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Research questions:

How has RECOPA been increasing the resilience of nomadic Fulani pastoral herders in a context of increasing environmental and political instability in West Africa?

A case study on RECOPA, Fada N’Gourma, Burkina Faso

- How is environmental instability affecting the livelihood of Fulani pastoral herders?
- How are challenging social and political conditions both in Burkina Faso and its neighbouring countries affecting the livelihood of Fulani pastoral herders?
- What is the role of RECOPA with regard to the resilience of the nomadic groups in Burkina Faso and how is this organization affecting such mobility?
- Is the bridging function of local organizations enhancing cooperation or creating further conflicts between Fulani pastoral herders and settled communities?

Chapter 1:

Problem statement: Fulbe pastoralists in jeopardy.

This thesis will concentrate on the problem of nomadic pastoral herders in relation to ecological and political instability in the Sahelian region of West Africa.

The paper will present the findings on primary research that I conducted in Fada N’Gourma, Burkina Faso. In my time in the west of Africa I had the chance to work in close contact with nomadic pastoral herder communities, more specifically with Fulbe herders, and through my internship in Fada N’Gouma in the East region of Burkina Faso I was able to identify points of interest towards realizing the research objectives.

This research examines the role of local organizations, particularly RECOPA, in both the process of mediation and prevention of conflicts between Fulbe pastoralists and local farmers in areas prone to conflicts and climate instability in the southern parts of Burkina Faso. In addition, I examined processes that are facilitating or inhibiting the well-functioning of transhumance in Burkina Faso and neighbouring countries. In Burkina Faso I worked with RECOPA an organization whose main scope is to improve the living conditions of pastoral groups. The data collected also gave me the opportunity to broaden my views on pastoral issues, the changes that are occurring in this sector and the role that local organizations such as RECOPA have in order to achieve better rights for pastoral herders as well as the issues that come with this trade and lifestyle in Burkina Faso. Through this experience I was also able to identify a lack of literature on the role of local organizations whose remit involves the farmer-herder conflict. This encouraged me to concentrate my research on the importance of local organizations in relation to such socio-political crisis.

I will use the organization which hosted me during my time in Burkina Faso as my key case study. The study will present the projects that have been put into place, the reflections and the hopes for the future of the people I met in the organization. I will present how such projects and the socio-political and environmental factors have been impacting nomadic pastoral herders in the south east of Burkina Faso and their experience in neighbouring countries.

Chapter 2:

Core concepts:

To better understand the strategies utilized by nomadic herders it is important to define what the concept of transhumance, adaptation and resilience are with regard to Fulbe pastoral herders and their livelihood.

What is resilience and how is this related to Fulbe herders?

The definitions of resilience given by the Oxford Dictionary (2017) are: “The capacity to recover quickly from difficulties; toughness” and “The ability of a substance or object to spring back into shape; elasticity”. This taken in the context of climate, political and social instability with regard to the situation that Fulbe herders are facing can be seen as the way they are adapting to cope with these different factors. This brings us to question what adaptation is. Adaptation implicates the actions which are taken by communities, in this case the Fulbe community around West Africa, to work against new or changing environmental, political and social factors in order to reduce the vulnerability of such communities in the face of the challenges that have to be tackled. Adaptation can be both a response and a prevention type of effort. It includes adjustments which not only have to be taken by the singular community but must also necessarily be taken at higher juridical levels through planning and responding to crises. (IPCC, 2014).

What is the relationship between adaptation and resilience?

The benefits of adaptation are amplifying resilience at different levels: individual, community, organization, country and global. For example, actions taken to adapt a certain environment in order to decrease the chances of crisis, augments the resilience of the communities that would be affected by such events. (The Global Risks Report, 2016)

In the case of Fulbe pastoral herders, their ability to adapt to different societies, environments and socio-political issues has created a strong sense of resilience to all of the cited factors. Fulbe herders have been able to maintain their nomadic way of life although being neglected by governmental policies throughout the Sahelian region. Their nomadic way of life and way of living have long been looked down upon and stigmatized. They have as a group been labelled as persona non-grata in certain countries (an example given can be Ghana, as cited by authors Olaniyan et al. [2015]), where the Fulbe herders were expelled from the country, or in Ivory

Coast, as mentioned by De Bruijn & Van Dijk (2005) where great efforts by the government were put in place to try and sedentarize the Fulbe nomadic herders.

One of the major factors that has helped the resilience against such factors by the Fulbe herders is their link to local organizations which have been able to provide them with tools to increment their noticeability within their countries. These tools have given them a voice at organizational and governmental levels.

What is transhumance and how is it affected by climate instability?

“Where resources are scarce, seasonal wandering, also known as transhumance, aims at providing livestock with the necessary pasture and water by moving to land with better grazing possibilities.” (Tonah, 2003; Schonegg & Martel, 2006).

According to the definition given by the Oxford Dictionary transhumance is: “The action or practice of moving livestock from one grazing ground to another in a seasonal cycle, typically to lowlands in winter and highlands in summer.” The origin of the word dates back to the early 20th century: the word transhumance comes from French, from the verb transhumer, based on Latin trans- ‘across’ + humus ‘ground’ (Oxford Dictionary, 2017). The process of transhumance sees the movement of people and cattle in response to seasonal cycles and to climatic adaptation. As the literature used in this paper presents, nomadic Fulbe herders have always undergone the process of transhumance in their search for better grazing land and high levels of natural resources to provide for their cattle. In the face of the climatic instability that has been affecting areas such as West Africa, the process of transhumance is taking the shape of a resilience method.

Farmer herder conflicts:

When talking about farmer-herder relationships it is necessary to take into account different factors which influence the co-habitation of these groups and the conflicts that can emerge between the two.

1) Climate

Historically the Sahelian region, has been typified by its strong climatic instability and irregular rainfalls. According to the UN Environment Programme (UNEP), these two factors pose as extreme obstacles to food security and the reduction of poverty in the region. The climatic instability perceived in the region has been deteriorating in recent decades. Between 1970 and

1993, 20 years of severe drought have been documented. Droughts have been recorded as being more severe and as more frequent, in addition floods have also been increasing over this period of time. The Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO) has reported that over 80% of the land in the Sahel is recorded as being in severe degradation (Essoungou, 2013).

To scientifically prove that a certain area has been affected by climate change, data from circa 105 years needs to be presented and in this region, it is not possible to obtain such data. It is noted that to have an adequate of climate, a range of weather data spanning 30-35 years is needed. Therefore, in order to identify if climate is changing, three cycles of 30-35 years of weather observations is required. This weather data collection consistency is not available in most areas of West Africa. However, there are some spots in the sub-region where data can be extrapolated, and one key example that can be given is the one of Lake Chad. Lake Chad is an extended basin that borders Nigeria, Cameroon, Niger and Chad. Statistics show that the lake's surface area in the past 50 years has been reduced from its initial 25,000 km² to less than 2,500 km². This environmental disaster does not just affect the ecosystem but the populations that depend on this natural resource for their survival. In a domino effect the struggles suffered by the local communities are extending to the broader society of the countries in this region. People who were living on the shores of the lake are continuously moving due to the shrinkage of the basin which leads different communities to come into contact with each other and compete over natural resources and space. This instability is also a good ground for terrorist organizations such as Boko Haram to thrive thanks to political and economic instability.

Lake Chad is an extreme example of how in the Sahelian region climate instability has been affecting the communities and leading to greater conflicts. But these are not the only clashes that can be encountered in the region. Clashes between Fulbe nomadic cattle herders and settled agricultural farmers have been ongoing for as long as settled and mobile communities have existed. This, in addition to other factors here presented have caused great tension in the local communities and also in the countries where nomadic herder transhumance takes place. (Batterbury & Mortimore, 2013)¹

In the case of farmer-herder conflict climate instability plays an important role in the cohabitation of the two groups, harsher climatic conditions mean higher levels of instability

¹ See also: United Nations Environment Program and DIVA-GIS in Kingsley, P. "The small African region with more refugees than all of Europe." The Guardian. 26 November 2016. Available at: <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2016/nov/26/boko-haram-nigeria-famine-hunger-displacementrefugees-climate-change-lake-chad>

between the groups who find themselves battling over scarce natural resources. When talking about climate change, there is no direct link between this environmental instability and the insurgence of conflicts per se. Although what has to be said is that within a context of climatic instability, where natural resources are scarce and uncertain, there can be the creation of an environment where conflict and violence can thrive. When people fail to maintain their livelihood, they can find themselves becoming more exposed to recruitment by terrorist groups. Such groups can offer quick solutions to concrete problems. They can offer economic incentives in terms of pay, or they can also lure people into their groups with the offer of a militarized response to conflicts between different social groups. In my experience in Burkina Faso, I recorded stories of both farmers and Fulbe herders joining radicalized terrorist groups. Although this paper will not go into depth with regard to this debate, it is important to give a general understanding of the facets that the issues of conflicts between sedentary farmers and nomadic Fulbe herders can take. (Podesta & Ogden, 2008)

