more or less) peaceful coexistence.....	32
6.1.2 Functional conflict resolution mechanisms.....	33
6.1.3 Politicians and community leaders driving conflict and violence.....	33
<i>6.2 Conflict and violence</i> .....	34
6.2.1 Outside perceptions of different pastoralist groups.....	34
6.2.2 Increasing tensions and violence.....	36
6.2.3 Impact of media and politicians’ narratives.....	37
<i>6.3 Policy-making with (unintended) consequences</i> .....	38
6.3.1 Laduga Grazing Reserve in Kaduna.....	38
6.3.2 The Benue Anti-Open Grazing Law.....	39
6.3.3 Violence on the Mambilla Plateau in Taraba.....	41
<b>7.0 Conclusions and Recommendations</b> .....	43

## **Acknowledgements**

This paper was written by Chitra Nagarajan who also conducted the research interviews and analysis with the invaluable assistance of Ibrahim Hassan and Phebe Banu. Lisa Inks and Danjuma Saidu provided advice, guidance and support throughout the research process. The team also thanks and acknowledges the contributions of all those who took part in the research.

## 1.0 Executive Summary

Farmer-pastoralist violence in Nigeria is often presented as due to the cultural and economic lifestyle of one group, an inaccurate representation that exacerbates conflict. This study aims to get a deeper understanding. It provides detailed accounts of internal socio-cultural dynamics within and between pastoralist groups and farmers in conflict-affected areas in five states.

**Pastoralists face increasing challenges and threats to their way of life and security, and they struggle to adapt to these challenges.** Pastoralists cited expansion of farming areas into grazing routes and reserves and insufficient pasture as primary challenge. This expansion, in addition to changing weather patterns, causes them to move cattle to new places with more fertile ground which exposes herds to new diseases. They also spoke of decreased social cohesion with farmers and increasing fears of violence. To cope with and adapt to challenges, pastoralists changed grazing patterns, shifted to settlement, and sought new. These strategies are both caused by and contribute to increased tensions among pastoralist groups and with farmers.

**Movement of pastoralists from other parts of West African is not a key driver of violence.** While there is cross border movement of those who come to parts of Nigeria to support their fellow pastoralists in what is seen as self-defense or revenge actions, the notion of “sudden influx” of herders from other parts of West Africa for livelihood reasons is implausible. Pastoralists have a particular zone of migration as cattle adapt to the ecology of the areas in which they live. If pastoralists move to a new area suddenly, it is likely that many of their cattle will sicken and die due to diseases present in the area and different types of pasture, both of which they have not had the time to adapt to. Movement to a new area altogether is done slowly from location to location over the years so cows can slowly adapt to changing ecology. It can take 10 to 15 years to permanently migrate to a completely new location.

**The shift from whole families to largely young men alone migrating with cattle is both a consequence and cause of conflict.** Long periods of family separation affect family dynamics and relationships between husbands and wives and across generations. It also increases burdens on both the men who migrate and the women who stay behind, as both groups bear family responsibilities that previously would have been shared. Partially to protect themselves through strength in numbers, and partially to share tasks such as cooking and setting up camp, young migrating men are traveling in larger groups. Stresses related to intense pressure to protect the (cattle) wealth of their families and the lack of family support in a time of declining pasture, water and increasing violence combine to intensify conflict dynamics and make violence more likely. The communities through which they pass see these male only groups very differently from pastoralists families migrating, viewing them with increased suspicion and hostility. Isolated from parents, wives, and other family members, these young men no longer have access to the advice of elders, female and male, who used to caution against violence. Respondents linked increasing numbers of fights, encroachment onto farmland, and involvement in criminality with this change.

**Trust, social cohesion and strength of relationships between Rimndoobe (migratory pastoralists) and Joodiibe (settled pastoralists) is decreasing as a result of increased farmer-pastoralist violence, intolerance to different gender norms and other factors.** Even though considered as one by many people, pastoralists are highly diverse with levels of movement/ settlement being a major difference. While some respondents from both groups had positive things to say about the other, the Joodiibe expressed superiority over the Rimndoobe due to self-perception of being better educated and more religious. Joodiibe respondents criticised Rimndoobe women for dressing in ways they said were not allowed by Islam and

Rimndooḃe men for not living up to ideals of Islamic masculinity of men providing for the family as women's milk sales tend to provide for the family's daily needs. These gulfs in gender norms contribute to decreased social cohesion between groups, fewer interactions to avoid 'bad' habits, and conflict along settled/ migratory lines. The Rimndooḃe, on the other hand, reported feeling stigmatised and discriminated against, and stressed their higher level of knowledge of cattle and exposure from living in different places. Whereas both groups used to cooperate with each other and with farmers, these relations have been frayed over time. Rimndooḃe identified 'territories of aggression' where they believe they are likely to be cheated or their property stolen. They reported passing through communities silently, minimising contact with both farmers and Joodiibe, as these groups are seen as close to each other. These tensions contribute to broader conflict between farmers and all types of pastoralists. Non-pastoralist respondents varied in whether they distinguished between different pastoralist groups. They showed less ability to differentiate in areas of greatest tensions and conflict where they were more likely to state that 'Fulani are Fulani' and all the same. Whether this tendency to generalize is a cause or effect of conflict, it is clearly part of the cycle of mistrust between farmers and pastoralists and perpetuates a lack of understanding.

**Conflict encounters often occur between women farmers and young male pastoralists and spread to the broader community and to other locations.** While violence is popularly understood as taking place between (young) men, crisis points often occur between young male pastoralists and women farmers on farmland and at water points. Women who protest animals eating crops or polluting water are harassed, chased and threatened with rape. Indeed, both farmer and pastoralist men have perpetrated sexual violence against women of the other group. Women have also physically driven away pastoralist men. In both cases, injured masculinity escalates tensions as men in farming communities feel compelled to avenge the attacks on 'their' women or young pastoralist men want to prove their masculinity after being chased away by women.

**Political and media narratives often exacerbate tensions, making violence more likely.** Respondents felt conflict and its causes and impacts were not well understood. They said politicians and journalists did not have basic knowledge about Fulbe communities, let alone know the differences between different groups and their ways of life. Media coverage was seen as full of negative reporting with attacks reported as being carried out by Fulbe groups based on little evidence and no corrections issued when subsequent investigation uncovered perpetrators were actually armed gangs or from another group. Reprisal attacks against Fulbe communities are linked to this inaccurate, misleading and biased reporting which triggered cycles of reprisals and counter-reprisals. Lack of impartial justice and rule of law were seen as key drivers of conflict. In many research locations, politicians were seen as key actors driving conflict and violence with policies implemented by federal and state governments often having unintended consequences of decreasing social cohesion, increasing tensions and driving violence.

**Based on these findings, governments, donors and practitioners should:**

**Facilitate genuine intergenerational dialogue that helps pastoralist families and communities adapt to changes, supports young male pastoralists with pressures they face, addresses the impacts of shifts in livelihood patterns on women and girls, and improves relations.** Dialogues need to be facilitated in ways sensitive to hierarchies of gender, age and power and institutionalized as part of long-term processes which enables the voices of young women and men to be heard on a regular basis.

**Foster peace education, intercultural tolerance, social cohesion, and communication to reduce discrimination, change attitudes on gender equality, shift norms of masculinity, and help farmers and pastoralists control anger and learn peaceful methods of resolving conflict.** Interventions should aim to enhance understanding, tolerance and respect for ethnic, cultural and religious diversity between different groups of pastoralists and between pastoralists and farmers. Spaces for constructive contact with those considered different need to be created and maintained, including through bringing together pastoralists across the nomadic/ sedentary spectrum to share challenges, realities and experiences, repair relations and develop common solutions. At the same time, ways to strengthen relations between migratory pastoralists and farmers and pastoralists settled on lands through which they pass need to be explored, including through discussions between leaders of migratory groups and settled communities.

**Jointly map and strengthen existing conflict management, governance and peacebuilding mechanisms to improve inclusiveness, effectiveness, coordination, responsiveness, and accountability.** At present, these mechanisms tend to be uncoordinated, ineffective, unsupported by federal and state governments support, lacking adequate resources and not enabling meaningful participation of particularly excluded groups including women of all ages, young men and migratory pastoralists.

**Build the capacity of influencers among pastoralists and farmers, taking an evidence-based and inclusive approach to defining who has influence, to promote intercultural understanding.** Actors should support the strengthening of networks of influential leaders and organizations to identify and mobilize existing social cohesion resources and work collaboratively with each other and the government. Those seen as influencers should not be limited to elite, older men but rather consider who has influence over which groups of people and be inclusive of women of all ages and younger men who often hold great sway not only over members of their own group but others in the community also. Supporting a range of influencers in this manner will facilitate increased knowledge, skills and networks to enhance dialogue, advocate successfully to policy-makers and improve social cohesion in gender transformative and socially inclusive ways.

**Work with community-based and civil society organizations towards inter-cultural dialogue, cultural diversity, non-discrimination, conflict mitigation and peacebuilding objectives based on principles of genuine partnership and mutual learning.** Doing so will embed in sustained local capacity, bring together coalitions for advocacy including to challenge conflict insensitive and otherwise harmful government policies and strengthen networking at and between local, state and national levels. These organizations should include pastoralist groups and non-pastoralists associations should be supported to reach out to pastoralists across the settled to migratory spectrum.

## 2.0 Introduction

Recent years have seen recurrent violence in many locations across northern Nigeria that are resource based, aggravated by ethnic and religious identities and driven by political and electoral contestation. Although conflict dynamics and root causes can be more complex and deeper, this violence is frequently spoken of as being caused by conflict between farmers and pastoralists. Incomplete, inaccurate and biased narratives in Nigerian and outside circles abound. This representation flattens the complexities of the conflict and often misrepresents its causes, manifestations and impacts. Subsequent policy and programming responses are often inadequate and conflict insensitive. They can fuel and exacerbate conflict and trigger violence.

While much is written and said about this conflict, there is limited evidence-based research on pastoralist groups, often demonised but little understood. The purpose of this study is to develop deeper understanding of the dynamics among pastoralist groups and between pastoralists and farmers in areas that have experienced significant violence and examine how these dynamics affect and are affected by conflict. Findings will be presented to donors and development agencies, politicians, government officials and media practitioners to engage them in discussion on best ways to address conflict.

After an overview of methodology used, this paper presents the study's findings in three chapters. The first findings chapter starts by describing pastoralism in Nigeria today. It outlines the groupings with which pastoralists self-identified, the key challenges they face and how they have adapted to these new realities. The second chapter looks at intra-pastoralist relations, how different groups interact and the contours of conflict dynamics between them. The third chapter examines relations between farmers and pastoralists, giving context, observing dynamics of conflict and violence and noting policy responses that have had unintended consequences. The paper ends with presenting its conclusions and recommendations for action by government, donors and practitioners.

## 3.0 Methodology

This qualitative study uses symbolic interactionist and grounded theory approaches<sup>1</sup> and seeks to answer the following research questions:

1. What are the different pastoralist groups with which people self-define? Where do these groups originate and how have their movements changed in the last five years?
2. What are the views and conflict narratives these different groups have about themselves, other pastoralist groups, and external groups, such as groups of farmers? To what extent do external narratives (from external groups, from media, from national policymakers, etc.) affect this?
3. How do these perceptions affect conflict dynamics within pastoralist groups and between pastoralists and other groups?
4. What are the gender dynamics around intra pastoralist relations and how does gender impact relations with other non-pastoralist groups?

Conflict sensitivity and awareness of and sensitivity to gender dynamics were guiding principles for the research. These concepts are seen as mutually constitutive and reinforcing i.e. conflict sensitivity has to integrate awareness of gender dynamics and gender analysis has to be sensitive to conflict dynamics.

Given the subject matter is highly sensitive and contested, ensuring conflict sensitivity is crucial. Talking about conflict dynamics and trends, particularly in communities affected by conflict, may in itself exacerbate and create tensions. The study was designed and implemented to mitigate its negative impacts and increase its positive impacts on conflict dynamics. For example, given the risks of group discussions creating or exacerbating conflict dynamics, the research team only conducted one-on-one interviews. Research tools were designed and delivered in conflict sensitive ways to not only 'do no harm' but actually 'do more good' including through integrating appreciative inquiry.<sup>2</sup> This research paper does not use conflict insensitive language, for example by calling groups by names they do not wish to be known, and it presents findings in ways that are as sensitive as possible to conflict dynamics. We commit to ensuring dissemination and influencing processes following publication will also be conflict sensitive.

Awareness of and sensitivity to gender dynamics is integral to this study, particularly as writing and analysis around farmer-pastoralist conflict tends to under-examine gender dynamics or to perpetuate narratives that owe their basis to gendered stereotypes rather than to evidence. Women took active roles as respondents and researchers in this study. Tools and research methodologies were designed to elicit findings around the ways gender impacts all research questions as well as to answer the question specifically around gender. Data collection was done in ways sensitive to gender dynamics in research communities and to encourage women to be respondents and speak openly and honestly. This paper examines the gender dynamics around intra-pastoralist relations, highlights different perceptions and realities when it comes to conflict dynamics and trends and analyses ways gender norms and narratives drive conflict and peace.

---

<sup>1</sup>Symbolic interactionism is an approach which centres the viewpoint of those who participate in the research whereas grounded theory is a process whereby the data gathered is used as the basis for theoretical concepts that are subsequently discovered.

<sup>2</sup>This approach focuses on the positive, valuing what currently exists and envisioning what might be. The study aims to uncover positive experiences and connectors where communities have pulled together and shown leadership and cohesion in addressing conflict causes and dynamics. Participants were encouraged to dwell on these positive aspects at the start and end of interviews so they do not leave thinking about the amount of tension, conflict and violence in their community and the impact of this on them.

A robust ethical approach was followed, with systems put in place to ensure the highest standards were adhered to at all times. These standards include ensuring respondents were clear about research aims and the risks and benefits of involvement. Respondents received adequate support during the research process to be able to participate fully and gave informed consent. Information was treated sensitively and confidentially and anonymity preserved. No names are used in this report. Speakers are identified using only their gender, livelihood group, ethnic group and location. The team established a referral system to be used in the eventuality of any disclosure of gender-based violence or child protection concerns. No such information was received.

Researchers conducted interviews in five states (Benue, Kaduna, Nasarawa, Plateau and Taraba) and in Abuja, the nation’s capital, in March and April 2019. Research locations are shown in Table 1. The research team conducted interviews in each location, sometimes interviewing respondents from other locations there, in state capitals and Abuja. The team chose locations to ensure geographical spread and on the basis of current dynamics and past experiences of farmer/ pastoralist conflict. Other considerations included ensuring representation of different types of pastoralist practices and issues of access, safety and security. In some areas, pastoralists had left communities due to conflict. We interviewed them in places where they are now present. For example, in Bassa LGA in Plateau state, we spoke with pastoralists who used to be in Miango in Rukuba where they now lived and we met pastoralists who had left Benue in Nasarawa.