Semi-arid regions such as the Sahel, are characterized by short rainy seasons which equally affect both herders and farmers. The rainy seasons usually only last between 3 to 4 months and they are often characterized by the unreliability of rainfall: such patterns of seasonal rain are considered to be bimodal in West Africa. The rainfall patterns can fluctuate in different ways, be that inter-annual, fluctuations in seasons and fluctuations in spatial distribution. (Hussein et al. 1999)

Examples of droughts, given by Hussein et al. (1999) that affected the Sahelian region in the 20th century are as follows: 1910–14; 1940–44; 1968–74; 1979–84. During these periods of time the Sahelian region saw a huge humanitarian crisis and many families lost their means to produce food for their communities. These extended periods of drought had a long-lasting effect on the population and their means of livelihood. Herder's livelihood strategies are affected by the fact that grazing land and natural resources needed for the growth and wellbeing of the livestock are found in different places and during different periods of time. This has led the herders to use an opportunistic approach to resource management and has led them to undertake a nomadic way of life, especially through the use of seasonal transhumance, to ensure the optimization of the use of the natural resources throughout the region. These types of strategies have safeguarded the persistence of pastoralism in semi-arid zones over the course of centuries. Although it had been long discussed that such types of practices had a negative effect on the environment this has been disproved. There is literature which supports the perception of the practice being a positive type of adaptation which does not negatively affect the land but instead,

its diversity and alteration of the use of the natural resources presented in the whole region creates a more positive outcome (Dyson-Hudson, 1980). In addition to this, earlier literature described transhumance and nomadism as a highly adaptive strategy which created a profound symbiosis between the herders and the land they lived on and used to support themselves. This has also shown the adaptability and resilience, shown by Fulbe herders, to environmental conditions of menace and insecurity. (Toupet, 1975)

Charlène Cabot (2017) during her research touches upon the skepticism related to climate change in the past. The author touches upon the fact that in the past climate change was not considered to be a real threat and how this view has been slowly changing in the last few decades. According to the author, the adverse climatic conditions that have been perceived around the world but especially in regions such as the Sahel, have brought a sense of fear of such environmental transformations as this process is thought to be leading to higher risks of conflict due to the decrease in the availability and condition of natural resources. Communities whose livelihood depends on such resources will be highly affected. In western Africa it has already been a long time since conflicts over natural resources have created tension between settled farming communities and both settled and nomadic pastoral herders. The predicted impacts of climate instability include a decrease and higher chance of irregular rainfall, less access to fresh water resources and an increase in population (hence less cultivatable /pastoral land) could potentially feed into violent conflicts in the future. These predictions are supported by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change and the Human Development Report 2000-2008 of the United Nations Development Programme which stressed the importance of fighting climate change because the problem goes further than just being an environmental issue but will lead to major security issues for humans. (Adano et al. 2012)

These environmental changes are already challenging the affected societies, especially in areas of the world that have always been affected by climate instability, and have been impacting and endangering the ways of life of such communities (IPCC 2007b: 10, 2014a: 1202).

This information links to the security issues that are related to the agro-pastoral conflicts observed in this thesis. In societies that heavily depend on natural resources the chance of a decrease in the quality and quantity of such resources increases the strain on the relationship between these two social groups. In addition, this research looks into transhumance which is a key component of pastoralism in dry regions such as the Sahel. Other factors closely related to climate instability that have to be kept in mind when reporting on conflicts in the Sahelian

region are political and economic ones. The Fulbe herders have a long history of migration and in building different types of relationship with the communities they come into contact with. Different countries in the Sahelian region see different dynamics between this ethnic group and the broader society.

2) *Sedentary communities*

To clearly understand the conflicts that occur between farmers and herders it is fundamental to clarify the fact that one group is nomadic and the other is sedentary. Fulbe pastoral herders come from a tradition of nomadism which is still largely perpetuated especially through the process of transhumance, while the agricultural farmers are settled.

When researching about transhumance, either on foot or by vehicle, there are many difficulties that are found on route: the crossing of borders, the incursion of agricultural territories (this is very common for nomadic pastoral herders as often the routes they take have been taken over by agricultural farmers, which makes it very difficult to access pastoral land and water points) and on route herders might encounter bandits who take their livestock hostage and demand ransoms for their return. This is a common practice especially in areas where national parks or reserves are present. As Fada N’Gourma is very close to two national reserves and Arli National Park, this meant that many nomadic herders asked for the help of RECOPA as they had illegally trespassed into the park or reserves. Although this is an illegal practice, the law states that the herders should pay a fine but would be free to gather their livestock and leave the premises. This was often not the case, many herders reported park rangers taking the livestock hostage and demanding high ransoms for their return. This can also often be the case when livestock trespass onto farming land. Many reports of these incidents were brought to the attention of RECOPA during my internship. All of these factors are creating conflicts with local communities.

As reported by De Bruijn & Van Dijk (2005) in countries such as Ivory Coast the relationship between Fulbe nomadic herders and the settled communities started as a positive consequence of the importation of livestock which was needed by the country to decrease the import-export imbalance from countries outside the African continent. The Fulbe herders pushed by droughts to migrate to the northern areas of Ivory Coast, as previously mentioned, were welcomed by local Senoufo farmers. The small number of people in the north of the country made it a perfect

environment for pastoralism and the Fulbe herders were able to maintain their nomadic ways while providing the local communities with the needed livestock products, such as manure, dairy products and milk.

As reported by the authors, the situation in Ivory Coast started deteriorating with the involvement of the government which led to the creation of conditions for conflict. The Ivorian government pushed for the settlement of Fulbe herders by creating parastatal organizations for the development of livestock production in the country. Infrastructures and access to safe and clean natural resources was provided and this led to a huge growth in livestock production in the country. Although this had a very positive affect for both the Fulbe herders and the local communities, it also meant that the Fulbe herders started settling in the communities and the numbers of the Fulbe society started growing. This process led to a major crisis in the relationships between the Senoufo farmers and the Fulbe herders; the Senoufo finding themselves in a situation which made them feel threatened by the numbers of Fulbe herders, started trying to limit the access of Fulbe herders to natural resources such as pastoral land, points of water and “by having hunting associations patrol the bush to track down the Fulbe whose herds destroy their fields”. (De Bruijn & Van Dijk, 2005)

Again as reported by the authors, these types of conflicts escalated into major violent conflicts between the two communities which led on occasions to the expulsion of Fulbe herders from Ivory Coast. This situation slowly deteriorated also during the year 2000 with the rising political tensions in the country and the growth of xenophobia with regard to certain ethnic groups. Many Fulbe herders returned to Mali and Burkina Faso due to not feeling safe in the country anymore. There are many other factors that led to the deterioration of the situation and that characterized these violent conflicts.

For the purpose of this paper I will concentrate on the ecological situation and the political interventions and manipulations, and how these affected the relationship between farmers and herders. Bassett and Crummey (1993) report that the areas of land cultivated by the Senoufo farmers had steadily increased: going from 23% in 1956 to 36% in 1989. In addition to the increase of farming land they also reported the increase of forested areas. These two factors can be linked to the need of Fulbe herders to maintain transhumance to provide grazing land for their herds which led the herders to move and come into contact with new communities and, as the land was already mostly occupied, to trespass arable land creating conflicts with the settled farmers.

This situation is reported as being very similar in Burkina Faso. An example quoted by De Bruijn & van Dijk (2005) is the Mossi plateau. In this densely-populated area, conflicts between Fulbe herders and settled Mossi farmers have been increasing. In addition to high population density, natural resources have been undergoing increasing degradation due to poor agricultural techniques and the overexploitation of the resources needed for the production of livestock and agricultural products. An important point highlighted in the literature is the conception by researchers of the relationship and the conflicts between herders and farmers. Breusers et al. (1998) suggests that the idea of farmer-herder conflicts being on the rise means that in the past herders and farmers had ways of dealing with the division and cohabitation of the land. In accordance with studies of the records of such conflicts in the 20th century it results that these types of conflicts have always been very common and it is thus difficult to prove that these have seen an increase in recent times.