Table 1: Research Locations

<b>LGA</b>	<b>Communities</b>
<b>Benue</b>	
1. Logo	Anyii
2. Makurdi	Sabon Gida Agan
<b>Kaduna</b>	
1. Kachia	Laduga
2. Sanga	Gwadei, Ungwanungu and Mayir
<b>Nasarawa</b>	
1. Awe	Angwan Akote
2. Doma	Cuibo
<b>Plateau</b>	
1. Bassa	Miango and Rukuba
2. Riyom	Ganawuri
<b>Taraba</b>	
1. Ardo Kola	Sunkani
2. Sardauna	Lemesaiga, Lemetela and Gembu

We interviewed a total of 70 respondents (28 women, 42 men) of which 44 were pastoralists (19 women, 25 men) and 21 were farmers (8 women, 13 men). We also interviewed a female academic and a male government official who had valuable insights to share and three male representatives of the pastoralists associations Miyetti Allah Cattle Breeders Association of Nigeria (MACBAN), Miyetti Allah Kautal Hore and Pastoral Resolve (PARE).<sup>3</sup>

<sup>3</sup>PARE is a Mercy Corps partner and supported this research..

We define a pastoralist as someone whose economic system or way of life is based on raising and herding of livestock. While other ethnic groups pursue pastoralism in other parts of Nigeria, all pastoralists present in the research locations studied were Fulbe.<sup>4</sup> While Fulbe and pastoralism are synonymous in public discourse, not all pastoralists are Fulbe and not all Fulbe are pastoralists. Many non-pastoralist groups also own and raise cattle, including through interactions with Fulbe for example by accepting cattle as payment or paying Fulbe people to graze cattle on their behalf. However, as their livelihood and way of life is not dependent on this activity, they are not classified as pastoralists in this study or in the popular imagination.

We selected respondents to ensure diversity in terms of spread of age, gender and representation from different pastoralist groups. This study aims to uncover dynamics within and between pastoralist communities so we deliberately chose to interview a higher number of pastoralist respondents. Apart from representatives of pastoralist associations, we did not interview Fulbe who live in towns. A few respondents had lost their cattle due to violence but most respondents were engaged in rearing cattle as their principal livelihood either exclusively or in conjunction with farming. We ensured respondents included pastoralists from different Fulbe *leyfi* and who pursued different patterns of movement and settlement. While we took steps to ensure a high number of women respondents (40 percent of the total), complete gender parity was not possible given time constraints and the need to interview community leaders in each location and representatives of pastoralist associations, all of whom were men.

Before starting data collection in any location, the team, working with people from or with in-depth knowledge of communities, gathered information on the different pastoralist groups present in the area and made preliminary arrangements required to arrange interviews. We made efforts to encourage research participants to feel comfortable with the research process and in discussing sensitive issues of power, discrimination and additional axes of marginalisation such as age, ethnicity, gender, occupational group, religion and location.

We held interviews in quiet, secluded locations and, if other people came there, either changed venues or asked these people to leave. We sought and obtained consent to audio record all interviews. These recordings were sent to transcribers to type up a verbatim record to ensure the most accurate documentation. A grounded theory approach was used to code and analyse data.

Respondents chose the language of interview. While many respondents chose Fulfulde, other languages used were English, Hausa, Irigwe, Mambilla and Tiv. We conducted some interviews in more than one language, following the lead of respondents in switching languages. In cases where the research team did not know the language in which respondents wished to speak, those with the requisite language and interpretation skills assisted us. This paper uses quotation marks when describing respondents' comments but the reader should bear in mind that these words have been translated into English as almost all respondents spoke in another language.

The study does not aim to be and cannot be representative of all those living in research locations let alone in northern Nigeria but rather provides data on experiences and thoughts of respondents. Constraints of time and budget necessarily limited its scope, including of those who participated. For example, interviewing more pastoralists and representatives from community-based associations would have been advantageous. However, the number of interviews possible within the timeframe available limited the range of people with whom we could speak.

---

<sup>4</sup>While this group is known as Fulani, the Hausa term, by those outside it and have a number of different ascribed names across West Africa, this paper will use Fulbe as this term is used by group members in northern Nigeria to describe themselves.

We sought a balance between ensuring a range of perspectives and keeping within these constraints. We prioritised meeting different groups of pastoralists, even if arranging interviews took time and meant we spoke with fewer people, rather than interviewing pastoralists easiest to access. Finding and seeking the consent of purely 'nomadic' pastoralists to be interviewed proved challenging. This difficulty is partly as many previously nomadic pastoralists have become semi-nomadic/ semi-settled. Additionally, those who continue to pursue nomadic styles of movement tend to interact much less with others, in large part due to conflict dynamics.

When accessed, nomadic pastoralists were wary of talking openly and tended to be guarded in responses. This suspicion is unsurprising given how they are often viewed by others, including pastoralists more settled. Given time constraints, it was difficult to build up the trust required among this group. Although some respondents in this category spoke openly, many did not. This dynamic may have been different if the research team had a longer period to spend with each group, although it may have also be difficult to gain agreement to do so.

Moreover, there were some groups, namely Fulbe from Zamfara, who pastoralist respondents mentioned as being problematic or involved in violence or criminality that we were not able to meet. Suspicion remained among pastoralist respondents even if few, if any, Fulbe from Zamfara were present in their locality. We were not able to go to locations where these groups are present due to reasons of security, time and access. The team had not put in place the arrangements necessary to go to Zamfara itself as this was not one of the research locations identified. In research locations where Fulbe from Zamfara were present, these groups tend to try to remain under the radar. They move often. By the time their locations became known and contact made, the research team had moved on to another state. We were not able to go back to interview these groups, particularly as it is likely they would have moved on again by the time we reached the area in which they were known to be staying.

## 4.0 Pastoralism in Nigeria Today

Pastoralists have experienced great change in recent years. This chapter starts with the different groups which pastoralists use to identify themselves before outlining key challenges they face and ways they are adapting to their new realities. It aims to bring forth their perspectives and so is drawn from interviews with pastoralists exclusively.

### 4.1 Group Identification

It is difficult to classify pastoralists using clear-cut categories as a high degree of fluidity appears in practice but there are a number of different ways pastoralist respondents defined themselves and others. Groupings were according to occupation, *leyfi*, movement and location.

#### 4.1.1 Occupation

The Fulbe are divided into those who farm (Fulbe *Remaibe*), those who rear cattle (Fulbe *Duroobe*) and those who live in towns and do not rear cattle (Fulbe *Wuro*). As our focus is on pastoralism, this section presents the experiences of mostly Fulbe who rear cattle, some of whom also farm crops, except for a few respondents who, after losing their cattle, have turned to crop farming.

#### 4.1.2 Lineage and Clan (*Leyfi*)

There are many Fulbe clans and sub-clans and, while it is beyond the scope of this study to develop a classification of Fulbe *leyfi* in northern Nigeria, their lineage and clan is a way Fulbe respondents self-defined. *Leyfi* maintain kinship via marriage, visits, commiseration/condolence visits and oral histories. Fulbe can mobilise across lines of *leyfi* when it comes to conflict and supporting each other in its aftermath. Many respondents, especially older ones, had knowledge and understanding of the history of their *leyfi* including the locations from which they were said to originate and their pattern of migration from that place. Relations between *leyfi* will be explored further in the chapter on intra-pastoralist relations and dynamics.

#### 4.1.3 The Settled/ Nomadic Spectrum

One of the major ways respondents classified themselves and other pastoralists was movement/settlement patterns. There is a spectrum here between nomads who have no area of permanent residence and sedentary groups often involved in farming and livestock rearing who graze their cattle near their residence. In between these ends of the spectrum are semi-nomadic/semi-settled groups which migrate at specific times of the year according to the onset of the rainy and dry seasons and agricultural cycles over different ranges, from shorter ranges a few kilometres away to longer ranges of up to 300km. As discussed in the next section, families can have some members who live in one location while others move.

While there seems to be fluidity across the spectrum and individuals and families can move along the spectrum and back at different life stages, respondents broadly classified pastoralists into two groups. The first is the *Rimndooɓe*, the pastoralists that migrate. Their main source of livelihood is selling milk, products from milk, and cows. Respondents also referred to this group as the *Mbororo*, a Hausa term for a bird that flies from one place to another which is seen as derogatory by some respondents, or the *Leyyi'en*, a term used to describe people who move who are unknown to the speaker. Most migratory pastoralists self-defined as *Rimndooɓe* which is why this

paper uses this term. Nobody called themselves Le'ien. The second group is the Joodiibe who are settled in one area although their young men can move to graze cattle elsewhere. While their sources of livelihood still include pastoralism, they often also engage in farming, trading, tailoring, riding motorcycle taxis, and other occupations.

In practice, while there are clear differences at either end of the spectrum, for those in the middle, whether someone is Rimndooɓe or Joodiibe heavily depends on to what degree they self-identify. Respondents who identify as Rimndooɓe and Joodiibe often had similar movement patterns in reality, with some family members staying in one location while others moved. One female respondent said that the Rimndooɓe can become Joodiibe if they have settled in one place for at least two years but respondents expressed a wide range of views of what it means to actually be settled. This self-classification may be influenced by strong narratives from settled pastoralists of how much better it is to be settled and how they are (morally) superior, as discussed in the next chapter. As a result, some pastoralists who are more migratory may describe themselves to others as Joodiibe or, conversely, may want to cling to the Rimndooɓe identity out of solidarity and a strong sense of identity, even if they are less migratory than before, because of this disapproval.

“We are 15-20 households moving together. Four groups – the Bodi, Yabaji, Fikaji and Ba'en - move together and we meet and move with other groups. This group was moving together when I was born. Other clans come and stay with us. We intermarry and become one and people would leave the group also. They could meet another clan and choose to stay in the area and integrate with them. When we met other clans facing the same way, we became one as we had the same interest. We also had people who weren't even Fulbe but boys we hired to look after the cows who became Bodi and intermarried.” Fulbe man interviewed in Ganawuri, Riyom LGA, Plateau

#### 4.1.4 Location

Respondents who were more settled, also identified with the location in which they lived. Some respondents spoke of themselves as being the 'indigenous Fulbe' of a particular location to stress their claims to pursuing livelihoods on these areas of land. They do so in the face of narratives around indigeneity from non-pastoralists such as farming communities and to distinguish themselves from other pastoralists who arrived more recently into the area or who are engaged in movement between areas. In some cases, respondents saw this indigeneity status as extending across large geographical areas as their ancestors had come to the area a long time ago but had not settled in any one place. For example, respondents living in the Mambilla Plateau in Taraba state spoke of how long their families had lived in the area even if the practice of staying in one place had developed only in recent decades.

#### 4.1.5 Influence and Decision-Making

Respondents spoke of how decision-making happens in the family, movement group, ley'yi, and according to location/ proximity. It varied greatly across research locations and took different forms for pastoralists who are more settled and those who migrate.

The primary unit of organisation is the family. Respondents, particularly those who were more migratory, described a large degree of autonomy. Families made decisions, for example around movement, without consulting or informing anyone else. They could join or leave movement groups at their discretion and decide to settle in or leave an area. Across all pastoralists, while the patriarch was said to be the one who made decisions, they often did so in consultation with their wives and grown children. Respondents spoke about the influence women have in the family,

particularly over their sons. Some respondents said this influence exceeds that of fathers due to the closer relationship and more time sons spend with mothers and that this influence could be used to ensure peace or to drive conflict.

Those who migrate spoke of doing so in groups of a number of households in search of pasture. These groups could include several leyfi, although levels of inter-marriage often blurred these lines, or consist of households of the same one or two leyfi moving together. While these groups often comprise those connected by family and kinship ties, their make-up can be amorphous, with people joining and leaving the group. Some respondents spoke of moving in a group of a core four to five households consisting only of those linked by blood and kinship ties, for example four brothers moving together, with others joining and leaving the group according to direction of travel. Other respondents spoke of moving in larger groupings of different families and leyfi. They noted the advantages of moving in larger groups for increased safety during a time of increased violence and criminality and as others can look after your children and belongings.

Among the Joodiibe (settled pastoralists), leadership hierarchies, although they did not always work in practice, are more established. While in some research locations, each leyfi had their own leaders who came together to discuss issues such as outbreaks of cattle disease, Fulbe leadership recognised by the government and other communities is tied to geographical locations and covers different leyfi and Fulbe settlements in the area. As for many non-pastoralist groups in northern Nigeria, there is a multi-tiered system with the laamido at the top then followed by the ardo ('leader') then the ardo's cabinet consisting in decreasing level of hierarchy of wakili, madaki, chiroma and jauro, all of whom are responsible for different geographical areas. An ardon ardodi is selected by all the ardos in a particular LGA or state to represent them. Migratory groups of pastoralists interact with the ardo of locations through which they were passing, for example to inform them of their presence, to request permission to stay in the location for some time and to ask for advice.

Women played key roles in the community when it came to the planning and organising of events such as naming ceremonies, weddings, and festivities as well as coming together to discuss issues and inform group decision making. The position of 'women's leaders' in many locations has come about due to initiatives by politicians or government officials as well as civil society organisations rather than organically. Their role is to organise women to hear politicians during campaigns, receive and distribute goods to women, and mobilise women to attend awareness raising sessions and to participate in campaigns such as those around child immunisation.

If women have issues they wish to raise, they go to the head of the family who takes the matter to the leader who discusses it with other elders. In some locations, women from all leyfi come together to discuss, deliberate, and take their concerns to elders. For example, women respondents in Laduga grazing reserve spoke of how they come together to discuss conflict dynamics then choose one of their members to present on their behalf to the leader. He calls a gathering which they can then address.

In practice, decision-making is highly devolved and operates at different levels. While the ardos have a certain level of power and influence, this is not absolute. Individuals, families, and groupings of pastoralists that come together in migration make decisions, for example around movement without informing the ardo. Some respondents talked of how many of the ardos of today are politically appointed and, as will be described later, create and perpetuate conflict.

## 4.2 An Era of Challenges

Respondents talked of how things had been in the past and about the challenges they currently faced, from changing climate and insufficient pasture to reduced social cohesion and increased livestock disease and death. While relations between farmers and pastoralists is covered in more detail below, this section touches on ways this conflict and violence is affecting pastoralists' lives.

### 4.2.1 Practices of Pastoralism in the Past

Pastoralists' way of life greatly depends on context, varying between research states. While research locations in Plateau and southern Kaduna have a long history of settled pastoralism, many parts of Nasarawa and Benue have historically had few settled pastoralists and many migratory pastoralists and Taraba has had both settled and migratory pastoralists.