Literature suggests that the cohabitation of these two social groups could have been maintained in more peaceful ways with the division of spaces, the farmers using arable land and the herders using land that presented bushes and grazing pastures. With higher levels of population density and with a general increase in population in the Sahelian countries, this type of division is becoming increasingly more difficult to implement. Population growth means that there is a need for more land where it is possible to build housing and to harvest agricultural products to maintain the communities. This has led the farmers to expand their arable lands in areas which would have previously belonged to herders who are pushed further away or end up passing through farming land to access water points or pasture land. (Blench, 1998)

Taking climate instability into account, the relationship between farmers and herders changes and is leading towards deterioration. Climate change in the last decades has changed from being an energy problem into becoming a security threat. As argued by the former British Foreign Secretary Margaret Beckett: “fights over water, changing pattern in rainfall, and fights over food production and land use are major causes of war and therefore the Security Council must be interested in what causes them, one of which is climate change”. In addition, she argued that “border disputes, migration, energy supplies, resource shortages, societal stress and humanitarian crises” will be the result of such climate instability especially in regions such as the Sahel (which is already considered as ground zero). (Olaniyan et al. 2015)

Such links between climate change and conflicts in West Africa are supported through studies by Hsiang, Burke and Miguel (2013) who argue the strong link between climatic conditions

and the rising of violent conflicts. Hendrix and Glaser (2007), who through their study on rainfall patterns in Ghana were able to prove how the unreliable rainfall was generating violent conflict. Steven Tonah (2002), who located the violent conflicts between settled farmers and nomadic Fulbe herders in the poor conditions of natural resources which caused higher levels of competition between the two groups. These climatic changes are pushing the Fulbe herders towards new areas in southern countries which the traditional transhumance routes would not have moved into. Another important factor is that Fulbe herders are now not only staying in these new areas for limited times but they tend to settle in the new areas on account of the higher levels of natural resources. Although these areas up to now have been able to support both the local populations and the migrants, due to depleting natural resources such as arable land and water sources the situation might be critically altered in the foreseeable future. In addition to the huge impact of climate instability, it has to be taken in account that the regions here mentioned are developing countries with high rates of population growth. In Burkina Faso population as of June 2017 amounts to 20 million people but statistics for the future see the population growing steadily. Better life conditions and better access to medical care means that the population is steadily growing even though there will be a decrease in the number of children per woman. (World Meter, 2017)

Further evidence of the link between environmental instability, population growth and conflicts can be seen in literature by Homewood et al. (2001). In their argument, the authors describe how in East African savannas, the constant population growth and the subsequent need for arable and habitable land has been affecting the degradation of the soil and has been causing major losses of wildlife. In semi-arid lands (which is a very similar type of land to the Sahel, the region taken as example in this paper) it is hard to establish indicating trends and casual chains. This is due to the fact that in such areas: rainfall, primary production, grazer populations, and vegetation formations show major unpredictable fluctuations between seasons and years.

3) *The state*

When looking at issues such as the conflicts between sedentary communities and nomadic ones, the simplest solution which is given by governments and by settled communities is that of pressurizing nomadic herders to become sedentary, and in countries where it is possible, by

creating areas where the nomads can settle and build ranches for intensive cattle farming. Examples are given by authors De Bruijn and Van Dijk (2005) who in their research on northern Ivory Coast, referred to government policies with regard to the settlement of nomadic herders.

“Nomadism - a lifestyle involving frequent movements from one geo-ecological region to another for reasons including pasturage and food supply - is considered as an outdated way of life, and is thus alien to the current societal structure of private land ownership and self-determination of each state”. (Durosinmi-Etti, 2016)

This type of argument assumes that nomadic pastoralism serves no purpose.

Nevertheless, the tradition of cattle migration is a long-standing practice which is used by pastoral nomads as a risk-management approach created on the basis of the understanding of ecological and geographical factors. Through their nomadism the cattle herders seek to avoid cattle disease, seek water and land access for their animals throughout the year which sees different climatic seasons: from the wetter months where the grass is plentiful and natural resources are more easily distributed between the community, to the dry season when the lack of natural resources bring the nomadic cattle herders to transhumance towards areas where their animals can thrive on better pastoral land and have easier access to water points. An important and interesting point made in the piece by Lateefat Durosinmi-Etti (2016) is the fact that from the point of view of many settled people, the best course of action is the settlement of nomadic herders. This discourse leads to the premise that pastoral nomads have no right to self-determination. They do not fit into the idea of normal behaviour reproduced in modern society, where they should be settling and abiding by the laws of their countries. The nomadic pastoral herders assume the role of aliens within their own country and the countries that host them as they practise transhumance. In the words of the author: “These assumptions (of the need of settlement) are markedly hazardous as they ultimately result in superficial resolutions that neglect the deep-seated grievances of herdsmen, while continuously feeding the growing nationwide hostility towards Fulani herdsmen - a potential recipe for nationwide disaster.” (Durosini-Etti, 2016)

As shown in the statement by Durosini-Etti, there is a lack of representation of the Fulbe herders in politics and at state level. This was also recorded in interviews with local Fulbe herders in Burkina Faso. The lack of representation of nomadic herders in politics and policy making has led to a lot of laws being implemented which do not take into consideration the needs and right of herders and their cattle. “Fulani cattlemen do not have children as

councillors...the lowest level of the political strata...a chairman in the local government or a member of a house of assembly...they virtually have nobody in government”, an official of the Miyetti Allah Cattle Breeders of Nigeria Association laments.

This begs the question, who is in charge of these people and who is there to protect their rights?

As highlighted in the literature by Olaniyan et al. (2015), in Ghana the Fulbe migration is a rather recent event. In this way Fulbes cannot be regarded as indigenous. In West African society, where there is a very strong attachment to primordial claims, this puts Fulbe herders in a very difficult position. Fulbe are regarded as strangers and seen as intruders in the already consolidated state of Ghana. As cited by the authors, a settled farmer is recorded saying: “we do not have Fulani as an ethnic group in Ghana. They all migrated from Nigeria, Mali, Burkina Faso and everywhere. They cannot come and destroy our land here. They must go back. They are not part of us”. This leads to the questioning of who is considered to be part of a society and when do you become a national?² Most of the Fulbe herders interviewed by the authors were born and raised in Ghana and so were their parents, they had Ghanaian national identity cards but yet they were not considered to be Ghanaian by the broader community.

Taking this into account and the fact that most Fulbe herders still do live in a nomadic way, it is fundamental to concentrate on the role of organizations in this process as they are among the only figures that represent Fulbes at local and state level.

² To clarify the rules & eligibility to claim Ghanaian citizenship.
Chapter 3 of the Constitution of Ghana

(6.1) Every person who, on the coming into force of this Constitution, is a citizen of Ghana by law shall continue to be a citizen of Ghana.

(6.2) Subject to the provisions of this Constitution, a person born in or outside Ghana after the coming into force of this Constitution shall become a citizen of Ghana at the date of his birth if either of his parents or grandparents is or was a citizen of Ghana.

(6.3) A child of not more than seven years of age found in Ghana whose parents are not known shall be presumed to be a citizen of Ghana by birth.

(6.4) A child of not more than sixteen years of age neither of whose parents is a citizen of Ghana who is adopted by a citizen of Ghana shall, by virtue of the adoption be a citizen of Ghana.

(5) A woman married to a man who is a citizen of Ghana or a man married to a woman who is a citizen of Ghana may, upon making an application in the manner prescribed by Parliament, be registered as a citizen of Ghana.

(8.2) A person who becomes a citizen of Ghana by registration and immediately after the day on which he becomes a citizen of Ghana is also a citizen of some other country, shall cease to be a citizen of Ghana unless he has renounced his citizenship of that other country, taken the oath of allegiance specified in the Second Schedule to this Constitution and made and registered such declaration of his intentions concerning residence as may be prescribed by law, or unless he has obtained an extension of time for taking those steps and the extended period has not expired.

Role of local organizations:

The breeding of ruminants in West Africa has always been characterized by its mobility. For a very long time this type of transhumance was thought to be a technique which was devastating for the environment. It was not until the 1980-90s with authors like Horowitz, Sandford and Scoones³ that its actual indispensability and its effective adaptation to the unstable climate of the region was proven. This is an efficient strategy for regions where climate is so volatile. Pastoral herders and their flocks are annually pushed to migrate in search of pastoral land and water. This type of mobility can be seen as a key element for the functioning of both stock breeders and their livestock in relation to the soil that they use. In regions such as the Sahel, but more specifically in the south of Burkina Faso where for up to 9 months a year there is no rain the soil is very impoverished. If high numbers of livestock were to remain in the region even during the peaks of heat and dryness the soil would be put under too much strain which in turn could lead to lower production of natural resources and could diminish the production of agricultural products.

Nomadic pastoral herding is the most suitable way for the sale and growth of livestock in regions such as the Sahel. Not only do the animals have the time to grow during the time of transhumance but it also means that nomadic pastoral herders with less economic stability can maintain their smaller herds. The herders can undergo the migration process to countries where their livestock can be sold at higher prices. This can create profit that will benefit not only the herders themselves but the community where they come from and the ones that they come into contact with during transhumance. The profit is therefore created by taxation of the animals in the neighbouring countries and by the economic impact that people passing through different communities make when buying and selling products. Although this is the most traditional and presumably most suitable style of cattle breeding in the Sahel, there are many obstacles to transhumance. The expansion of the agricultural land, the lack of access to pastoral land and natural resources and the co-habitation with settled agricultural farmers has been increasingly putting a strain on transhumants⁴ and their flocks and herds. This leads to many people struggling to maintain their families and themselves through their traditional livelihood. This insecurity has created the opportunity for different organizations to step up and provide

³ As cited in: 7. Cabot, C. (2017). "Climate Change, Security Risks and Conflict Reduction in Africa: A Case Study of Farmer-Herder Conflicts over Natural Resources in Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana and Burkina Faso 1960–2000". Hexagon Series on Human and Environmental Security and Peace. Springer-Verlag: Berlin Heidelberg.

⁴ I am using this term to indicate the plural of transhumant.

nomadic pastoral herders and their communities with new legislations and facilities to improve the process of transhumance.

Nonetheless, at local community level, Fulbe herders are represented by local organizations. As mentioned above, the role of local organizations is fundamental for the advocacy of the rights and needs of Fulbe nomadic herders. They do not have any level of representation within the governments and as they are nomadic so often they do not find themselves in their country of origin. Local organizations take a focal role when talking about pastoralist issues and the crisis that has been growing in West Africa.

Local organizations not only implement different projects for the improvement of the conditions of transhumance but they also work at both regional and state level to make the voice of Fulbe herders heard. In the meetings organized by the international non-governmental organization GIZ that I attended in Benin thanks to my internship with RECOPA, the need for communal laws throughout the Sahelian region was discussed. The purpose of these meetings was to put forward proposals on how to provide nomadic pastoral herders with the same rights and duties in every country they might transhumance to. Organizations from the Sahelian region see the need for a common pastoral code to protect the rights of Fulbe herders throughout the countries which host them during transhumance as well as in their country of origin. As Fulbe herders are mostly nomadic, they move around West Africa. Due to different conditions they are pushing themselves towards southern regions. This shows a need for better cooperation between local organizations for the reinforcement of the rights and obligations of pastoral herders at Sahelian level.

Issues with the dependency on external donors:

As reported by Poskitt & Dufranc (2011) in their paper on Civil Society Organisations in Situations of Conflict, a decreasing space for the participation in the process of governance and policy making by local organizations in situations of conflicts has been recorded. Local organizations are recorded to be limited in their actions in influencing the policy making and in the achievement of social changes.

Restrictive legislations within a divided society present a major challenge for the legitimacy of such organizations and their ability to work in networks. In addition, corruption and the often

presence of instable political situations in different countries throughout the African continent, pose a significant negative effect on the work of local organization in conflict areas.

Often an external issue in the well-functioning of projects of local organizations is the prioritization of agendas of external international organizations over the local needs.

Through their study the authors highlighted how the donor's agenda often defines the areas and priorities of the projects put in place by local organizations. This often translates in the prioritization of the projects that the external organizations are willing to fund instead of projects needed in the community. This can also be a cause of higher levels of conflicts and tensions.

During their research Poskitt & Dufranc (2011) interviewed different representatives of local Civil Society Organizations who described a discrepancy between the needs of the community and the projects funded by external donors. The interviewed conveyed how in a situation of conflict the main areas of work which need to be tackled are: "1) Civic education, which involves working with communities on awareness raising and education programs, and 2) Promoting human rights and good governance". However, most of the local and international organizations interviewed during the research stated that the main activities which had been promoted were: "1) Human rights education, 2) Gender-focused projects, 3) Provision of health services".

As stated by the authors, there is a great need for the coordination of project strategies between local organizations and international donors as the lack of local resources and the, often, absence of the government creates a strong dependency of local organizations on the funding by external donors.

Chapter 3:

Methodology

The method of data collection used for this research consisted in qualitative research carried out by means of semi-structured interviews with both single individuals and focus groups. The final paper is based on the conjunction of primary data and through utilizing pre-existing data both in literature and that gathered from the organization with which I was able to work during my time in Burkina Faso.

The choice of using a qualitative type of research was due to my interest in providing a personal point of view in relation to the views of Fulbe pastoral herders within the context of farmer-herder conflicts in Burkina Faso. The use of a qualitative type of research comes from the need for the sensitization of concepts used for the exploration and an understanding of the world and life of the individual's biographical process which has led that person to the situation he or she is currently in. (Flick, 2014)

As a method of interviewing I opted for semi-structured interviews as the use of questionnaires could have potentially limited the access to the information which it was believed to be necessary to obtain: often Fulbe herders are not schooled and may be unskilled in literacy which would have reduced the ability of the participants to fully understand and answer the written questions. Additionally, there was also an interest in creating a relationship with the respondents so as to be able to fully understand their stand point on the issues discussed during the interviews. It was initially planned to follow a structured interview format, presenting specific questions and aiming for the discussion of defined subjects. As the interviews began to be carried out, I came to realize that the respondent would open up and discuss more intimate views only after the structured interview had ended. This factor led me to opt for more open questions which allowed the respondent to navigate through different topics and subjects, although I tried to maintain the conversation within specific topics. Through this strategy I was able to deepen my understanding of the issues and the points of view of the interviewed herders.

While I was undergoing my research in Fada N'Gourma, Burkina Faso, I had to set myself some focus points for my research. I focused on the questions which I wanted answered and which specific aspects of the livelihood of transhumants and the conflicts which involved them interested me. I mainly concentrated my questions on the changes that the respondents had noticed within transhumance throughout their lives. I tried to maintain a life story approach by asking them how they had experienced transhumance and the relationship with settled farming communities from their youth and how had this changed within the years. As I learnt about new policies being put in place by hosting countries, I also tried to concentrate my questions on their thoughts on such changes and how they felt these affected them and their communities. The choice of subject selection was mainly influenced by the fact that to collect primary data, I was able to avail of already existing groups as this is the method that is utilized by the RECOPA organization, which I worked with during my time in Burkina Faso in the first place. I chose to interview both single individuals and groups, to try and gather a better understanding on the issues both on a personal and group levels.

As the organization is concerned with pastoralist issues I was able to avail of their primary contacts and through these meetings I was able to gain access to further participants.

The gathering of data was carried out by interviews. To do so the interview mainly employed focus groups which were composed principally of local settled herder chiefs who expounded their ideas, worries and needs. In addition, it was important to have meetings with the actual herders themselves that were undertaking the transhumance and see their point of view, both the ones that had already crossed the borders of Benin and Togo and the ones that were preparing to do so. As it can be difficult to access the neighbouring countries these consultations were mainly done through telephone calls. Each of the chiefs that attended the meetings were asked to contact their associates and enquire about their knowledge on the changes of laws and how these were affecting the herders. For the herders that had yet to cross the borders we were able to meet with them and discuss these issues. This was done mainly through small groups of 2/3 people who were undergoing transhumance together or individually. This gave us the chance to really get in-depth knowledge of the group and/or individual and gain greater awareness of the subject and the obstacles that they could encounter.

In addition to these encounters, it was fundamental to have a good knowledge of the changes in the laws. Although I was able to access the documents provided to all local organizations in Burkina Faso, Niger and Mali (these being the countries from which most transhumants travelling into Benin and Togo come) it was still very difficult to fully comprehend the changes occurring. Thanks to local organizations in Benin I was able to gain a better understanding of the reasons behind the changes in the laws, and I was made aware of the fact that these are still in the process of being altered.

Difficulties encountered during data collection:

One of the main issues which arose during the data collection was the role that women have in the Burkinabè society and my nationality. As a young European woman coming into contact with a world which is mainly operated by men, was very difficult to manage. Often women in pastoralism in recent times have not participated in transhumance due to security reasons, they are often left behind while men travel to southern regions and maintain the family through the production of dairy products and tending to smaller ruminants. This meant that I did not get in contact with many pastoralist women during my time in Burkina Faso. What was difficult in managing in organizations and in a world that, as I personally experienced it, is mainly run by men was the struggle to overcome cultural differences and the ideas related to gender roles.

I often worried that my role during interviews was being misinterpreted and that the respondents might be giving biased answers due to my ethnicity and my status in the organization.

For example, when in the field collecting data, as a white European I found it difficult at times to create the correct impression of being present only as a party interested in observing and learning instead of introducing my foreign ideas. The concept that white westerners come to Africa and intend to change the traditional ways was highlighted very often by the people I interacted with, so I had to work very hard to break down this mindset and get through to people the real purpose of what my work was. In addition, as a woman it was very difficult at times to be listened to. The world of pastoralism is a male dominated one and very often I was the only woman attending meetings or ateliers. In these instances, at times I found it difficult to get my voice and opinions heard.

Location:

Location is a critical component of the of data collection process (Gill, Stewart, Treasure, & Chadwick, 2008; National Science Foundation, 1997). The data collection method was interviews. All interviews were carried out in different locations. Mostly I had to move to different locations to approach pastoral herders which were already undergoing the process of transhumance; this created some challenges as it is not always easy to move through different locations due to road conditions and to the availability of transport. This influenced the data collection process as some of the interviews had to be postponed due to the unavailability of one or both parties, or due to the inability to access certain areas.

As the period that I spent in Burkina Faso coincided with the period of transhumance I often found it difficult to get in contact with Fulbe herders who had already left the country toward southern regions which I was unable to access because of the difficulty of obtaining a visa to the neighbouring countries of Burkina Faso, and the unavailability of transport.

The timing had a serious effect on the collection of data as it meant that I could only access a smaller number of Fulbe herders than I had previously expected.