In the past, more pastoralists moved between different locations than is the case today. Some pastoralists passed dry and rainy seasons in different places and moved in between. Others would stay in one location for one season and

move between areas the rest of the time. For example, one Fulbe woman told us how her family would leave Zaria during harvest time and move to new locations, staying around two months in each place, until the rains came when they would move back to Zaria.

Pastoralists have a particular zone of migration as cattle adapt to the ecology of the areas in which they live. If pastoralists move to a new area suddenly, it is likely that many of their cattle will sicken and die due to diseases present in the area and different types of pasture both of which they have not had the time to adapt to. Movement to a new area altogether is done slowly from location to location over the years so cows can slowly adapt to changing ecology. It can take 10 to 15 years to permanently migrate to a completely new location.

Those who are more nomadic also move slowly to allow their cattle time to adjust. Nomadic pastoralists interviewed spoke of how they had moved long distances over decades, passing time in each location before moving on. One respondent spoke of how he and his family had migrated from Zamfara to Niger to Kwara to Oyo to Lagos to Benin Republic to Togo to Cameroon to Taraba, staying for anytime between two to 10 years in each place. When asked why he engaged

in this movement, he replied: "Life was very good and nice before. We could trek from here to Kafanchan and get anything you want. People didn't look at you as a threat to society and you can go to any house to ask for water." Fulbe woman, Ungwanugu, Sanga LGA, Kaduna who was over 70 years in age recounting her childhood migrating.

"We were in Jota Marabu on the border between Benue and Taraba. We moved due to lack of pasture and would go as far as Shito in Ikun local government in Benue to graze. It would take four days to go there. We would stay for some time then return. We moved to Anyii because of water and pasture. We would be in Anyii in the rainy season and Buruku in the dry season, taking three days to move in between... Some years we would go to Kwatan Sule in Guma local government. There, they are rice farmers so after they remove the rice, we would buy rice husks and give our animals. Each year, we would go to either Kwatan Sule or Buruku. We were doing this for 35 to 40 years" Fulbe man, displaced from Anyii in Benue to Angwan Akote, Awe LGA, Nasarawa

"When a farmer in one piece of land gets 20 bags of maize and is told the same amount of land in a different place will get 40 bags, where would they prefer to farm? We moved as we get more in another place. Some places are

good for animals and they become healthy and strong and their productivity increases but, in other areas, the grasses are not good and the cattle do not feed so it is not good for them” (Fulbe man in Sunkani, Ardo Kola LGA, Taraba).

Pastoralists scout areas before moving. One respondent spoke of going with other pastoralists using public transport or motorbikes to search for new places then moving with his family and cows. During the initial trip, he would meet pastoralists staying there (both migratory and settled) to say he was interested in moving and ask where they stayed to then settle nearby. Then, the family would move to the new areas, whether by walking or by public transport, and construct the settlement in which they will stay. Depending on the kind of movement they favour, pastoralists can stay for months or years in one place before moving on again. Many respondents, particularly older ones, said life was better in the past. They spoke of increased social cohesion and lower levels of suspicion.

A Fulbe woman who is over 80 years old said her family had no permanent settlement but would go anywhere the grazing was good: “It is only Lagos I’ve not gone to.” She described how women walked and those not able to do so would ride on horses or donkeys. Upon arrival at a new location, women would cook food, hawk milk and construct houses while the men scouted places for grazing. She spoke of how things had changed as a result of grazing areas no longer being open, as conflict had set in along cattle routes and as there was no pasture. She has now settled in Ganawuri in Riyom LGA, Plateau as she is no longer able to move due to physical frailty.

#### **4.2.2 Changing Climate**

Pastoralists talked about the impact of changes in climate, particularly increased variability in rainfall and temperatures, and people moving away due to lack of rain: “Before, we would get rain after five months but now it takes seven months for it to rain. Many people move because the lack of rain affects pasture. Many of my relations moved to Cameroon because the grasses are no longer as much as they were before as when animals continue to graze, the grasses will die” (Fulbe man in Sunkani, Ardo Kola LGA, Taraba). However, while respondents talked of making movement choices due to resulting impact on grazing conditions and the news that pasture was no longer good in certain places, pastoralists’ key challenge with regards to pasture and water tended to be the presence of farming in grazing routes and areas. There are many factors behind this expansion of farming, including the impact of rainfall changes and variability, heat or other climatic factors on soil fertility and livelihood viability.

#### **4.2.3 Expansion of Farming Areas and Insufficient Pasture**

Grazing routes and reserves are areas officially designated for pastoralists’ use by law. Their delineation is well known by communities in the locality and, historically, there have been strong norms and customs that these areas should not be used by others. However, these areas have been gradually encroached upon due to failure by different levels of government and community leadership structures in enforcement and the weakening of these structures and mechanisms for preservation of areas for grazing. Almost every pastoralist respondent talked about lack of pasture due to expansion of farming onto grazing reserves and routes by farmers from the area and elsewhere. They try to divert their cattle to new areas but often also fail to find pasture there. While many respondents expressed sympathy for farmers who had farmed in these areas and whose crops were destroyed as a result of cattle grazing, they also were extremely frustrated about this state of affairs.

“The grazing areas have been overtaken by farmers and cattle routes have been blocked and there is not enough space to graze so animals destroy crops. The cattle routes need to be expanded for cows to pass. You cannot carry cows on your head. Wherever route is blocked, it is a serious problem to find how to pass... Other people think pastoralists are not human beings. If they saw us as human beings, they would not block cattle routes.” Fulbe man, Cuibo, Doma LGA, Nasarawa

#### 4.2.4 Reduced Social Cohesion and Increased Fear of Violence

Respondents talked of reduced social cohesion among pastoralists and between farmers and pastoralists. They had been experiencing a lot of conflict and tension along grazing routes, in many places, for a number of years. Fear had been present for significant periods of time, linked to conflict between farmers and pastoralists as well as events such as the Jos crisis of 2001 and the post-election violence in Kaduna in 2011. One young man who grazes said, “We are not sure about getting to Magama until we get there as anything can happen. The change has been since the start of the Jos crisis in 2001” (Fulbe man, Ungwanungu, Sanga LGA, Kaduna). Mothers spoke of being afraid for their sons who travelled to graze, praying for them and fearing they would not see them again.

While many respondents linked farming on grazing routes and areas to increased farming populations, some saw a direct correlation between reduced pasture and conflict, believing farming was a deliberate strategy done as a form of revenge and to spark violence. As one Fulbe man interviewed in Ungwanungu in Sanga LGA, Kaduna said, “They are deliberately farming [on stock routes and grazing land]. What can it mean? It means they want trouble.” Pastoralists have to keep more careful watch over cattle to ensure they are not killed or stolen. “Before, you could push your cows to the bush and they would graze freely and you don’t need to go because nothing will happen and there was no farmland in the bush. But now, everywhere has been taken over by farmers. There was security, no thieves, enough water and pasture but now you cannot graze comfortably” (Fulbe man, Cuibo, Doma LGA, Nasarawa). They had moved from places which had become ‘no go’ areas or stopped going there for fear of violence. This dynamic intensified pressure on relatively safe areas due to increased populations of people and cattle. Conflict dynamics between farmers and pastoralists will be explored later on.

“The movement is still on but we have had to change our routes due to conflict. The route through Berom land is not accessible and other routes near towns and cities have been taken over. We need to stay and move before they awake. We now move to Bauchi, Niger, Enugu and Abuja. The length of movement has increased because cities and towns have taken over grazing lands. So, some of us return in a year, some do not come back if they find some place more conducive, and some have gone to Cameroon.” Fulbe man in Rukuba, Bassa LGA, Plateau

#### 4.2.5 Increased Livestock Disease and Death

Respondents described difficulties finding enough food and water for cattle and how herds were getting weaker, reproducing less and producing less milk. Incidence of cattle disease such as booru (foot and mouth disease), hanta (liverflukes) and sammore (trypanosomosis) had increased, linked to hunger as cows are scavenging and eating whatever they can find and the collapse of veterinary services. Migratory pastoralists said their cattle were stronger, healthier, and had higher resistance to disease and climate changes. This difference was as they were used

to moving to new places, adapting to the ecology there, and consuming pasture from different areas with a variety of nutrients. However, as many were no longer able to move as they had previously done, they were seeing resulting reduced resilience in livestock.

They spoke of cattle dying. Some respondents had seen their entire herd killed. Others spoke of cattle death due to sudden movement. When movement has to occur quickly due to conflict, pastoralists stay as close to the original location as possible. Where they are forced to suddenly move to a new area, a high number of cattle sicken and die. For example, respondents forced to leave Benue for Nasarawa had lost many livestock which had moved to a new area too quickly to be able to cope with different pasture and cattle disease found there. They had moved their cattle back to Benue despite the dangers as they felt all animals would die if they remained in Nasarawa. Even the more resilient cattle of migratory pastoralists sometimes died in these circumstances.

“We have to move from place to place and allow slow adaptation for animals but we moved at once to a place too far so there was no slow adaptation and this affected animals. If we wanted to move here, the animals would have come in the rainy season for three to four months then go back to Sabon Gidan Agan to adapt to the environment but we had to take the animals at once.” Fulbe man displaced from Benue now in Nasarawa

## 4.3 Adapting to New Realities

Due to the challenges outlined above, pastoralists have had to adapt and make many changes. Faced with declining pasture and the spectre of conflict, they are changing where they graze, how they graze and for how long they graze. Many pastoralists have chosen or been forced to settle in one location and are no longer as migratory as they had been before. The young men of the family, sometimes with their wives and children, now move with cattle while elders are sedentary. In many cases, young men form large groups for protection and to share the tasks done by the whole family previously. Pastoralists, particularly those remaining in one place, are pursuing new livelihoods. These dynamics have changed power relations within families and communities, with older men in particular complaining of diminishing power and respect.

### 4.3.1 Changing Grazing Patterns and Finding New Ways to Feed Cattle

Many pastoralists have changed grazing patterns. They take long detours to get around cattle routes blocked by farming or because of the threat of violence along the route. They have to go further into ‘the interior’ i.e. away from human habitation away from the areas they used to graze. Or, frequently, they have to use roads, because the stock routes are blocked. The tarmac damages the animals’ hooves and risks collision with vehicles. Movement can be longer or shorter. While some respondents are now travelling further distances and spending longer lengths of time in relatively newer areas, others are now sticking closer to home.

Not only are many routes and areas now farmland but, in some areas, a new type of grass grows that animals cannot eat. Respondents spoke of carrying cutlasses rather than the sticks of before to cut down leaves from trees [forage] to feed livestock. However, doing so is not always available as trees have been cut for firewood. When conflict is triggered, having cutlasses around mean conflict is more likely to lead to serious violence as they have been used to wound opponents.

“I have been grazing cows for 20 years. When I was small, it was easier and simpler to graze but now, the grasses are no longer there. Most places are farmland. The places before had grass but now we see this new kind of shrubs. The grass cannot grow so we cannot graze. This started five years ago. We get less rain now compared to the past. For the past two years, the weather has been hot. Many animals died because the dry season became longer and there is nothing for the animals to get. Most streams dried up so it is difficult to get water. Before, we would climb trees and cut leaves when the dry season became harsh and there was no grass but there has been cutting of trees in the last two years because farmers are looking for money and food security. Now, we can only follow animals and pick up anything they can eat. If not, the animals return hungry.” Fulbe man, Gwadei, Sanga LGA, Kaduna

### 4.3.2 Settlement

All pastoralist respondents spoke of a movement towards settlement. This shift occurred at different times for different respondents and locations. For example, in Plateau state, it was dated to the time of the state of emergency declared by Obasanjo from May to November 2004 as a response to the communal crises in Plateau State whereas others said this had happened more recently in the past five years. While this shift has intensified in recent years, it is part of a wider trend. According to a male Pastoral Resolve representative, “In the 1960s, 70-80 percent of pastoralists in Nasarawa and Benue were nomadic but we have seen spontaneous settlement from the 1970s onwards due to changing culture, expansion of cultivation and government policies... Now, less than 10 percent of Nigerian pastoralists are totally nomadic with no permanent settlement.” Many respondents believed Fulbe nomadism was dying out as a way of life.

“In time, movement may become history” Fulbe woman, Ganawuri, Riyom LGA, Plateau

Pastoralists settle in areas previously known to them and after asking for and receiving permission from the local ardo and other community leaders. Respondents spoke of three broad ways settlement took place. The first scenario is where the whole family settles and their cattle, if any remain, graze nearby. The second is where the entire family settles in a place except for its young men who continue to migrate with the cattle. The third is where elders stay in one place while younger people migrate with the cattle. Most of the men in the group walk to new locations with animals while the women, children and one or two men use public transport as this is easier and safer. Sometimes, one wife may remain with the elders while the other wife travels with her husband. Pastoralists can move from one form of settlement to another, first settling their elderly family members then their wives and children before stopping movement themselves. In many cases, this change happened as a result of (fear of) violence.

Respondents said they now realised they had been suffering during their years of migration and were glad to be living in one place. Others wanted to continue to move but were unable to do so. They spoke of how they missed moving, that their cattle had been more productive before, and that cultural practices had weakened as they were now living with people of different cultures. They chose areas to settle or reside based on significant presence of Fulbe. For example, pastoralists who left Anyii in Benue chose Angwan Akote because many Fulbe pastoralists are in the area.

“We had to sell a lot of animals and their productivity decreased. Because of the crisis, places we used to go to became difficult to go to. They stopped giving birth and some died. Some of our relatives were attacked and killed together with their cattle. It was very difficult. If I thought about where to go, I could not sleep at night. We suffered a lot so we decided to settle in one place and only move animals to graze and return. We decided to settle here as the majority of the people are pastoralists. We called the leader of the area to say we want to settle here. He consulted with others and did a thorough investigation before giving his decision. I was worried he would say no after the consultation but he told us to look for areas to settle then chose the area for us.” Fulbe man, Ganawuri, Riyom LGA, Plateau

### 4.3.3 Increasing Burdens on Younger Men and Reduced Power of the Patriarchs

The shift from the family walking together to only young men moving with cattle has brought challenges. In some cases, their wives and children await them in the next location whereas in others, they are away grazing for months at a time. This change has increased the burdens of both women and men who still move. Before, although these tasks fell disproportionately on women, the whole family would be involved in packing up belongings and setting up camp in a new location. These days, the women together with one or two men who use public transport with them are charged with setting up the new location while the men are on the move with the cattle. Meanwhile, young men, particularly those whose families are settled in one place, are also having to do more. Tasks shared between family members are now falling completely on their shoulders. In addition to grazing animals, young men now have to buy ingredients, cook food, set up and pack up camp, find pastoralist women to whom to sell milk for hawking, make decisions about cattle routes to take and try and settle any disputes that arise.

They have started to move in larger groups not just for protection and support in case of attacks as described above but for practical reasons, to share tasks among young men which used to be divided across family members. Cooking rotates among the group with young men in teams taking it in turns to cook. This shift affects how well young men can look after cattle. They either have divided attention or leave less

“Women would cook food so we can concentrate on grazing but now, young men have to look for and cook food and look after animals... Migration alone is tiresome compared to when women, children, elders are there. The schedule is more and a bit tight. The work that two or three people used to do has been reduced to one person so our activities increase. Women would tie up all the luggage, prepare huts and food while young men concentrate on animals... Now, most of the youth when we come to a location and find pastoralist women in the area, we sell milk to them. We don't hawk whereas before, women would hawk milk or sell to people who came to buy.” Fulbe man, Ungwanungu, Sanga LGA, Kaduna

skilled boys to look after cows. These boys are unable to control the cattle which then damage crops. Respondents also said boys hired to look after animals are not invested in this work because animals do not belong to their families and they are not on good terms with cattle owners. In other cases, boys hired to take care of animals will leave without notice, leaving the pastoralist to look for animals in the bush.

The young men interviewed spoke of missing parents and their advice. They discuss matters and seek advice from wives if they are with them. If their wives are elsewhere, they spend months without family. They spoke about the loneliness they feel during this time and how difficult it had

“When we were with our parents, they teach you so many things – how to relate with people and how to take care of yourself and your family... Both father and mother would be advising you. When you are not with them, you have to think about what to do and some decisions are very difficult....Sometimes, you can discuss with elders who are still migrating. Nowadays, young men come together to advise and have decisions. We also discuss with our wives who are with us so we can come to a decision together.” Fulbe man, Cuibo, Doma LGA, Nasarawa

become to take decisions, for example about which cattle routes to take, without having family members around. The family splitting impacts familial bonds. Marriages break down due to this distance and breaks in interaction and communication. Young men said they spent less time with family now than before as they no longer move together. Visits can be shorter if cattle routes are blocked by farming activities. This means young men must rush back as they have left cattle with others whereas they could previously move with cattle and spend more time with families.

These young men are under a lot of strain. They are responsible for the wealth of their families which is tied up in cattle but face increasing difficulties in finding enough food and water to ensure their

continued good health while avoiding violence. They do so with reduced parental advice and support and from ages as young as 15 years onwards. Older respondents expressed great sympathy for these young men. Women respondents in particular spoke of the challenges faced by their teenage sons while looking after the family's cattle. However, older respondents also spoke about how young men's character and behaviour had changed without parents around to advise and in the absence of their wives and children.

Young men in Nigeria are often blamed for violence and, as will be shown in the section on farmer/pastoralist relations, much violence in research locations is driven by the actions of others such as community leaders and politicians. Young men can be agents of peace as well as involved in conflict. However, it is important to recognise the role of masculinities in driving conflict and for conflict morphing into violence. This shift from entire families to large groups of young men moving with cattle is significant. All-male groups, particularly those charged with protecting family and community lives and property, can exhibit behaviour more likely to exacerbate conflict and violence. Respondents for the present study linked increasing numbers of fights, encroachment onto farmland and involvement in criminality with this change. Young men spoke about how their elders, female and male, used to caution against violence when young men wanted to retaliate against wrongdoing. Without the presence of these voices, this need for restraint was less likely to be voiced. Masculinities, the desire to protect the wealth of their families, the intense stresses these young men are under, drug abuse and the lack of family support in a time of declining pasture and water and increasing violence combine to intensify conflict dynamics and make violence more likely.

“Now, a young man doesn't know what to do and before you realise it is bad, it's gone far. For example, they abandon animals and engage in other unrelated activities such as you can align with others to engage in kidnapping, cattle theft, cattle rustling, robbery. Some listen to elders and women but some now do not listen or obey instructions. Some call parents or wives to tell them of the situation for advice but others do not consult and take the law into their own hands.” Fulbe man, Ungwanungu, Sanga LGA, Kaduna

Meanwhile, the power of older men had reduced. This changed power dynamic is not surprising given the burden of livelihoods now falls on younger men who run risks and do work necessary to graze cattle while older men are more likely to remain free from the hardship and strain. Older

men still expect deference but do not necessarily fulfil responsibilities needed to earn respect. Many older male pastoralists complained of younger men, how they dressed, that they were taking decisions alone and that traditional ways of showing respect were not followed. They felt young men could decide not to agree to certain practices such as shadi or soro.<sup>5</sup> While older men interviewed were not necessarily proponents of shadi and there are many reasons why shadi as a practice is no longer followed by many Fulbe, older men felt these decisions by younger men were indicative of the power they had to decide which traditions to follow or not follow.

“Now, people have a lot of knowledge but no wisdom... There is too much civilisation now so young people decide to marry from other tribes. Children decide what they want. There is a lot of disrespect from women and children. It is becoming unbearable as they want to eliminate you if you have wealth. Pastoralist women would only hawk milk before but now they open shops and restaurants and connive with children to kill, take your cows to the market to sell and make the husband sick with high blood pressure.” Fulbe man in Rukuba, Bassa LGA, Plateau

They also expressed unhappiness at changes in gender roles and norms. Due to economic necessity, women are now going out more in public and engaging in a range of new livelihoods. Some older women said gender norms had become more restrictive but this has recently changed. One Fulbe woman in Rukuba, Bassa LGA, Plateau said women in her family had stopped doing certain things such as hawking milk about 10 years ago as they started to practice kulle<sup>6</sup> due to religious influence as their husbands did not want their wives to go out. However, this restriction has changed and now some women in her community are selling firewood, doing tailoring and running shops as well as hawking milk. This shift is due to broader societal changes and increased levels of education as well as increased need for women to engage in new forms of economic activities given family need, men’s inability or unwillingness to provide, and the lack of viability of previous livelihoods that women pursued such as milk hawking. Some older men said they still try to ensure their wives and daughters do not hawk milk but stay at home and have husbands looking after them. They felt they received less respect from women who also are less likely to rely on them. They expressed suspicion and discontent about the livelihood activities in which women were engaged, saying women go out for hawking milk and arrive back late at night and no longer listen to their instructions or orders.

#### 4.3.4 Pursuing New Livelihoods

In the past, women would hawk milk, take care of the family, cook food, fetch water, wash clothes, look for firewood, set up and pack up camp when moving, and do other household tasks. Men would graze the cattle, milk the cows, and give the milk to women for processing and selling. With time, this role would be played by sons rather than husbands. These dynamics still continue in some communities but people also pursue new livelihoods as they have settled, seen cattle killed or stolen, had to sell cattle or found pastoralism to no longer be productive.

Whereas women sold milk and men sold cattle previously, income was either not forthcoming or insufficient to meet family needs. Some women respondents said cows did not have enough grass

---

<sup>5</sup>Shadi is a practice whereby young men of another clan beat young men and boys who are their age mates. The person being beaten has to show he can withstand pain and so prove his masculinity. When a clan issues an invitation for shadi, it is very difficult to refuse as the person refusing will be branded a coward and his refusal used as a reason to disregard what he says. This practice takes place from a young age onwards, escalating in the amount of violence and with formal invitations issued, until the age of around 30 years. While this used to be more playful in the past, it has become more violent with often serious injuries suffered requiring medical treatment and leading to bad relationships and bitterness between clans.

<sup>6</sup>Seclusion.

to produce milk. Other respondents had to buy milk from other pastoralists to sell as their family's cattle were either grazed by the young men of the family in locations faraway or had been killed. Doing so badly affecting profit margins. A Jos based researcher spoke of how women were no longer able to go to the market in some parts of Plateau state because of fear of violence and that their business had been affected by rumours that Fulbe women were poisoning people through the milk and oil they sold. As women are no longer able to provide for the family through selling milk as they previously had done, families are increasingly reliant on the sale of cows to meet the family's needs, leading to dwindling herds. Particularly widows and those who had taken in the children of their children or co-wives killed in violence spoke of the difficulties of supporting the family.

"I would hawk milk and get money and buy whatever I wanted... I would buy clothes, buy ingredients for cooking and husbands were relieved of this [responsibility]. Men would buy rice, maize and beans from the money they got selling cows. Our husband wouldn't even know how much money I sell the milk for and he has no business knowing. Women decide what to buy. If I had money left over from what I want to buy when I come home, I would hide the money from him." Fulbe woman, displaced from Anyii in Benue to Angwan Akote, Awe LGA, Nasarawa

Settled pastoralists diversify into new livelihoods while pursuing pastoralism if possible. Women make clothes, soap, pomades and bournvita, raise chickens and white goats, braid hair, knit sweaters, sell ghee, butter, fura and moin moin during the dry season and fry akara and yam. Meanwhile, men are tailoring, selling fertiliser and provisions, being okada and keke napep drivers as well as grazing animals. While both women and men are farming, women farm maize and rice while men farmed guinea corn, ginger, carrots and cabbage for commercial use.

"The crisis has impacted women negatively as we had a lot of milk in Benue and would hawk, get money and use this to take care of ourselves... There is no pasture or water for cows here. We had fear of conflict and crisis so we had to separate the people from the cows. So, people stay in one place where it is safer and send cows to graze in Abendo in Benue. It's not a very safe place to go and settle as conflict can happen at any time... [Husbands] have to sell a cow to take care of the family and household responsibilities. Women would support the running of the household before [through selling milk but can no longer do so] .... More cows are being sold now than we would like as there is no other alternative." Fulbe woman, Cuibo, Doma LGA, Nasarawa

## 5.0 Intra-Pastoralist Relations

Although interactions across pastoralist groups had been positive in the past with marriage frequently cited as an indicator of strength of relationships, respondents also spoke of reduced levels of solidarity and support compared to before. Violent conflict had affected relations. Pastoralists spoke of particular groups being more likely to be involved in crop damage, criminality, and violence and the actions they had taken to mitigate these risks. Relations between pastoralists had frayed as a result with some groups no longer interacting or feeling a sense of bitterness towards each other.

### 5.1 Interactions Between Pastoralist Groups

Respondents spoke of generally good interactions across the groupings outlined above. They spoke about relationships between different Fulbe leyfi, which can vary depending on the location and leyfi concerned. They spoke of other groups with whom they did and did not inter-marry and the reasons why. While they were a sense of solidarity among the Fulbe, this feeling was said to be no longer as strong as it once had been.

#### 5.1.1 Inter- Leyfi Relations

Relations between leyfi vary. Some leyfi are closer than others due to historic ties if leyfi came from the same location, present interaction if they live together now, or if they are sub-groups of the same leyfi. Respondents said hardship and crisis brings together people of different leyfi who have gone through this common experience together. While some respondents felt closer to their own leyfi or to leyfi with whom they had a shared history, others felt location and shared history was more important than the leyfi. They were closer to those they lived next to even if they were of different leyfi rather than people of the same leyfi who lived far away. Leyfi that are close have particularly friendly and joking interactions and are considered as playmates. The strength of relationship with another clan can be present across the leyfi, for example if for reasons of lineage, or be localised to a particular area, for example if two leyfi live together and intermarry. In some cases, leyfi had become so close they considered themselves as one.

Although there are conflict dynamics related to inter- leyfi relations, respondents disclosed no significant conflict between leyfi. They spoke of tensions between individuals of same and different leyfi alike, for example during community gatherings for ceremonies and religious festivals or over marriage if two people want to marry the same person. In some areas, conflict mitigation mechanisms deal with intra-pastoralist conflict dynamics. For example, in Laduga grazing reserve in Kaduna, respondents said elders, leyfi leaders and heads of family meet to manage risk of escalation of conflict. Although conflict dynamics existed between pastoralists in research locations, for example around issues such as land, theft of cows and farm produce and sexual violence, the only form of significant intra-pastoralist violence disclosed was that of gender-based violence.

#### 5.1.2 Support and Solidarity?

Many respondents spoke of feeling solidarity with other Fulbe. They spoke of going on condolence visits and giving money and food items to others who had been caught up in violent conflict. However, they also described a dissipation of ethnic identity and solidarity. Sometimes, this change is due to practical reasons. An older Fulbe man interviewed in Rukuba in Bassa LGA, Plateau spoke about how brotherhood had decreased saying friends used to visit each other

previously but now, people hardly visit or support even their own blood relations. He attributed this change to people being less willing to walk long distances, less sympathetic and more attracted to “worldly things.” For other pastoralists, diminished relationships were a conflict avoidance mechanism. One Fulbe man interviewed in Rukuba in Bassa LGA, Plateau said: “The Irigwe people are fighting with the pastoralists in Miango and not others – but we will not be spared if they think we have come to support the pastoralists there.”

### 5.1.3 Inter-Marriage as an Indicator of Cohesion

In some areas where pastoralists are settled, *leyfi* marry internally for the first marriage but for the second marriage in case of divorce or widowhood, women and girls can marry men of other *leyfi*. These dynamics are highly context specific however as in other areas, inter-marriage between *leyfi* is common and women and girls have more choice in marriage partner rather than having elders decide. Respondents in some locations even spoke of marriage between Fulbe who were settled and non- Fulbe being common, as long as the person concerned was also Muslim. Meanwhile, Rimndooɓe (migratory pastoralist) respondents spoke of mostly marrying within the group that travelled together, including within the family or lineage: “I married the younger brother to my father so he was in the same group. We were 10 households moving together. We are all related” (Fulbe woman, from Wukari in Benue who had moved to Angwan Akote, Awe LGA, Nasarawa).

Inter-marriage is not common or encouraged between Rimndooɓe and Joodiibe. While Joodiibe (settled pastoralists) spoke of increasing numbers of intermarriages with other *leyfi* and with non-pastoralists, many respondents showed reluctance to allow their children to marry Rimndooɓe. They felt marrying Rimndooɓe would be a step backwards, did not like the migratory lifestyle and worried about the additional hardships their children would face. As one Fulbe woman in Rukuba, Bassa LGA, Plateau said, “We marry other *leyfi* but not the Le’ien because of their culture and their exposing of bodies and as they keep moving about. I cannot see my child doing that and I would worry about my grandchildren’s education. Their men are violent and they don’t do houses for their women.”

Rimndooɓe respondents spoke about how their daughters would be happy to marry Joodiibe men to have easier and more comfortable lives. On the other hand, they thought it would be difficult for a Joodiibe woman to marry a Rimndooɓe man as they would likely find the migratory lifestyle difficult, not have the required skills to do tasks required in movement and be unable to cope. These statements need to be seen in the context of conflict dynamics between the Rimndooɓe and Joodiibe, discussed below.