Another important factor related to location that might have created a certain bias in the answers of the respondents, was that some of the interviews were carried out at the main offices of RECOPA Est. I believe that being in this space might have increased the positive answers with regard to the work carried out by the organization. This, I personally felt, was supported by the

fact that the only time I encountered any negative criticism of the organization was when the interviews were carried out in neutral environments.

Language and cultural impairments:

Language was an obstacle in the process of data collection. Even though I have a good level of spoken and written French, most of the respondents were not fluent in French and it was quite difficult to find someone to translate for me. In addition to this in the instances when a translation was necessary I felt that a lot of the answers were being slightly modified by the translator. As I did not use a professional translator but mostly benefitted from the availability of colleagues and locals who were able to help me in the process, a lot of the interactions were altered by this; especially on occasions when the interviews led me to question the work of local organizations. When the translator was one of my colleagues from RECOPA, I believe the answers became more biased due to the presence of a representative of said organization. Although I do not doubt that RECOPA Est is doing a very good job and providing important projects to the Fulbe community and to the broader Burkinabè society the answers of participants that I recorded were: “RECOPA is the best organization in the region”, “They do so much for our community and there is nothing they should change about themselves”. This was a major point of discussion also during my time in the organization. It was highlighted to me that it is often difficult to truly understand what are the issues faced by the herders and how to handle them best as often, herders might not make any negative comment or criticism to the organization as they fear this would mean that the association would not work with them in the future.

I was however able to overcome these issues by talking to people on different occasions and building a relationship with them. Once they fully comprehended the intentions of my research we were able to have more frank conversations about the role that local organizations have in the maintenance of a good quality of life for Fulbe herders and the mediation work that associations do between farmers and herders both in Burkina Faso and in neighbouring countries. We were thus able to talk more freely about both the positive and negative aspects of such relationships between the herders and the organizations.

Chapter 4:

Research area

Burkina Faso:

The research hereby presented was specifically concentrated in Burkina Faso and more exactly in the southern east region of Burkina Faso and its neighbouring countries, Benin and Togo. Although much research on these conflicts has been done, this is an ongoing issue and due to political, economic and environmental instability the region seems to be heading towards the verge of major conflicts. Groups such as Boko Haram are making their way into Burkina Faso and the increasing shortage of natural resources is putting a strain on both settled and nomadic communities. While researching and working in the country, I came to realize the importance of the role of local organizations in the wellbeing of the nomadic communities and as a consequence of this also of the settled farming communities. Local organizations play a key

role in conflict mediation in the Sahel region, and in presenting this research I will use RECOPA as a pivotal example of the work of such organizations in the region.

As described by the World Bank “Country Report” (2017), Burkina Faso is a low-income, landlocked Sub-Saharan country with limited natural resources. The country borders with Mali to the north, Niger to the east, Benin to the southeast, Togo and Ghana to the south, and Ivory Coast to the southwest. Its capital is Ouagadougou. Burkina Faso (formerly known as Upper Volta) achieved independence from France in 1960. Burkina Faso’s population is composed of different ethnic groups: Mossi 52.5%, Fulani 8.4%, Gurma 6.8%, Bobo 4.8%, Gurunsi 4.5%, Senufo 4.4%, Bissa 3.9%, Lobi 2.5%, Dagara 2.4%, Tuareg/Bella 1.9%, Dioula 0.8%, unspecified/no answer 0.1%, other 7% (2010 est.) (CIA, 2016).

As a result of declining mortality combined with high fertility rates, Burkina Faso has a very young society. As its population continues to expand, this has been increasingly putting pressure on the country’s limited functional land.

Population growth:

The country saw an exponential growth of population starting in the 1960s. Over the course of recent years this has meant a 3.11% growth in the population and it touched its highest levels in 2010. Since its peak, the population has steadily been growing on an average of 2.85%.

The estimated population for Burkina Faso in 2050 is 42,788,778 showing an average 2.48% growth in the next 33 years. Statistical calculations show a decrease in child birth per female as the average will decrease to 3.34 in 2050 from a starting average of 6.1 in 1955 and 5.56 in 2017. This will still lead to Burkina Faso having a higher population density: density per square km is going to go increase from 70 to 156 in 2050. (World Meter, 2017)

Such statistics show an enormous increase in population in a country which is already struggling for natural resources to sustain its populace. Burkina Faso is not the country which will be most affected by population growth and density per square Km. Its neighbor Niger will see an even higher population growth. The current population of Niger is 21.5 million as of Tuesday, May 30, 2017, based on the latest United Nations estimates. The population density in Niger as of today is 17 per Km² (44 people per mi²) but it is estimated that its population density will grow to 57 per km² by 2050. (World Meter, 2017)

These statistics show an increase in population and at the same time a decrease in agricultural and pastoral land. These challenging social changes both in Burkina Faso and its neighbouring countries, such as Niger, will have vast effects on both Fulbe pastoral herders and farming communities. Higher levels of population mean an expansion of cities and the need for the construction of habitable areas leading to the loss in farming and agricultural land. These increases in population could then lead to greater levels of conflict between agricultural farmers and herders as the competition for natural resources and land access will become greater.

Political situation:

The country experienced recurrent military coups throughout the 1970s and 1980s which were then followed by multiparty elections in the early 1990s and a new presidential election two years ago, in 2015. Political instability in Burkina Faso in recent years has also been a factor that is increasing these conflicts. After 26 years of semi dictatorship, in 2015 the Burkinabè population revolted against the government and a revolution started. Even though the conflict was relatively brief, it left Burkina Faso with the struggle to pick itself up from political controversy and repression.

Although a new government has been in place since 2016, it seems that the main field of interest as far as the agricultural sector is concerned, has been settled farming and the production of agricultural products. The East region of Burkina Faso is predominately focused on mobile livestock production as during the drought months agricultural production is very low due to the climatic conditions. This feeling of being forgotten by the government is strongly felt by the Fulbe community and by other nomadic pastoral herders. During my time in the region statements by political figures were made that suggested that there was a higher interest in maintaining a good level of agricultural land compared to making nomadic trails secure. Many transhumants feel that they have been overlooked by the government and this is often translated in their feeling of being mistreated by local authorities in case of conflict, which results in many of them not reporting such issues or taking them into their own hands. These often evolve into major conflicts linked to ethnic and social stigmatization.

Burkina Faso in 1991 introduced into their constitution the concept of decentralization. The country has been implementing the devolution process in stages since 1995. The municipal elections of 2006 resulted in the creation of 13 regional parliaments and 351 urban and rural councils. As of 2014, all relevant responsibilities have been formally transferred to the local authorities. (OECD, 2016)

The new distribution of responsibilities between the different levels of government still poses major challenges for the successful structuring and implementation of the decentralization process. The country has implemented a progressive delegation of competences to the local authorities creating a decentralized system, meaning that a type of administrative decentralization was put in place. The authority, responsibility and financial resources were spread between different levels of government redistributing the political power between the state agencies. This gave more decision-making power to local authorities introducing a gradual delegation of competences to local authorities including a step-by-step de-concentration then decentralization process. (World Bank, 1998) The issue when looking at a country like Burkina Faso is that the complex negotiation process which involves the population, civil society, municipalities, specialists, and national governmental and state bodies is that there is both a severe shortage in finances, human resources and specialists which leads to huge problems in dealing with issues and providing basic services to meet the needs of the population. (GIZ, 2017)

Farmer-herder conflict on the rise (Benin/Togo):

Firstly, the idea and reasons behind the increase of conflicts between farmers and herders needs to be described, paying particular attention to theories that support the notion of the rise in violence and the frequency of such conflicts.

Farmers and herders all over the world, and especially in semi-arid areas, have always shifted between relationships of co-operation, competition, and conflict. This was observed by the author Gallais (1975) in his studies of relations between the farming and herding communities in Mali. The author sees this type of relationship as the essence of the Sahelian condition.

The farmers and herders share the same living spaces and rely on each other for the supply of essential services and goods. This demonstrates an important interdependence between the two groups which also translates into close socio-political relations. The two groups, however, still maintain very unique identities and find themselves competing for the limited amount of natural resources that can be found in the region. This shows two important factors: While it may appear that conflict over diminishing natural resources is impossible to resolve, it must be

remembered that the two social groups have historically had close social and economic relations (Adams and Bradbury, 1995). As reported by (van Raaij, 1974): ‘...distrust and dislike are...as much part of their relationship as mutual appreciation...’