“It is difficult to marry their daughters or sons but I am happy to marry my children [to them] if they are settled but not if they are nomadic. I will encourage them to settle first as my daughter is not used to moving and sleeping outside. If a nomadic girl agrees to stay here, that will be okay, but not if she pulls my son to migrate. I hate movement, not the people who move” (Fulbe man in Rukuba, Bassa LGA, Plateau).

## 5.2 Conflict Dynamics Between Pastoralist Groups

While no incident of violence between pastoralist groups was mentioned, many conflict dynamics exist with claims and counter-claims made. A significant fault-line is around movement and settlement, between those seen as Rimndooɓe (migratory) and Joodiibe (sedentary). While some respondents from both groups had positive things to say about the other, the Joodiibe evinced a superiority over the Rimndooɓe due to the fact they were settled, their increased levels of (formal)

education and their supposed higher religiosity. They disparaged the movement in which Rimndooḃe engage, their continuation of cultural customs, and gender norms and roles, saying Rimndooḃe men did not live up to ideals of Islamic masculinity and women provided for the family and dressed in ways not allowed by Islam. The Rimndooḃe on their part felt stigmatised and discriminated but stressed their higher level of knowledge and exposure from living in different places. Respondents also claimed particular groups of pastoralists were more likely to be involved in crop damage and criminality. Conversations centred around pastoralists from particular locations as well as circling back to the Rimndooḃe/ Joodiibe dynamic.

### 5.2.1 The Rimndooḃe vs Joodiibe Dichotomy

The quality of relations between Joodiibe and Rimndooḃe varied. Many respondents from both groups talked about meeting when grazing, attending each other's festivals and ceremonies, and their children playing together. Main sites of interaction are between women, young men, and elders/ leaders. Rimndooḃe women come to the towns and villages to buy goods at the market, sew cloths and hawk milk. Young men interact as they often graze in the same areas while elders/ leaders interact when it comes to matters affecting their communities.

Some Rimndooḃe respondents talked about how much more they liked the settled lifestyle. Increased access to education, mentioned by almost every respondent, was particularly prized. For Rimndooḃe women, the attractions of being settled in one place are obvious. They spoke of being under constant strain and the stress of having to prepare for movement. One respondent who was 30 years old had given birth to 10 children, all on the road with no access to antenatal or hospital care. Sometimes, sick people can be left behind to continue accessing medical care as the group migrates because staying can mean cattle, their main source of livelihood, will die. Meanwhile, some Joodiibe respondents said they appreciated that Rimndooḃe protected their culture and traditions, wore Fulbe attire, followed Fulbe customs, and spoke a 'purer' Fulfulde unadulterated with Hausa words in contrast with themselves who had assimilated. They saw Rimndooḃe as having larger herds and bigger cattle because "They have more grass, keep to tradition and give things to their cattle to make them healthy and grow" (Fulbe woman in Rukuba, Bassa LGA, Plateau). They had sympathy for the Rimndooḃe. They saw them as vulnerable to violence while passing through conflict-affected areas. They believed, due to their lack of education, Rimndooḃe had less access to healthcare and were more likely to be taken advantage of, for example by being fined higher amounts than the value of crops damaged.

However, more Joodiibe respondents were highly critical of the Rimndooḃe than positive. A number said that there was nothing they liked about them. They saw themselves as superior precisely because they were settled. Their narratives showed a respectability politics<sup>7</sup> focused on length of settlement, expressions of religiosity and gender politics, contrasted with Rimndooḃe who they often call Mbororo or Le'ien. Joodiibe viewed Rimndooḃe as less religiously conscious, drinking alcohol, going out at night, smoking, not fasting or praying, being dirty when praying, and not practicing good Islam. They did not like that Rimndooḃe followed Fulbe customs, seen as not allowed by Islam, which they had left behind. One example given is when young men travel from

---

<sup>7</sup>The term 'respectability politics' describes the ways marginalised groups police their own members and show their behaviour and social values as compatible with the mainstream or dominant groups rather than challenging them for failure to accept difference. People engaging in respectability politics do so believing that conformity to standards deemed acceptable by the mainstream or dominant groups will protect members of minority or marginalised groups from prejudice, violence and systemic injustice. However, this policing is not only symptomatic of internalised oppression, whereby the idea of inferiority of certain identities, behaviour and ways of life become internalised by individuals of minority or marginalised backgrounds, but continues to place acceptance in the hands of oppressive systems and tends to create sub-groups that become even more marginalised.

one community to another to celebrate the transition to becoming koriyo (a life stage at 28-33 years of age) for approximately a month. One Fulbe woman interviewed in Rukuba in Bassa LGA in Plateau said: “[Before] all we were looking forward to is the koriyo where during naming ceremonies, we would invite people, play drums and dance... Now we are educated, exposed, and realise it conflicts with the religion, all the leyfi here have stopped. The Le’ien are still doing this. We don’t like this as it is not putting children on the right path. They will only know how to drum and dance when they grow up and don’t want to go to school for proper education.” As with other Muslims in northern Nigeria, while pastoralists are more likely to belong to the Qadiriyya and Tijaniyya tariqa of Sufi Islam, in areas of Plateau and southern Kaduna, many (settled) pastoralists are Izala.<sup>8</sup> Many Joodiibe respondents gave the risk of children learning ‘bad habits’ or becoming religiously lax as why they do not want to become too close to Rimndooibe.

It was difficult to understand the present-day meaning of the term ‘Mbororo’. It signifies pastoralists who move but some migratory pastoralists rather identified with their leyfi. Some pastoralists, called Mbororo by others, said it was a term given to them by Joodiibe with which they don’t identify and saw as derogatory. A nomadic woman said, “The Mbororo are the genuine Fulbe. Anyone else is not an original Fulbe. We cannot understand what they say as their language is difficult. I don’t want Mbororo to come close. There are no intermarriages between the Sisilbe and Mbororo. There is nothing I like about them. We are all migratory pastoralists but even if we are moving in the same direction, we do not settle in the same place together. We don’t mix” (Fulbe woman, from Wukari in Benue to Angwan Akote, Awe LGA, Nasarawa). That this woman had this perspective is not surprising according to a scholar who has studied and spent time with the Fulbe as the Sisilbe, a clan with origins in northwest Nigeria but now found across the country, generally cannot speak Fulfulde and are seen as having lost much of the nomadic Fulbe culture which creates a barrier and some suspicion between them and other Fulbe leyfi. It was clear the term Mbororo carries significant stigma among some people, to the extent that almost every pastoralist respondent who is settled distanced themselves from it. On the other hand, this same scholar said Mbororo as a word is not necessarily derogatory per se and, while settled pastoralists use it in a derogatory way, those who are nomadic do not generally see the term as negative.

Another area of criticism is gender norms. Rimndooibe respondents said they did not like the way Joodiibe women behave, characterising them as not having kunya<sup>9</sup> and engaged in opening up shops and having occupations which they saw as not good while Joodiibe respondents said Rimndooibe women were half naked rather than being covered as required by Islam. Rimndooibe men were seen as not living up to breadwinner masculinity ideals and Islamic standards of manhood. Many Joodiibe men talked of how they do not sell cows to look after their families financially but rather that household needs were met by the money earned by Rimndooibe women by hawking milk. Joodiibe women also spoke of the differences between Rimndooibe and Joodiibe men, saying Rimndooibe men care more about their animals than their wives. They saw Rimndooibe men as being hot-tempered and more likely to beat their wives before divorcing them.

<sup>8</sup>Sufism is often defined as the individual quest to get closer to God and interpret Islam in the context of prevailing (corrupting) times. Sufis make up the majority group of northern Nigeria Muslims and tend to favour internal struggle to external jihad targeted at others. While the Qadiriyya is the oldest of the Sufi orders in northern Nigeria, the Tijaniyya is possibly the largest. In 1978, Jama’atu Izalatil Bida’a wa Iqamat al Sunna (Society for the Eradication of Innovation and Reinstatement of Tradition), popularly known as Izala was established by reformist Salafists. Izala is opposed to Sufism which it considers to consist of unacceptable innovations and advocates societal (moral) reform without violence. Many accuse Izala followers of intolerance, provocation, and aggressive behaviour such as forceful seizure of mosques and attempts to prevent Sufi rituals. There has been violent intra-Islam conflict. Abdul Raufu Mustapha, and Mukhtar U. Bunza, ‘Contemporary Islamic Sects and Groups in Northern Nigeria’ in Abdul Raufu Mustapha (ed), *Sects and Social Disorder: Muslim Identities and Conflict in Northern Nigeria*, (James Currey, 2014), pp. 54-97.

<sup>9</sup>Shame.

Given the sensitivities involved in asking questions around domestic violence, the study was unable to ascertain if this was the case in reality.

“Before you marry a woman, you must have a place where you will keep her but they move around with wives and sleep wherever night falls. You have to take care of your women, give them a room to stay not keep on seeing your wife suffering and looking for what the family will eat. Rimndooɓe men are not living up to their responsibilities under Islam. Before you marry, you must ensure your family will provide for your wife in terms of clothing, food and housing.” Fulbe man, in Ganawuri (Wuronmodi), Riyom LGA, Plateau).

Many Joodiibe respondents wanted Rimndooɓe to settle, send their children to schools and stop modes of dressing and cultural practices seen to contradict Islam. In areas where formerly migratory pastoralists had settled, many respondents who had been settled there when they arrived spoke of how well they had integrated and the length of time they had lived in the same place together. However, even these groups were seen as still having a way to go to ‘catch up’ to their own standards in terms of education, Islamic knowledge and other ways of being ‘civilised’. On the other hand, Rimndooɓe respondents viewed those who had settled as ‘Westernised’ as they had become integrated with non-pastoralists and go to state and Islamic school as opposed to Rimndooɓe who remain closer to Fulbe culture. They were not happy about how they are seen by Joodiibe and felt discriminated against and stigmatised.

Rimndooɓe and Joodiibe held different attitudes of what constitutes knowledge and wisdom to be prized. Each felt they were wiser than the other. While Joodiibe talk about attending school, Rimndooɓe talk of the value of other forms of wisdom, stressing their knowledge of cows and exposure to other locations, people, languages and ways of living as opposed to the Joodiibe who stay in one place.

“Rimndooɓe are wiser and more intelligent than Joodiibe... because we interact with different people in different locations in different communities... For example, in Kagoma, my wife would sit with people who are not Muslims or pastoralists and so is able to be wise while Joodiibe only stay with one kind of people. They only know their area and people while our children can speak Kagoma, Tiv, Kadara, and even broken English from when we stayed at the border between Enugu and Benue because they have spent time in different communities and interacted with people there. Joodiibe know that the Rimndooɓe know more than them, that we know people, are more exposed, know so many places and know animal diseases more. [Diseases] occur in different locations and Rimndooɓe know which diseases occur in which places. Even when it comes to searching for a place to stay for some time, Rimndooɓe look at the place and know what will be good for animals but Joodiibe will not know.” Fulbe man, Cuibo, Doma LGA, Nasarawa

These narratives seem to have intensified at a time of increased fluidity of categories as more pastoralists have moved from migrating to settling as well as a time of increased conflict and violence. As discussed below, intra- pastoralist relations feed into broader conflict dynamics. Respondents who were or had been migratory until recently spoke about their fear of losing their ways of life while more settled pastoralists tended to cast blame on those who migrated. However, as described above, not all respondents held oppositional views and many could see the hardships and attractions of life of the other way.

## 5.2.2 The ‘Troublemakers’

Pastoralist respondents pointed to certain groups of pastoralists as more likely to be involved in conflict, violence and criminality. These dynamics need to be understood in the context of a general breakdown in social cohesion and trust as discussed above. The groups mentioned included pastoralists from particular places such as Bauchi, Borno, Gombe, Zamfara, Niger Republic and areas experiencing violence. The Joodfiibe/ Rimndoobe dynamic also played a role in intra-pastoralist perceptions.

Respondents spoke about pastoralists from other places coming into their locality and causing problems. For example, pastoralists who were previously in Benue spoke of those from Bauchi and Gombe causing more crop damage than those who stayed in the locality, feeling they allowed their cattle to deliberately damage farms. Respondents also blamed a group of pastoralists from Niger Republic. While they were not present in any of the research locations, respondents knew of them and their supposed behaviour from time spent in areas they were present as they had increasingly been coming to Bauchi during the dry season to escape desertification in Niger. According to one respondent, “People do not say good about them as they break all the laws. They allow animals to damage cassava farms. For us, damage is a mistake but for them it is deliberate. It’s in their nature and character. Since they came, we see more farms destroyed” (Fulbe man in Ganawuri, Riyom LGA, Plateau). As farmers were seen to be able to differentiate this group from Niger from other pastoralists due to their different animals and mode of dressing, this damage had not affected relations. Unfortunately, we were only able to talk with pastoralists who frequently migrated to Bauchi about this Nigerien group and, as Bauchi was not a research state, not able to talk with the group themselves. They might well be referring to the Uda’en.

The location seen by the largest number of respondents to produce pastoralists that caused harm was Zamfara. Notions of the Fulbe from Zamfara being criminals were prevalent although recent and linked to escalation of violence and criminality in the state. While some respondents saw many Fulbe from Zamfara as victims and blamed the current insecurity in Zamfara on lack of government action, they also automatically suspect those from Zamfara present in the area of any theft that takes place. In some locations, actions are taken to prevent Zamfara Fulbe coming into the area and, if someone gives permission for Fulbe from Zamfara to settle and there is any incident in the area, not only are the Fulbe from Zamfara blamed but so too are the people who allowed them to settle. There have also been efforts to restrict pastoralists leaving Zamfara and settling elsewhere as traditional leaders in Niger, on the request of their counterparts in Zamfara do not allow pastoralists to pass through Niger. The reasons given were economic, due to the revenue earned from milk and beef production by the Zamfara state government and potential negative impact if pastoralists leave the state.

“Anyone who comes here from there, we fear that they are among the people committing those crises... Zamfara people kill people, attack whole village, rustle animals – the farmers there also do this. We are worried it can occur here” (Fulbe man in Sunkani, Ardo Kola LGA, Taraba).

Only in Taraba, did pastoralists talk of fear of the Fulbe from Borno. Possible reasons could be that the Fulbe did not join armed opposition groups in northeast Nigeria in large numbers, historic lack of participation of nomadic (as opposed to town) Fulbe in jihadist movement and as Fulbe in Borno are seen as victims rather than perpetrators of violence. Additionally, Fulbe from Borno have not migrated to research states apart from Taraba. In Taraba, some respondents spoke of how they were worried the violence in Borno may spread: “We are worried that Borno people will spread such ideology here because we hear they abduct children from school so there is fear among people with children in school that they will start doing such things here. If that thing comes

here, they also rustle animals in their thousands and we are worried that we will lose our animals” (Fulbe man in Sunkani, Ardo Kola LGA, Taraba). However, they spoke positively of the Fulbe who had been displaced from Borno to Taraba, saying that they were fleeing violence and that there had been no trouble associated with them.