“In the past the relationship between us [the farmers] and the pastoralists were cordial and built on reciprocal trust. We would entrust our cows to the pastoralists who would guard them for us... Today, relations between the farmers and pastoralists have deteriorated and we no longer respect pastoralists enough to let them care for our animals”. (Bennett, 1991:36)

Bassett (1988) used the ecology approach to study the farmer-herder rapport in the central areas of Ivory Coast. According to the author, farmer-herder conflicts have been substantially increasing between the 1970s and the 1980s. through the use of surveys he was able to elaborate the views of locals who attributed the intensification of such conflicts to the arrival of Fulani herders from southern Burkina Faso, southern Mali and the northern regions of Côte d’Ivoire; this is described to be a process that happened due to the extended periods of drought that the whole of the Sahelian region went through during the early 1970s (these types of migration waves frequently happened again throughout the periods of drought that hit the region in earlier and later times). In the case of the areas of Cote d’Ivoire, the herders found themselves clashing with the indigenous Senoufo and Malinkè farmers. These conflicts gradually became more intensively violent and from the latter part of the 1970s, they became a matter for direct intervention by the state. As reported by the author, the conflicts took on more of an ethnic character leading to huge issues not only between the individuals concerned in specific conflicts but becoming a generalized conflict between ethnicities and social groups. This was also worsened by the efforts of the government to sedentarize the nomadic herders. This policy led to higher levels of conflict due to the necessity to distribute space and natural resources between groups that were already engaging in violent relations. Unfortunately the analysis presented by the author does not present time series data on conflict, and data on casualties and losses are given only for the years 1981–2 and 1986, making the identification of trends very difficult.

Another type of theory used in the study of such conflicts is the one presented by Harshbarger (1995) who uses a ‘state-society’ approach. In the study which will be taken into consideration in this paper, the author examines the conflicts between the Meta and Aghem farmers and the

Fulbe herders of the north-west province of Cameroon. In her paper the author illustrates the individual disputes over trespassing on land to support the theory of the increase in farmer-herder conflicts in the area. Although she reports a rise in the levels of conflicts, she highlights the fact that the nature of the conflicts has not seen any long-term changes in the area where the study took place. The paper also specifically looks into major clashes that occurred in the region between 1973, 1981 and 1991. These clashes were reportedly ultimately caused by the failure of the government to act as impartial mediator in the conflict between the two social groups. The government in this instance colluded with the herders who started occupying farming land close to the villages. This resulted in a shortfall in state legitimacy and saw farmers taking actions themselves which led to violent action and the suffering of losses by both parties involved.

The involvement by the state having a negative impact on such conflicts was also recorded by author Marty (1992), who while carrying out field work in Cameroon documented the feeling of insecurity perceived by nomadic herders in the area. The herders noted that they felt threatened by the expanding cultivated land which is gradually invading the traditional transhumance routes. Herders perceive the government to be in close contact with farmers and to be favoring them in the policy making process, creating an alliance which leads the herders to feel powerless in this conflict.

Marty reports the complaints of Bororo pastoralists who criticized farmers, as they feel that they are not willing to understand that parts of land should be reserved for grazing land for the animals.

In studies carried out in both sub-Saharan and North Africa, findings indicate that often conflicts arise from the abuse of traditional host-stranger relationships. It is reported that nomadic herders are often given temporary rights for settlement in an area. Conflicts can arise if the stranger community overstays their welcome and demand the same rights as the indigenous population to utilize the land that they were given the right to settle temporarily. In addition to these instances, it's often the case that local populations reclaim the land used by the "temporary" strangers. This often results in the escalation of conflicts which are frequently characterized by violence. This can also regularly be seen in cases where the government attempts to start a process of sedentarization of the nomadic communities, which has led to agricultural populations objecting to such processes and this has seen an upsurge in the intensification of the conflicts between the farmers and herders. (Houssain et al. 1999)

As previously stated, one of the major factors which has been linked to such conflicts is climate change and climate instability. As reported by Olaniyan et al. (2015) climate change is seen as being a major factor behind conflicts in West Africa. The climatic impact on the soil and on the natural resources found in the region is putting a strain on communities. This is leading people to have to move in search of better natural resources. This is not only being done by nomadic pastoral herders but also by settled agricultural farmers who have had to change locations and have been increasingly coming into contact with Fulbe herders. In the past these herders would have lived in the bush far away from the settled communities.

As described by the authors there are many different types of theories behind these conflicts and the effects they have on broader society and on the Fulbe people. Relative deprivation theory, proposes an idea which sees that both social groups will perpetually be in conflict with one another as both groups rely on the same resources and sees one group always losing out due to the other group's actions. Another important point indicates that the groups will never be able to live peacefully with one another due to the extreme difference in "culture, linguistics, practices and traditions" which are the factors that will prevent them from creating mutual understanding. (Olaniyan et al. 2015)

Processual theory, as Mark Moritz (2010) notes, "If patterns of herder farmer conflict could be entirely explained by structural factors alone, we would expect all conflicts in the same stressful context to display not only similar causes, but also similar levels of engagement and violence and similar outcomes. Moreover, a focus on the local conditions in which violence erupt shows how large scale environmental or structural causes are exacerbated (and can be mitigated) by local forces and local relationships".

This statement links in to the discourse of the importance of local organizations. The role they play in the mediation of the relationship between the two social groups is fundamental to the well-functioning of these relationships as they work as a buffer. However, it can also be argued that the presence of such local organizations can lead to a certain discontent in the communities. In local communities such as the one of Fada N'Gourma, Burkina Faso, the altercations between Fulbe nomads (and settled families) and the settled farmers has been present for many years. Organizations such as RECOPA have had a fundamental role in the reduction of violence between the groups. They have advocated for the rights of Fulbe herders and have been implementing projects for the well-functioning of transhumance while in return helping economically both farmers and the wider community (the purchase of land for transhumance

routes from farmers, higher levels of economic gain during transhumance time, imports of quality meat etc.). Even though these examples show how both social groups are gaining through the involvement of a local organization, the groups still feel that one or the other is gaining more out of this relationship and that one side is being preferred over the other.

It is important to state that local organizations such as RECOPA should have very good links with both the settled farming community and the nomadic Fulbe herders. Many of the people who work for the organization are of Fulbe descent or have worked in the farming community. This said, RECOPA's main goal is to advocate for pastoral herders and for transhumance of cattle. In view of this goal, it is clear that RECOPA sides with Fulbe pastoral herders on policy issues and for the rights to transhumance; this has created many problems for the organization with regard to settled farming communities and the organizations that support them. Farming communities feel that foreign money and resources are being given to Fulbe herders instead of them, which again creates conflicts and stigmatization of the Fulbe.

Taxation has been at the centre of discussion in the past few years as most neighbouring countries of Burkina Faso (which are the predominant ending points for transhumance) have implemented new laws for the collection of data and payments from nomadic herders. Togo and Benin have been the center of attention as they have just recently implemented changes in their pastoral codes which include higher taxations and the implementation of identification badges. This has led to much discussion between nomadic herders and local organizations. According to the governments of Togo and Benin the implementation of these laws has been put into place in order to be able to reduce and control the number of animals that are entering the countries from abroad. They differentiate between nationals and transnationals. In Togo badges were put in place to distinguish the herders that come from foreign countries and the ones that come from the country itself. This is thought to be creating higher levels of stigmatization for the Fulbe herders who have already been undergoing a high level of discrimination by locals.

Benin for example is a predominantly agricultural country. As a result, agricultural organizations have a very strong influence over the creation of laws in comparison to pastoral organizations. The interesting aspect that was highlighted in meeting with Beninese organizations, which I was able to attend during my time with RECOPA, was that in this case pastoral organizations were the ones pushing for the implementation of stricter rules on

nomadic herders. This shows how the lack of natural resources is pushing locals to fight against the entrance and use of the land by foreign herders. The implementation of higher taxes was proposed by local Beninese pastoral organizations to try and deter foreign herders from entering the country and to control the length of time they would be able to access the land. In February 2017 this created an increase in conflicts as many people were blocked at the border of both Benin and Togo and were not able to access the countries until a set date.

More specifically in the case of Benin, while waiting for the adaptation of the pastoral code the government had been putting into action some special measures for the transhumance of 2016/2017.

Special measures taken by the government of Benin for the 2016/2017 period of transhumance:

- Registry at entrance required;
- Routes of passage were signaled and transhumants have to follow them so not to overstep in farming land;
- Reception and Pasture Areas were delimited for the stopover of cattle and transhumants;
- Various taxes which had to be paid at different locations on the transhumance route through the country, such as: entry, grazing, TDL;

Taxes planned 2016-2017: ⁵

- o Entry fees in Benin (applicable only to foreigners)

500 FCFA per head of livestock

200 FCFA per head of small ruminant

⁵ The currency conversion from Euro to FCFA as of the 10/07/2017 was: 1 EUR = 655.957 FCFA

- o Grazing tax (applicable to nationals and foreigners)
 - 500 FCFA per head of livestock
 - 200 FCFA per head of small ruminant
- o Local development tax (applicable to nationals and foreigners)
 - 100 FCFA per head of livestock per commune crossed
 - 50 FCFA per small ruminant head per commune crossed
- Security deposit upon arrival had to be paid by cattle herders depending on the number of heads entering the country:
 - o Deposit payable at the entrance and refundable upon departure from the country
 - 10 000 FCFA per head of livestock
 - 1000 FCFA per head of small ruminant

The total to be paid per head of livestock: 11.100 FCFA

The total to be paid per head of small ruminant: 1.450 FCFA ⁶

The deposit given by the transhumant at the entrance of the country is a guarantee that the transhumant will leave the territory. This does not exempt the transhumant from the compensation for damage caused to others or to property during the journey;

- Penalties for offenders were put in place for transhumants who did not follow the newly implemented legislations;

⁶ These sums are very high as most of the cattle herders undertake transhumance with 50 head of livestock. This means that cattle herders can end up paying up to 555000 FCFA (846 €) for a herd of 50 head of livestock and up to 72500 FCFA (110 €) for small ruminants. These figures can easily be higher as herders are often accompanied by other members of the family in order to be able to move higher numbers of cattle.