Despite the violence, there is still some movement between Borno and Taraba because of better productivity and reproduction, larger grazing areas, good pasture and healthier soil in Borno. Pastoralists migrate to areas in Borno that are safe during the rainy season and come to Ardo Kola LGA in Taraba during the dry season. However, many pastoralists have also fled violence in Borno for Taraba. While there has been no conflict between these internally displaced people and host pastoralists, there are issues with access to land as there is insufficient grazing area for all. While pastoralists who have been in Ardo Kola for a long time graze their cows elsewhere due to lack of pasture, this is not the case for people escaping violence who instead buy animal feed for their cattle as well as graze where they can.

Respondents expressed a lot of sympathy for pastoralists who had been forced to leave particular areas due to violence or political policies. They hosted them and gave them areas to stay. Many displaced pastoralists tend to go to places they have relatives or which contain displaced pastoralists. However, levels of support pastoralists could provide those displaced had declined as host pastoralists too were now struggling to look after even themselves and their families let alone able to help anyone else. Nevertheless, most pastoralists living in these areas characterised relations as largely positive. For example, pastoralists who were forcibly displaced from Benue said they had been welcomed by pastoralists living in Nasarawa communities. In Angwan Akote in Doma LGA, they had been given land on which to farm so they could get food to feed the family given most of their cattle had been killed. There had also been intermarriages. One reason for these smooth relations could be because of solidarity and sympathy given the events in Benue and as many pastoralists in the area are relative newcomers too. One respondent spoke of having been in the area for only 13 years while the first set of pastoralists from Benue arrived 10 years ago. Also, as the pastoralists from Benue do not have many cows, there were no issues in terms of sufficiency of pasture or cows damaging farmland and worsening relations with farmers. Many non-pastoralists also were recent arrivals and relations between them and pastoralists from Benue and those living in Nasarawa beforehand were said to be cordial.

However, in other areas which have a longer history of settlement, some respondents blamed newcomers for encroachment on farmland. They said they do so because they have a history of crisis with farmers and do not know what it means to co-exist peacefully. Actions of people from another area can spark conflict if they don't follow the rules agreed upon between farmers and pastoralists of the community.

“People displaced from crisis areas influence others to follow their way of thinking and do not communicate in a peaceful way. They have bad character and have been sent out and asked to leave [their previous area] as they are people used to crisis. They exhibit the same character that they used to exhibit and graze on somebody's farm and destroy crops. They do not follow guiding rules, for example not to climb trees and cut branches to feed animals, and graze carelessly. There are tensions between us as we have different ways of living and they influence our youth to accept [their] way of life” (Fulbe man in Rukuba, Bassa LGA, Plateau).

Additionally, dynamics between Joodiibe and Rimndooibe discussed above manifest further when it comes to perception of who causes damage and violence. While crisis was seen as cutting across all Fulbe people, many Joodiibe spoke of how Rimndooibe were mostly likely to damage crops at night and leave. Farmers who discovered this crop damage in the morning often blame

and attack the nearest Fulbe community. Some Rimndooɓe agreed that they were more likely to destroy crops than settled pastoralists but, they felt perceptions that it was in the character of the Rimndooɓe to misbehave or damage crops was untrue and unjust. The Joodiibe see Rimndooɓe actions in damaging crops as affecting relations with farmer neighbours. When they explain what has happened, these farmers sometimes believe them that it was the Rimndooɓe who caused crop damage and sometimes do not, depending on strength of relationships and their knowledge of intra-pastoralist dynamics.

These dynamics are a manifestation of a changing pattern of relationship between the Rimndooɓe and Joodiibe. There used to be more cooperation in the past. Rimndooɓe needed food, water, security, social relations and interactions, and information and so had to establish relations with communities along migratory routes to get this. Likewise, Joodiibe needed information about what was happening in other locations. As a result, social relations existed between Joodiibe, Rimndooɓe and the farming communities they passed through. This pattern is now changing. Rimndooɓe know the 'territories of aggression' where they are likely to be cheated or their property stolen. They cut off interactions, increasingly not wanting to associate with anybody and passing through communities silently. They know relations even with the Joodiibe are now likely to lack cordiality and they see them as being closer to farmers.

Some Rimndooɓe respondents interviewed could understand why this was the case: "Farming is very difficult. You keep doing a lot of work then animals destroy. Farmers like their farm like pastoralists like their cows so the way Joodiibe see Rimndooɓe has truth. They sympathise with farmers when they see destruction. We have felt bitterness from Joodiibe as the consequences fall on them. Someone commits a crime and the blame falls on the innocent" (Fulbe woman, Ganawuri, Riyom LGA, Plateau). However, Joodiibe are engaged in policing Rimndooɓe passing through their communities and many Rimndooɓe are bitter about this. Respondents spoke of investigating Rimndooɓe to see if they are of good character by calling relatives who live in areas from which they are coming. If they receive bad reports, they ask them to leave. If they commit any offences, they arrest them and hand them over to the police. In many locations, Joodiibe youth have formed groups called Jonde Jam (Fulfulde: 'Peace') to patrol cattle routes and watch Rimndooɓe who are passing. In Ganawuri, this has been happening for the past two years. If Rimndooɓe cattle damage any crops, the pastoralist responsible is detained until the relevant farmer is around so they can pay compensation. There are usually clashes when this happens with arguments and accusations: "Rimndooɓe feel unhappy and betrayed by their own people. Many Rimndooɓe have taken to passing at night as a result, at times where Joodiibe youth are not on the cattle routes" (Fulbe woman, in Ganawuri, Riyom LGA, Plateau).

## 6.0 Relations Between Farmers and Pastoralists

In contrast to some popular narratives of ancient enmities, relations between farmers and pastoralists have historically been generally positive. Where conflict arises, it is resolved either bilaterally between conflicting parties or with the involvement of others. However, incidents of conflict have increased as have their escalation into violence due to a number of factors including some of the issues mentioned in the pastoralism in Nigeria today section above as well as roles played by politicians, community leaders, and media practitioners. Intra-pastoralist dynamics also play a part and some non-pastoralists point to particular pastoralist groups they see as problematic. Policy responses discussed include grazing reserves, banning open grazing, and ranching but, in the absence of strong conflict prevention mechanisms and due to the actions of political players, they can have unintended consequences of exacerbating conflict.

### 6.1 Putting Violence Conflict into Perspective

While the focus of this paper is on conflict between pastoralists and farmers, this conflict should be placed in perspective. There can be as much conflict within these groups, for example between Tiv and Jukun (farmers) communities in Benue and Taraba as between farmers and pastoralists. One male Aten (Ganawuri) farmer in Riyom LGA in Plateau even said that he knew no history of conflict with pastoralists in his area and that conflict was rather with other farmers.

Farmers and pastoralists have a long history of peaceful coexistence. There are mechanisms to both mitigate and resolve conflict. Indeed, many respondents spoke about how this conflict was a relatively recent phenomenon and pointed to the role of political and community leaders in its creation and perpetuation.

#### 6.1.1 A History of (More or Less) Peaceful Coexistence

Pastoralists and farmers told of harmony, peace and cordial relations in the past. They visited each other's houses, went for ceremonies and condolence visits, and spent time together while buying and selling goods. Farmers asked pastoralists to graze on their land after harvest. Pastoralists gave manure to farmers. It was not only between those living in the same locations that relations were good. A Fulbe man, interviewed in Angwan Akote, Awe LGA, Nasarawa recalled a time where he and his family were nomads, moving from Katsina to Bauchi to Adamawa to Taraba, and said: "I enjoyed the movement. Anywhere we went, we felt it was safe. We didn't think of the conflict in the area. We are comfortable following the animals. We had enough pasture. We are free and don't fear. It was a great time for me. We had no problems with the communities that we passed through."

In some places, these relations continue in the present. Women in particular come together across community lines, speak with their husbands and sons to urge calm, and protest for peace. These relationships tended to be strongest among people who knew each other well. In some areas such as Rukuba in Bassa LGA and Ganawuri in Riyom LGA, both in Plateau state, pastoralists and non-pastoralists have historic ties. In Rukuba, respondents spoke of how the Gamanko'en of the Fulbe and Rukuba people migrated from Sokoto hundreds of years ago. In Ganawuri, respondents said the Fulbe and Ganawuri people were co-existing in the mountains during the colonial era and moved down together. Young male respondents, often seen as perpetrators of violence, spend time together despite conflict dynamics: "We meet in the market and villages and discuss in the evenings in non-pastoralist villages. We make jokes. Sometimes we greet as we are passing but we sometimes sit and talk. We have never discussed our

challenges, we just have fun with each other” (Fulbe man, Gwadei, Sanga LGA, Kaduna). Strong relations between groups are attested to by intermarriages. One respondent said, “We are closer to the Rukuba people than pastoralists far from here or Rimndoobe. We have intermarriages and grandchildren with them” (Fulbe man in Rukuba, Bassa LGA, Plateau).

### 6.1.2 Functional Conflict Resolution Mechanisms

In many locations, respondents spoke of conflict resolution mechanisms still functioning. Proactive efforts made by communities reduce levels of conflict. If cattle destroy crops, the pastoralist meets the farmer, apologises, and either is forgiven or pays compensation for damage caused. This process happens either on a bilateral basis or with the involvement of others. Community leaders meet or there are committees of young people drawn from farmer and pastoralist communities who investigate incidents and decide ways to make amends.

In areas where incidents spark conflict, peace and reconciliation meetings ease tensions. When crop damage occurs, pastoralists are asked to pay compensation. When cattle routes are blocked by farms, they meet the leaders of the Fulbe and farmers’ communities who then speak with the farmers concerned to ask them to open an area for cattle to pass. This opening is made and conflict mitigated. Success is not always guaranteed and some farmers continue to farm in grazing areas and incidence of crop damage continues. Yet, where it does work, fair processes of adjudication and sense of justice reduce incentives to use violence to address conflict.

### 6.1.3 Politicians and Community Leaders Driving Conflict and Violence

“We are here for a long time and still are not considered indigenes. When will we be considered as Nigerian?” Fulbe man, Gwadei, Sanga LGA, Kaduna

Often, farmers and pastoralists spoke of the role of politicians in driving conflict rather than blaming those in their community. According to one respondent who represents one of the pastoralist associations, “The interplay of politics, religion and quest to preserve exclusive land ownership for certain ethnics has caused a breakdown of relations between farmers and pastoralists in the Middle Belt.” He pointed to areas where the Fulbe share the same religion as farmers as having lower levels of social division as do areas where they are of different religions but which are less influenced by politics but areas where Fulbe and farmers have different religions and which are highly politicised as having the worst levels of conflict. Here, land (and, depending on the location, religion) becomes a rallying issue as Fulbe are opportunistic users of land when needed as opposed to farmers who annex land exclusively to themselves. He said this dynamic started in the 1970s due to preaching by Muslims of the Izala sect and Christian evangelists and politicians championing ethnic groups and exploiting differences for popularity in the aftermath of the politics of the 1960s and the civil war. When pastoralists settled, people were initially welcoming but this started to change in the 1980s with division into who was considered an indigene and who was a settler and again since the democratic transition in 1999. Pastoralists who settled were accepted as long as they did not contest for power but still considered ‘settlers’ regardless of how long families had been in the area.<sup>10</sup>

<sup>10</sup>People in Nigeria are considered indigenous to certain localities based on their paternal family history and along ethno-linguistic lines. Someone who was born and brought up in a particular area in which their family has lived for generation is considered a settler not an indigene of that location, even if their mother is from that place if their father’s family is seen to be from elsewhere. Being an indigene gives individuals and groups certain rights, including to political positions, as they are seen to both ‘belong’ to the land and the land to ‘belong’ to them. Classification is highly contested with groups often pointing out the length of time their families and ethnic groups have been in the area, including

Respondents also spoke of community leaders. While some leaders play positive roles as described above, many respondents felt community leaders were biased in decision making and, in the worst examples given, contributed to and even caused violence. They spoke of particular locations where attacks against pastoralist or farming communities were planned by community leaders of both groups who gave instructions to young men to attack. They also spoke of cases where corruption and personal interest had led to conflict.

In one village in Taraba, the village head and ardo are believed to conspire to sell land used by others to Fulbe pastoralists and divide the money made. Conflict arises when Fulbe graze their cattle on this land which is farmed by others. Both parties think the land is theirs. When community members meet the village head, he tells them he can sell whatever land he wants due to his position. Meanwhile, the ardo refuses to attend meetings called. This state of affairs has led to at least two people being killed. All sides are now doing their best to avoid conflict but are unsure what will happen during planting and harvest times.

## 6.2 Conflict and Violence

There has been increased incidents of violent conflict across northern Nigeria in recent times. The dynamics between different groups and the adaptations pastoralists have made play a role with some farmers perceiving the Rimndooɓe as those who cause problems and seeing more of a connection between themselves and the Joodiibe in their area.

Increasing tensions and conflict have sparked into violence with conflict encounters often occurring between women farmers and young male pastoralists and spreading to the broader community and to other locations. Respondents felt the media and politicians played active roles in creating and spreading conflict narratives which spark violence.

### 6.2.1 Outside Perceptions of Different Pastoralist Groups

Non-pastoralist respondents varied in whether they distinguished between different pastoralist groups. They showed less ability to differentiate and more propensity to stereotype and generalise in areas of greatest tensions and conflict. Here, respondents were more likely to say words to the effect that ‘Fulani are Fulani’ and all the same. Whether this is a cause or effect of conflict or part of a cycle of mistrust with lack of interactions and attempts to understand the Other is unclear.

In other areas, non-pastoralists were able to distinguish. They could tell the difference between animals of various groups due to different horns or ears sizes and shapes or due to cattle brands used. They spoke of good relations with the Joodiibe but that the Rimndooɓe caused problems. One male Ganawuri farmer, interviewed in Ganawuri, Riyom LGA, Plateau spoke of how crop damage was caused by the Rimndooɓe. Because they move, the community do not know whom to hold responsible. He said they used to blame the Joodiibe but their Fulbe neighbours they had convinced them it was the Rimndooɓe not them who damaged crops. They believed them due to the trust developed by living together from childhood. He went on to say, “I have Fulani friends settled here and they are not happy with what the migrants are doing. There have been cases where settlers have reported migrants for encroachment. We and the settled Fulani are really close.” Other farmer respondents also saw the Joodiibe as having divided loyalties between their farmer neighbours and Fulbe co-ethnics or as being on the farmers’ side. In some cases, Joodiibe

---

claiming that ancestors arrived in the locality prior to the group that is not considered to be ‘indigenous.’ The indigene-settler dichotomy is particularly problematic for the Fulbe, who are seen as being historically nomadic, even for families who have been settled for generations, and so characterised as non-indigenes.

have not only formed Jonde Jam groups to patrol cattle routes and apprehend Rimndooɓe whose cattle damage crops but have asked farmer leaders to tell Rimndooɓe to leave as they damage crops, refuse to pay, and cause trouble for all Fulbe. Many Joodiibe clearly saw themselves as different from the Rimndooɓe. They stressed the length of time families had been present so as to stake their claim to the land, including through saying their families were present on the land before farming communities now considered indigenes arrived.

“There is likely more damage by migratory pastoralists as they can destroy crops then move. You will be crying out in the morning that your crops have been destroyed and you can’t see anyone as they destroy at night. Most of the migratory pastoralists follow the major highways as the cattle routes are blocked so if you farm nearby, you have the possibility of them allowing animals to graze and damage farms. If a person does not farm one year in an area and the land becomes fallow, they will graze there and if you farm nearby, there is also the possibility of crop damage. There is farming on the grazing routes and areas where they graze as the soil is fertile where cows have stayed. No matter how small the place is, if they see a small place, they can manoeuvre to go and crops can be damaged. Pastoralists also rub dung on the crops as the animals will not eat these ones. It is the sensible ones who do this before they pass through narrow areas.” female Nyandan farmer, Sunkani, Ardo Kola LGA, Taraba

Farmer respondents say they have noticed a difference since families stopped moving together. A Tiv woman farmer, interviewed in Sabon Gida Agan, Makurdi LGA, Benue said, “When I first came here [25 years ago for marriage], they were moving with their families but not all communities would welcome them so if they found anywhere that was peaceful, they would leave their wives in one place and move [from around 2010/2011 onwards].” She had noticed a change in behaviour: “If you are coming with your family, you will be slow to cause problems as you worry the repercussions will fall on them but if you know your family is safe elsewhere, you are free to do anything.” Farmer respondents contrasted their behaviour with the pastoralists of the past with whom they had good relations. They said pastoralists moving in groups of largely young men as opposed to families moving together exacerbates conflict dynamics. They saw them as lacking restraint, patience and respect, using drugs and being more likely to engage in violence.

However, this narrative of Rimndooɓe causing crop damage and being involved in violence, leaving the Joodiibe to pick up the pieces can be one-sided. Despite narratives that pastoralists who migrate are the ones causing problems by damaging crops, conflict can occur between different actors and for different reasons. From villages where community leaders conspire to make money by selling farmland to (settled) Fulbe pastoralists to Berom land in Plateau and the Mambilla Plateau in Taraba, there are many areas where conflict is between pastoralists and farmers of the location. Moreover, these relations between Joodiibe and farmers cause problems for Rimndooɓe too. Rimndooɓe respondents who used to pass through lands where Berom communities are present spoke of how conflict between Berom and Joodiibe affect them. A Fulbe man, interviewed in Gwadei, Sanga LGA, Kaduna said, “Now, we have to move as a group as animals will be rustled by the Berom. This started three to four years ago as Plateau Berom and pastoralists are fighting. They do not differentiate between the Plateau pastoralists and us.”

Other respondents spoke about how cattle of Rimndooɓe could damage crops only once while they were passing while cattle of Joodiibe could destroy the same crop from planting to harvest. They said the Joodiibe shifted the blame to Rimndooɓe claiming they are responsible for crop damage to avoid paying compensation. In some locations, who was responsible for crop damage depended on the season. For example, in Ardo Kola LGA in Taraba, migratory, settled and semi-settled pastoralists are responsible for damaging crops during the April-May planting season although the Joodiibe tended to shift the blame to Rimndooɓe who had already moved on.

However, during the harvest time in November-December, almost all damage is done by Joodiibe as others are not in the area. A Fulbe farmer who has links to both Fulbe pastoralists and farmers said, “Joodiibe can damage crops five times and only claim one or two and say Rimndooobe are responsible for the others” but only a few farmers would know this and be able to differentiate between groups while others see all Fulbe as the same.

## 6.2.2 Increasing Tensions and Violence

Respondents saw major conflict triggers being farming in grazing routes and areas, crop damage, and blocking of water points. They described how conflict between individuals escalates to inter-group conflict and to other locations. Boys and young men whose cattle damage crops can be beaten which escalates tensions and leads to violence, especially as they now carry cutlasses to cut leaves off trees to feed cattle and families are unhappy with the treatment of their sons.

At the same time, conflict management mechanisms have weakened due to a number of reasons, including leaders seen as corrupt, politicised and biased who have less influence than previous generations of leadership with communities, and the roles played by politicians. Pastoralists who used to report crop damage in previous years have started no longer doing so to avoid problems as such cases are no longer settled amicably, seeking instead to move away quietly. Both pastoralists and farmers spoke of decreasing levels of patience that led to conflict turning violent.

“Twelve to thirteen years ago, my cattle destroyed a sugar cane farm. After I paid the compensation, the farmer said this is our friend and refunded me the compensation I had paid him... Before, you would settle with a farmer amicably but now there is a fight so we no longer report to the community leader to resolve issues.” Fulbe man in Ganawuri, Riyom LGA, Plateau

One explanation for increased violence given was increased use of drugs by both communities. Pastoralists said their young men were interacting with ‘bad friends’ from non-pastoralist communities who influenced them to take drugs. Farmers stated that cows damaged crops as many boys were high on drugs and so let their animals roam and, as there was high incidence of drug and alcohol use among farmers too, that this led to violence.

Violence has gendered dimensions, with women and men playing different roles and gender norms driving conflict and violence. Despite violence being seen as taking place between (young) men, the crisis point is often conflict between young male pastoralists and women farmers. All women farmers interviewed spoke of how Fulbe pastoralists treated them compared to men. They felt disregarded and disrespected: “When they meet women in the farms, they will not answer if they are destroying crops and you try to say something to them. They entered my groundnut farm, I said something to them and they just looked at me as the cattle passed into the farm. They are more respectful to men and talk with them – maybe they think women can do nothing to them but with men, this can lead to men fighting each other.” (Tiv woman farmer, Anyii, Logo LGA, Benue).

They felt Fulbe pastoralists were more likely to encroach on farmland if a woman was there but pass by if they saw a male farmer: “They are more likely to come to women’s farms because they know women fear if they threaten.” (female Nyandan farmer, Sunkani, Ardo Kola LGA, Taraba). A (hijabi) respondent spoke of women being treated differently depending on if they wear hijabs: “They treat women with hijab differently as they consider those with hijabs as Muslim and they give more threat to women without hijab who they consider as Christian. They look at those with hijab as sisters and those without as non-Muslims who don’t belong to them” (female Ayu farmer, Mayir, Sanga LGA, Kaduna).

However, women also fight back. Respondents spoke of women using telephones to call the police after which the pastoralist will disappear. In one case recounted in Benue, the woman farmer seized and took away the cutlass the pastoralist young man had pulled out to threaten her.

Women farmers spoke of being harassed, threatened with rape or chased with machetes if they try to protect crops: “Even if you try to protect your crops, they threaten to rape women. Now, they go to graze with arms. They will put their cattle on the farmland and if you try to say anything, they will shoot you... When they threaten women, women have to run away to save their life” (woman Ganawuri farmer, Ganawuri, Riyom LGA, Plateau). Rape is not only threatened but perpetrated, particularly in more rural communities, by both farmers and pastoralists. Farmer respondents spoke of cases where Fulbe men raped an elderly woman in Ganawuri as she was harvesting her crops and of a reported five cases of Tiv women being raped by men assumed to be Fulbe when they went to the bush. Conversely, on the Mambilla plateau in Taraba, respondents spoke of Fulbe girls and women being raped then killed in 2017 by Mambilla men who also, in at least once incident, cut a baby from the womb of a pregnant woman and killed both baby and mother.

Domestic violence and abuse may also be increasing as a result of violence. Many respondents were reluctant to speak openly about this, not surprising given the culture of silence and under-reporting that surrounds this type of violence. However, one woman did talk about increased stress as a result of fear and violence manifesting in this way: “We have people getting angry for no reason, due to increasing stress as a result of the violence. This leads to more cases of husbands beating their wives” (Fulbe woman, originally from Miango but displaced to Rukuba, Bassa LGA, Plateau).

These narratives were consistent among women respondents across research locations. They spoke of ways rape of women farmers increases anger against pastoralists and how male farmers lose their temper and retaliate because women are attacked on farms. Their stories point to ways in which conflict between women farmers and young male pastoralists can escalate to violence between farmers and pastoralists due to norms of protective masculinity that mean men feel angered and a desire to retaliate because ‘their women’ have been attacked.

### **6.2.3 Impact of Media and Politicians’ Narratives**

All respondents had strong opinions on narratives by media, government officials, politicians and others of the conflict. They felt the conflict and its causes and impacts were not well understood. They said politicians and journalists did not have basic knowledge about Fulbe communities, let alone know the differences between different groups and their ways of life.

Respondents said the conflict was under-reported, that media coverage was full of negative or ‘sentimental’ reporting, development issues were left out and reporting was unfair. Fulbe respondents felt journalists saw everything as being the fault of pastoralists. They noted that media outlets reported attacks as being carried out by groups of Fulbe (‘suspected Fulani herdsmen’) with very little evidence this was the case and not issuing corrections or apologies when subsequent investigation uncovered that perpetrators were actually armed gangs or from another group. They linked ‘reprisal’ attacks against Fulbe communities to this inaccurate, misleading and biased reporting which triggered cycles of reprisals. They characterised media outlets as rekindling crisis once it had died down and accused journalists of “even enjoying the crisis as groups give out money in press conferences” (Fulbe man in Laduga grazing reserve).

“Tell the world that we are not as we are represented – bandits, robbers, kidnappers. We are not like that. There is no tribe in crime. You should not talk of ethnic groups when you talk of criminality. The Fulbe are bitter about this as almost everyone is staying away from the Fulbe due to media hype. You shouldn’t particulate this behaviour to the Fulbe alone. This is sending the wrong signal” Fulbe man in Laduga grazing reserve in Kachia LGA, Kaduna in Kachia LGA, Kaduna).

They also blamed government officials and policy makers, saying that they did not act but rather turned away from the Fulbe during times of crisis, did not bring perpetrators of crime to justice, and saw the Fulbe not as victims but perpetrators of crime and injustice. Lack of impartial justice and rule of law were seen as key drivers of conflict: “The Fulbe don’t go and look for trouble. The conflict is due to other people looking for trouble. The authorities do not take action so we feel all we can do is go on reprisal” (Fulbe man in Rukuba, Bassa LGA, Plateau).

The role of politicians in driving violence has been discussed above. In many research locations, politicians were seen as key actors driving conflict and violence. For example, as discussed below, Governor Ortom who passed Benue’s Anti-Open Grazing Law was seen as responsible for violence committed against Fulbe communities as he had given farmers the courage and power to attack cows. Respondents felt soldiers, rather than being neutral, were heavy-handed and committed violence against Fulbe but not Tiv communities. However, farmers interviewed in Benue and Taraba had similar narratives, feeling soldiers present were on pastoralists’ side. These dynamics will be discussed more in the case studies in the next section.

## 6.3 Policy-Making With (Unintended) Consequences

It is important to view this violent conflict not in isolation, occurring between the individuals fighting, but within the ecosystem in which it takes place. The role of community leaders, political contestation and religious and political leaders has been discussed above. There is an institutional context in which conflict and violence take place. Policies can create or exacerbate conflict dynamics. The following three case studies of Laduga grazing reserve, the Benue Anti-Open Grazing Law, and conflict on the Mambilla Plateau makes these connections clearer. Each case study represents a different policy response often proposed and/ or implemented by policy-makers: grazing reserves, banning open grazing, and ranching. Conflict dynamics present and violence that has taken place in each case proves they, in isolation, are not the workable, sustainable and conflict-sensitive solutions required.

### 6.3.1 Laduga Grazing Reserve in Kaduna

While Laduga grazing reserve was established in the 1960s, movement of pastoralists there was initially slow. However, its population has greatly increased in recent times. Many Fulbe moved there due to communal clashes and political crises in surrounding areas. Many Rimndooobe who used to pass through during the dry season on their way south and during the rainy season on their way north have settled there. Although their cattle together with their young men still move in areas outside the grazing reserve, this movement is not as long ranging as it was before.

Fulbe, who are granted land, say they are able to farm enough to feed 20-30 cows from dry season farming. However, respondents spoke about lack of services and facilities. Bad roads make it difficult to leave during the rainy season. There is only a private clinic and no hospital on the grazing reserve. A small number of boreholes serves an increasing population. Government agencies come only twice a year to treat animals. Nevertheless, the grazing reserve is seen as a

safe haven by those who moved there from volatile areas. As one 47-year-old Fulbe woman who moved to Laduga after her two sons and all their cattle were killed said, “Anywhere I look, there is Fulbe so I feel safer.”

However, while settling in one place is considered by many as being a way to avoid conflict, grazing reserves are not necessarily the magic solution. Some Fulbe respondents pointed out that the grazing reserves introduced by the government in the 1960s did not have sufficient land to accommodate all the pastoralists in Nigeria. Many of these no longer exist or have had farmers encroach on this land. Others living in areas outside grazing reserves spoke about not being able to move there as the reserve was already full and all land occupied. Moreover, given younger generations do not have a history of co-existence with farmers, this segregation may augur ill for the future. Conflict narratives may find it easier to take hold in the absence of a continued history of knowing and interacting with ‘the Other.’

Moreover, while grazing reserves are designated for pastoralists, in practice, there are farmers and other non-pastoralists present or nearby. These people include butchers, medical personnel, tailors, teachers, traders, and others who move there for economic reasons. Relations between those who interact economically with pastoralists were said to be amicable with some marriages with non-Fulbe taking place. While there is no conflict with farmers in much of the grazing reserve as there are not many farmers present, there is conflict in the areas outside the reserve. Farmers spoke about how older family members had been moved from their lands by the government when the grazing reserve was created and given land nearby. They have been farming there for over 50 years but recently, as a result of crisis in other areas, pastoralists have come from other places to occupy these farms. Despite pastoralist leaders within the grazing reserve asking these pastoralists to move into the grazing reserve, they remain on this farmland.

These pastoralists say the area is a grazing reserve not meant for farmers and they can go wherever they want while farmers stress the land was given to their parents by the government. There are competing narratives over where the grazing reserve starts and ends. Farmers say their land does not fall within but is adjacent to the reserve. Pastoralists who are on their farmlands believe the whole area is part of the grazing reserve. A reported thirteen people have been killed to date. With the planting season approaching at the time of data collection, farmers and grazing reserve pastoralist leaders shared a sense of hopelessness about what to do and how to calm young men who are angry and being prevented from pursuing their farming livelihood.