The conditions to be fulfilled by the transhumant herders set by the Beninese government were:

- The herder had to have valid ID or any other identification papers to present at the entrance and throughout the transhumance period in the country;
- International certificate of transhumance signed by the veterinary service of the country of origin;
- Mandatory passing through official gates for registration and orientation by staff;
- Herders had to comply with tax provisions at entry and throughout taxation posts on the transhumance routes;
- Herders had the obligation to cross the border during the pre-established dates of entry and exit;
- One herder was only allowed the entry in the country with a maximum of 50 head of cattle;
- The herders had to be at least 18 years old;
- The use of pasture land during night hours was prohibited;
- Herders were prohibited to pasture their livestock in national parks, wildlife reserves, classified forests, and reforestation areas which are not provided with a management plan;
- The detention and use of firearms and narcotics was prohibited;

The transhumance period was also changed, dates of entry (depending on entry points) and exit were put in place:

15 December 2016 to 30 April 2017: Atacora, Donga, Borgou and Alibori

December 31, 2016 to March 31, 2017: Zou, Hills, Couffo, Plateau

By not respecting the required dates the transhumants would be subject to forced expulsion from the country.⁷

⁷ Field notes from Benin and data collected during my internship in RECOPA.

Nomadic pastoral herders from Mali, Niger and Burkina Faso usually undertake transhumance starting from late November/ December, the decision from the government of Benin to delay the entrance date had major repercussions on the wellbeing of livestock and, as previously mentioned in the paper, it created situations of tension and conflict as many transhumants found themselves at the entry points without being able to enter. As the land was already scarce in natural resources people found themselves fighting over the little resources that could be found which increased tensions and led to the death of at least 15 Fulbe herders. On the border with Togo tensions between settled agricultural farmers and nomadic pastoral herders were very high, this was worsened by a group of violent thieves who dressed as Fulbe herders stole from farming families. The increasing tensions led to violent actions by the settled communities against the Fulbe herders. This violence resulted in the death of 15 herders and the theft of numerous heads of livestock (which were then found in northern Ghana). The other fundamental aspect is the economic one because people were not able to provide the high taxes that had to be paid for the entrance into the country and this led to a rise in criminal activity. It was reported in interviews that authorities were taking illegal payments for the entrance of transhumants before the starting date. This meant not only an increase in criminality but also a big disparity between the herders who were able to provide for the bribery sums and the ones who were not. This was reported to have increased the tensions not only between local communities, authorities and the herders but also among the herders themselves.

Chapter 5:

The herder's views:

Carrying out my research in the south east of Burkina Faso I had the chance to interview and discuss the changes and issues regarding transhumance with Fulbe pastoral herders. The discussions mostly led to very similar conclusions. Fulbe pastoral herders have noticed deterioration with regard to environmental changes, political and social issues both in their countries of origin and the host countries during transhumance. Most of the respondents described how transhumance has become increasingly dangerous which has brought many of them to decide to leave their families behind so as to protect them from conflicts during transhumance and in the host countries.

As reported by Siddo, an elderly Nigerian Fulbe herder, transhumance has become much more difficult and stressful in the last few decades. During our conversation he recalled how during his youth his whole family would undertake transhumance from Niger towards southern countries in search for better grazing land during the dry season. Women and children would move with the men and would be able to provide for the food and well-being of the whole camp, while also selling dairy products in the villages they would stop in. This meant that women were able to independently earn money and actively participate in transhumance life while also contributing to the economy of the host countries. This has completely changed nowadays. Siddo told me how now the conflicts and tensions between herders and farmers, as well as within the broader community, have lead transhumants to opt to go on transhumance alone.

I could notice while travelling around Burkina Faso and Benin, at present only men can be found conducting their herds. As described by the president of RECOPA, Mr. Diallo, and by other respondents, traditionally children would be also initiated to transhumance from a young age while nowadays this is not possible anymore. Laws have been changed which means that minors cannot conduct the herds during trans-border transhumance. These changes have led to families being torn apart. While the men go on transhumance women are left behind with the burden of tending to the small herds left behind, the children and the household. It was also reported that young adults are not partaking in transhumance as much as in the past. As the situations of conflicts are on the rise, only experienced older men are undergoing transhumance as they have better and established contacts with local communities and have more experience in dealing with conflict situations. One interview which caught my attention was with a young Fulbe herder Idrissa Djilli whom I had the chance to work with during my time with RECOPA. He decided to join the organization in the role of Rouga⁸ to improve the situation of Fulbe herders in Burkina Faso. Idrissa has been a nomadic pastoral herder his whole life but has now started working with RECOPA to become a Rouga in his commune of Koptedu at the border with Togo.

He owns around 100 cattle but has not gone on transhumance this year. However, he is in very close contact with his fellow herders that have taken his herd to Togo.

It was reported that the number of conflicts perceived by the herders in transhumance in the last decade has increased. Although the zone is a mostly dry/subtropical area (meaning that the area is subject to rains earlier than the rest of the east of Burkina thus augmenting the natural resources that are needed for the wellbeing of the animals) there were still conflicts in the past (and present). In the area where Idrissa comes from conflicts are mainly due to theft. The animals are taken and brought to Ghana which leads to greater difficulty regaining the herds because no local organization working with Fulbe herders from Burkina Faso and northern countries is present in the field. However, since RECOPA has put in place the figure of the Rougas these thefts have diminished and the locals have a figure they feel they can approach and be protected and aided.

Idrissa complained of the fact that Togo at the moment is undergoing many changes in its laws and taxations. The taxes are very high and these, in addition to the security situation, are pushing

⁸ Rouga is a figure introduced by RECOPA. Within each nomadic pastoral herder's communities, one in each municipality, an elected representative works with the organization closely following transhumants and working as mediator in cases of conflicts.

people not to undergo trans-border transhumance. He mentioned that he believes that local organizations (such as RECOPA), the Burkinabè government and those of the neighbouring countries need to create a dialogue for the negotiation of such taxations. This is because the present day situation is merely increasing the difficulties that transhumants have to undergo and leads to more unhappiness and conflicts between people.

Idrissa had very positive words for RECOPA. He mentioned how other organizations are also in the field and have been putting in place projects that have been constructive. He was keen to highlight how RECOPA through its facilitators was able to accompany the transhumants in their nomadic herding to neighbouring countries. This he said was a major step for himself and other stockbreeders as by having such figures enabled them to deal with conflicts and any other issues in a calm and knowledgeable way (they were accompanied by individuals that are trained in pastoral code and laws in relation to pastoralism).

In the last few years he has seen changes in the pattern of the weather conditions which have become more instable, even in the north of Togo. Idrissa says that Ghana is a very good country for grazing conditions but as there are many conflicts and since Burkinabè organizations are not working directly there he would not feel safe in bringing his herds there. However this would make sense from an access to resources point of view.

Is it a cultural problem? Idrissa spoke about the fact that in countries like Ghana it is more difficult to approach people and authorities as the culture is different but also the language and customs. There are many conflicts between Burkinabè and Ghanaians. Today, people are being highly taxed once they bring their herds to Ghana and a lot of informal taxation and corruption is present at the border. On the other hand, these taxations are also present in both Benin and Togo. Idrissa mentioned how there seems to be more corruption in Ghana and that the authorities are always looking for some way of taking your money or your animals away.

What came out of the conversation is also that there is a lot of conflict due to the changing of laws in the neighbouring countries. Many animals have died this year because of the fact that a lot of herders found themselves at the border and could not enter until the end of January. This left many animals to depend on a limited area for grazing (creating huge problems for the herders themselves, conflicts between them were very common and tension was very high) and many did not make it. The interesting aspect of what Idrissa says is that some people were able to enter the countries anyway by paying bribes. He mentioned how some of the herders knew the border control officers and it was possible for them to access the country by paying them.

Idrissa still thinks that there will be change and that there is hope for more positive outcomes if the local organizations keep on helping the herders and the local communities. He has great faith in the organizations. He thinks that people will change their itineraries too, moving from transhumancing to Togo and Benin to transhumance towards Ghana and Ivory Coast. Moreover, he is very worried about the outcomes of the continuous conflicts that are happening both in Burkina between cattle herders and agricultural farmers and in neighbouring countries. He mentioned how Nigeria could be a very good country to transhumance to as their natural resources are abundant and there are plenty of pastoral fields. However in addition to being a very long way to walk, there are struggles with the political insecurity and many people fear for their lives. Idrissa mentioned how he is very worried that terrorist organizations like Boko Haram are infiltrating the neighbouring countries such as Mali, and how this is going to affect Burkina Faso and the daily livelihood of its population. This is especially true for the ones that need to freely move from one country to another.