### **6.3.2 The Benue Anti-Open Grazing Law**

Farmer and pastoralist respondents described how previously good relationships in Benue had deteriorated over time. This situation started to change around 2010 when increasing populations of farmers went to new areas to farm. Grazing lands were used for farming and house construction and cattle damaged crops. Whereas people would sit together and resolve issues when crop damage occurred previously, this increasingly no longer was the case, supposedly due to an increase in the numbers of migratory pastoralists in the area who would be more likely to damage crops then leave. These confrontations became more violent over time with cutlasses and machetes being used and reprisal and counter-reprisal attacks taking place.

The state government set up committees called the Civilian Joint Task Force (CJTF) comprising both farmers and pastoralists. They tried to mediate conflict, including through opening up cattle routes and facilitating compensatory payments for crop damage. One young man who was involved in one of the committees said, “We tried to bring peace between farmers and pastoralists. If cattle ate crops, farmers would go to talk with the owner of the cattle before but now they

reported to the committee. If a youth killed a cow, the owner would also report. So, it was the committee that was taking action, not the people involved directly talking with each other” (Tiv male farmer, Sabon Gida Agan, Makurdi LGA, Benue). In these cases, conflict did not lead to violence as justice was seen to be done in a more or less balanced and even-handed way. Although the committees were showing signs of success, a gun amnesty introduced by the State Government following political killings and increasing criminality had adverse consequences. Attacks against farmer and pastoralist communities increased, thought to be because attackers knew communities, having turned in their weapons, were undefended. Not only were attacks on Fulbe communities under-reported in comparison to Tiv attacks as Fulbe live in more rural areas and have less contacts with journalists but attacks on Tiv communities were misreported as being perpetrated by ‘Fulani herdsmen,’ leading to worsening relations and retaliatory attacks.

In Anyii in Logo LGA, two sets of dynamics escalated the conflict. The first was a 2014 case of crop damage. The farmer concerned found the pastoralist and settled the matter in a peaceful way but pastoralists came later at night and killed him. Following this killing, farmers would kill cattle in retaliation for crop damage to purposefully destroy pastoralist livelihoods. After farmers told pastoralist they were no longer welcome and should leave, they left but young men came back without families to graze at night. They damaged farms at the edge of cattle routes. More cows were killed in response.

Another set of dynamics were around water access and use is when Tiv women and Fulbe young men would clash at river banks. The women would go there to collect water at the same time young men brought cattle to drink. These encounters increasingly led to violence that started at water points and extended to settlements. According to a Tiv male farmer from Anyii, “The Tiv women were more in number so they would beat up the Fulani young men then the pastoralists would go to Tiv settlements. People were killed and houses burned then Tiv would retaliate.” The Fulbe young men felt a particular need to prove their masculinity with a show of force after being beaten up by ‘mere women.’ The military were sent in and attacks reduced.

Then, in November (check) 2017, the Anti Open Grazing Law was passed banning open grazing and requiring pastoralists to ranch cattle. No spaces were allocated for these ranches or guidance given on how to make this change. All pastoralists and farmers interviewed said this law escalated conflict and violence started again. Pastoralist members withdrew from the CJTF. Attacks on both communities took place. Fulbe respondents believed the Livestock Guards created by the state government to enforce the law carried out many of the attacks against their communities. Fulbe families left Benue and moved to Nasarawa. Pastoralists in Nasarawa told Tiv people living there that they should go back to Benue even though they had lived in Nasarawa their whole lives.

Benue’s Anti-Open Grazing Law is a clear example of the role of politics and policy making in exacerbating conflict and triggering violence. Farmers, while appreciating the law was passed to help them, spoke of how it had inflamed tensions and caused violence. Pastoralists forced to leave Benue blamed the Governor not their farmer neighbours. They spoke of Tiv farmers gathering when they were leaving to ask them to stay. They said farming and pastoralism were complementary livelihoods in their communities. Farmers relied on livestock for cattle dung, farming in areas where cattle had been grazing to benefit from more fertile soil. As pastoralists did not graze in the same place for two consecutive years as this was not good for animals, they moved on to new areas. They returned to the old places after the soil had reduced fertility by which time farmers had moved to more fertile places where cattle had been more recently. Some Fulbe pastoralists and Tiv farmers still keep in touch, speaking to each other on the phone. Pastoralists said that, despite the violence, they were more comfortable in their previous locations due to their knowledge of the area and relations with people living there. One Fulbe man said he

was more comfortable speaking in Tiv than in Fulfulde and that his community continued to speak a mixture of Fulfulde and Tiv with each other in Nasarawa.

Yet, relations between farmers and pastoralists have been significantly affected by violent conflict. Farmers spoke of new pastoralists unknown to them coming into Benue and said there was no interaction between the two groups. This distrust, suspicion and fear is felt on both sides as these pastoralists too do not want to mix too closely with farmers. They spoke of how they had sent their cattle back to farm near where they used to stay as they, not used to different ecology, were dying in Nasarawa. As a result, some of the cows that had been brought by the 'new pastoralists' may well belong to the same pastoralists with whom farmers had good relations, perhaps looked after by younger generations, even as their friends stay away for fear of violence.

### **6.3.3 Violence on the Mambilla Plateau in Taraba**

Unlike other research locations, most pastoralists are settled on ranches here. Despite many factors that lead to farmer-pastoralist conflict elsewhere being largely absent, the plateau has seen repeated violence. Conflict is driven by two factors: disputes over land ownership and politics. There are competing narratives about patterns of settlement and related rights afforded. While the Mambilla say they are indigenes and the Fulbe are settlers with their presence greatly pre-dating theirs, the Fulbe say both groups came at approximately the same time.

While there is clear demarcation between grazing and farming land, pastoralists were more able to buy land due to higher levels of wealth as well as colonial legacies of land demarcation continued in the post-independence era. As a result, while the Mambilla, who are largely farmers, are the most populous group on the Plateau, the Fulbe, who mostly graze animals, own the majority of land. The Fulbe have legal documents of ownership on their side but the Mambilla have political power due to their larger population. All local politicians tend to be Mambilla men and, as the Fulbe and Mambilla tend to support different political parties, politics, ethnicity and livelihoods are intertwined.

As populations increased, Mambilla farmers required more land and, considering themselves to be the indigenes of the area, became increasingly unhappy that the Fulbe owned the majority of land. The Fulbe say politicians polluted the mind of the Mambilla, characterising Mambilla politicians as 'starting to instigate the Mambilla, saying why should you beg for land when you are the majority. The Fulani man does not have land but travels from one place to another... take the land and we will back you... even if it comes to the state, we have Commissioners, Speaker, we will protect you' (Fulbe man, Gembu, Sardauna LGA, Taraba). The Mambilla started warning the Fulbe that they need to leave 'their' land. Prominent politicians started saying "all land owned by the Fulbe is done so illegally... They have no land and will be eliminated. We will kill them if they refuse to run – their children and their cows – and dominate the land" (Fulbe man, Lemesaiga, Sardauna LGA, Taraba).

Conflict started in one village in 2001 and spread throughout the plateau with a Mambilla group moving from one Fulbe settlement to another attacking people. In the area of Leme, the Mambilla of Lemetela, a Mambilla settlement, went to the Fulbe of Lemesaiga, a Fulbe settlement, to recommend they leave the area for fear of violence as they would not be able to protect them. They helped them to escape. The Fulbe returned only due to military protection. However, nearby Lemeyirma, where both Fulbe and Mambilla lived experienced attack. Fulbe respondents say their Mambilla neighbours took part despite the history of peaceful co-existence and joint cooperation. Today, relations in Lemeyirma are still strained. Land seized there by the Mambilla in 2001 was not returned and herds have still not replenished after many cows were killed during

the attack. Fulbe respondents say they have started fencing cows at night and watch their cows more closely than previously was the case.

Soldiers stayed in the area for six years and the threat of violence reduced but once soldiers left, Mambilla farmers started extending areas of cultivation. In 2017, many locations across the plateau experienced violence, once again incited by local politicians. The region of Leme was largely spared violence as local Mambilla leaders persuaded communities not to attack the Fulbe. In Lemeyirma, “The Mambilla talked among themselves to say that, since we have already experienced crisis, we don’t want to go back. When the Mambilla came from outside to attack, they told them not to attack and stopped them on the day.” (Fulbe man, Lemeyirma, Sardauna LGA, Taraba).

However, conflict was triggered in Lemetela/ Lemesaiga due to clashes over land. When Mambilla women went to prepare farms for planting, the Fulbe told them this was not their land and they should leave. Mambilla men went to investigate what was happening and to protect their women and children. The Fulbe of Lemesaiga believe the Mambilla of Leme instigated violence, inviting others to come and attack. They feel there was impunity because of links with politicians. By the time police officers arrived, a father and his two adult sons had been killed. Many cows had been killed and stolen. When soldiers tried to enter the community, Mambilla women came out in masse to block the road to prevent them from doing so. Allegedly, the commander gave a directive to start shooting and a woman and child were killed. The Mambilla blame these deaths on the Fulbe.

Violence against the Fulbe was systematic and widespread with at least 500 Fulbe killed according to media reports at the time. Livelihoods of both Fulbe and Mambilla communities have been seriously affected. Many Fulbe households have lost much of their livestock. They are no longer able to graze near the river during the dry season after farmers have harvested crops as they fear cattle will be killed. The Mambilla say women who want to farm or fetch firewood are stopped from crossing the boundary between the communities. Gully erosion has increased due to increased deforestation, as people use the sale of firewood as a livelihood source in the absence of other options. There is over-grazing as cows cannot go onto farmlands after harvest and are on the same land all year around. As a result of not being able to farm due to fear of violence, many Mambilla young people have migrated for work. Fulbe children are no longer able to go to school as the school is in Lemetela, a Mambilla village with Mambilla teachers. All Mambilla respondents interviewed asked for the government to relocate nearby Fulbe to another place “because they don’t want peace or to settle with us” and to replace them with “peace-loving” Fulbe. All Fulbe respondents feared they will be killed once soldiers, who continue to remain in Lemesaiga, leave the area.

## 7.0 Conclusions and Recommendations

This paper has presented an overview of intra-pastoralist relations and how they affect dynamics between farmers and pastoralists. Pastoralist lifestyles have drastically changed over recent decades as many pastoralists have shifted to more sedentary ways of living while the young men of their families continue to migrate with cattle. Women and men are struggling to cope with these changes. Intra pastoralist relations have evolved over time with the relatively stronger social cohesion of the past fraying as a result of these changes, increased religiosity and solidifying of certain gender norms. They affect conflict between farmers and pastoralists and are affected by them. Conflictual encounters between young pastoralist men and women farmers are exacerbated by particular nodes of masculinity that take root among young male pastoralist groupings and among male farmers who desire to avenge attacks and threats against women.

Many policy and legislative responses focus on changing pastoralists' ways of life, believing the solution lies in settlement, grazing reserves and ranching. While there is a need for modernisation and adaptation, this study has shown solutions need to be conflict sensitive, thinking through potential negative repercussions, and be political as well as technical.

### **Governments, donors and development partners should:**

**Facilitate genuine intergenerational dialogue that helps pastoralist families and communities adapt to changes, supports young male pastoralists with pressures they face, addresses the impacts of shifts in livelihood patterns on women and girls, and improves relations.** Dialogues need to be facilitated in ways sensitive to hierarchies of gender, age and power and institutionalized as part of long-term processes which enables the voices of young women and men to be heard on a regular basis.

**Foster peace education, intercultural tolerance, social cohesion, and communication to reduce discrimination, change attitudes on gender equality, shift norms of masculinity, and help farmers and pastoralists control anger and learn peaceful methods of resolving conflict.** Interventions should aim to enhance understanding, tolerance and respect for ethnic, cultural and religious diversity between different groups of pastoralists and between pastoralists and farmers. Spaces for constructive contact with those considered different need to be created and maintained, including through bringing together pastoralists across the nomadic/ sedentary spectrum to share challenges, realities and experiences, repair relations and develop common solutions. At the same time, ways to strengthen relations between migratory pastoralists and farmers and pastoralists settled on lands through which they pass need to be explored, including through discussions between leaders of migratory groups and settled communities.

**Encourage farmers and pastoralists to rediscover complementary livelihood modalities, drawing on past practice for example grazing on farmland after harvest to increase soil fertility.** It will also be beneficial to peace to facilitate the opening up of lines of communications where the migratory pastoralists inform local leaders of their presence and movements from the sedentary pastoralist also known as the Ardos and traditional leaders from the farming communities.

**Jointly map and strengthen existing conflict management, governance and peacebuilding mechanisms to improve inclusiveness, effectiveness, coordination, responsiveness, and accountability.** At present, these mechanisms tend to be uncoordinated, ineffective, unsupported by federal and state governments support, lacking adequate resources and not

enabling meaningful participation of particularly excluded groups including women of all ages, young men and migratory pastoralists.

**Build the capacity of influencers among pastoralists and farmers, taking an evidence-based and inclusive approach to defining who has influence, to promote intercultural understanding.** Actors should support the strengthening of networks of influential leaders and organizations to identify and mobilize existing social cohesion resources and work collaboratively with each other and the government. Those seen as influencers should not be limited to elite, older men but rather consider who has influence over which groups of people and be inclusive of women of all ages and younger men who often hold great sway not only over members of their own group but others in the community also. Supporting a range of influencers in this manner will facilitate increased knowledge, skills and networks to enhance dialogue, advocate successfully to policy-makers and improve social cohesion in gender transformative and socially inclusive ways.

**Work with community-based and civil society organizations towards inter-cultural dialogue, cultural diversity, non-discrimination, conflict mitigation and peacebuilding objectives based on principles of genuine partnership and mutual learning.** Doing so will embed in sustained local capacity, bring together coalitions for advocacy including to challenge conflict insensitive and otherwise harmful government policies and strengthen networking at and between local, state and national levels. These organizations should include pastoralist groups and non-pastoralists associations should be supported to reach out to pastoralists across the settled to migratory spectrum.

## CONTACT

DARIUS RADCLIFFE Mercy Corps Nigeria | Country Director  
[dradcliffe@mercycorps.org](mailto:dradcliffe@mercycorps.org)

**About Mercy Corps** Mercy Corps is a leading global organization powered by the belief that a better world is possible. In disaster, in hardship, in more than 40 countries around the world, we partner to put bold solutions into action — helping people triumph over adversity and build stronger communities from within. Now, and for the future.

45 SW Ankeny Street  
Portland, Oregon 97204  
888.842.0842  
[mercycorps.org](https://mercycorps.org)