Discrimination against Fulbe creates huge problems and conflicts. Many people have been suffering from stigmatization and others have been taking advantage of this. A previously mentioned incident occurred during February 2017, on the border between Burkina Faso and Togo, which saw some people disguised themselves as Fulbe from Burkina Faso and stole from local agricultural farmers. This created a conflict between the local community and the transhumant Fulbe community. 15 people died and most of the transhumants livestock was lost or stolen. RECOPA had to intervene to try and reduce the damage and attempt to at least save the livestock so they could be returned to their rightful owners in Burkina Faso. Idrissa was personally involved in the process of conflict mediation in this case and was able to save some of the cattle from the robbers. He believes that Fulbe discrimination in Togo is on the increase and that the locals are not happy to have foreign herders using their diminishing natural resources.

Identification badges in Togo, which have been implemented for foreign herders as part of the new legislations for the transhumance period of 2016/2017, are seen as highlighting the differences between people and it reinforces the discrimination that is felt by the Fulbe.

Although the situation of conflicts throughout the Sahelian region has been increasingly deteriorating, all the Fulbe herders interviewed still had hope for a better future. They all highlighted the fact that conflicts in this region have always been at the heart of the relationship

between herders and farmers, but with the help of the work of local organizations they still hope for a decrease in such conflicts and for better conditions for their communities.

Chapter 6:

What does RECOPA do and how does it link into these issues

The organization:

The Communication Network on Pastoralism (RECOPA) is a pastoral association from Burkina Faso which was created in 1998, the organization was firstly created with the help of Vétérinaire Sans Frontière as part of a communication network project. The organization is based in three regions of Burkina Faso: the west, north and east. I worked and researched mainly with the section of RECOPA based in the south east of Burkina Faso. The organization is based in Fada N’Gourma, capital city of the region of Gourma in the East of Burkina Faso. The city is of relevance as it is one of the major hotspots for pastoral herders and transhumants and it hosts the biggest cattle market in the region. In addition, the city it is situated on the road to Niamey, Niger and to the neighbouring countries, Benin and Togo. This means that most of the transhumance routes pass through or close to Fada N’Gourma, making it an ideal spot for the organization to be reached by nomadic herders.

The purpose of this network is to contribute to the improvement of the living conditions of pastoral groups through access to training and appropriate information. The overall objective pursued by RECOPA is to strengthen the capacity of pastoral groups and their organizations to participate in the development, implementation and analysis of all texts, laws and policies that may influence their activities at local, national and international levels in the field of pastoralism.

As its initial aim the organization worked on The Pastoral Correspondents which is a collection of texts relating to pastoral activity and made them available to the herders who, in turn,

capitalized the information relating to herd management, animal health, the organization of traditional herders etc. These exchanges of information led to the creation of a newspaper called "DJANGOMEN" (our future). The desire to disseminate information to a wider audience than the newspaper could reach, urged the pastoral correspondents to initiate, in collaboration with the herders, listening committees on the radio, as well as fora. This new approach brought together livestock herders, administrative and technical service managers directly or indirectly involved in the livestock sector. During these meetings the herders explained their difficulties and the Technical Services presented the information they had: law, improved livestock systems etc.

The Vétérinaires Sans Frontière's project ended in December 2000. The Pastoral Correspondents decided to take over and initially created the "Information and Training Network for Herders" (RIFE) and the "Réseau de Communication" On Pastoralism (RE.CO.PA). Since then, RECOPA has developed an associative base in the communes with pastoral correspondents in each commune. Today RECOPA exists at the national level and counts more than 2000 members who are groups of pastoralists and agro- pastoralists. (RECOPA, 2015)

The main objective that the organization set out to achieve is to: "reinforcing the capacities of herders and their organizations to participate in the development, the analysis and implementation of all the texts, laws and policies at local, national and international level which affect the development of pastoralism.

Some of the main objectives being:

- increase organizational and negotiating capacity of herders through information on policies, existing laws and laws governing access to resources Natural resources and their management in a development process sustainable;
- supporting organizations in policy analysis of previously existing laws and texts in preparation for new policies and laws, so that the organizations can represent the voices and needs of herders;
- raise public awareness of the need for taking into account pastoralist problems in regards to the implementation of sectoral development plans;

- to reconcile the different interests of users of natural resources at local, national, regional level and internationally by identifying and creating strategic resources (water points, magasin aliment betaille, etc.);
- supporting the inclusion of women's activities in the pastoral sector;

RECOPA's areas of intervention:

- Pastoral infrastructure development:
 - o livestock markets and loading docks
 - o livestock feed stores
 - o immunization parks
 - o water points and pastoral wells
- Securing pastoral resources
 - o livestock trails
 - o grazing areas
 - o rest areas

RECOPA's projects are mostly structured so as to create a strengthening process in regards to the capacities of herders through:

1. Training: this is a fundamental aspect within the organization as RECOPA main concern is to create and spread information which can enable pastoral herders to strengthen their own capacities and knowledge of the sector and the policies and laws which are implemented and how these affect them. Pastoral herders are trained in:

- o natural resource management
- o conflict prevention and management
- o the challenges of pastoralism in the Sahel
- o management of markets and feed stocks
- o livestock trade in West Africa

- o the local animal health system
- o pastoralists para-jurists

2. Technical and organizational support

- o infrastructure management committees
- o communication
- o information monitoring;
- o pastoral correspondent

RECOPA is structured in a way that enables it to be in proximity and constant contact with its members and activities throughout the territory in which it is represented. Thus, the main governing bodies of RECOPA are:

- The General Assembly: it is the supreme body which brings together all members of RECOPA; these are departmental correspondents and representatives of member organizations.
- The National Office: it is composed of 13 representative members.
- The National Executive Committee: composed of 3 members, one representative per region.
- Three (3) Regional Offices: east, west and north.
- The Departmental Committees: they represent the highest authority of the RECOPA in each department of the organization throughout the country.

This structuring of the RECOPA enables it to reach all its members and promotes the circulation of information from top to bottom and vice versa.

Since its inception, RECOPA has set itself the goal of strengthening the capacity of pastoralists and their organizations to participate in the development, analysis and implementation of all laws, Local, national and international levels related to the development of pastoralism. The mission of RECOPA is to enable pastoralists to take action on the main issues in order to influence evolutionary trends, which challenge the very future of pastoralism in Burkina Faso.

Within the south-east regional office, the organization is mainly run by the Coordinator of activities Mr. Boubacar Maiga. The team is then composed by: two specialized assistants who have the role of creating databases and have the tools to process the data collected in the field; three animators whose work is to collect data and meet with locals to then report the information back to the organization. In addition to these fixed figures, RECOPA works with local actors such as “parajuriste”. These are informal volunteers who are trained by the organization on the laws and issues regarding pastoralism in Burkina Faso and are figures who accompany the pastoral herders; in the case of conflicts they act as mediators when and if RECOPA is not able to be physically present. A similar figure is the one of the Rouga. These are chief pastoral herders who also act as “parajuriste” but are much closer to the pastoral herders as they are elected by them and act as a link between the organization and the pastoral herders (especially once the pastoral herders undertake transhumance). They are provided with electronic tablets so that they can collect all the information given by the pastoral herders and then can send the information directly back to RECOPA. This is extremely interesting as once on transhumance the pastoral herders are still able to send back precise information so that RECOPA can act to facilitate conflict mediation.

Other figures in the organization are the accountant, the secretary and the President of RECOPA. The latter mostly participates in ateliers as a representative of the organization but does not actively participate in the work.

It is important to highlight the fact that RECOPA is a partner with different international organizations, one of the main ones being Acting for Life a French organization which is concerned with the issue of territorial economic development. This is done through the implementation of territorial-based projects aimed at strengthening the economy of rural or indigenous communities. (AFL, 2016)

The main project that Acting for Life and RECOPA partner on is one concerned with the resilience of livestock keepers and food farmers in order to render the border crossing transhumance of livestock more secure. The project aims to create a cartography of transhumance routes (with the implementation of points of access to water, pastoral land etc.). This step of the project mainly aims to create mapping and protect livestock transhumance routes with an emphasis on areas which are affected by difficult climatic situations. Another aim is to create and service livestock routes by building livestock markets on transhumance routes, creating areas of access to veterinary facilities and providing the nomadic herders with

specialized shops to buy livestock feed which might not be available in certain areas during transhumance. This feed is provided to the public at lower prices in comparison to the livestock feed that would be found on the market meaning that this product is available on a larger scale and is accessible even to lower income earning herders.

The project also deals with the promotion of the importance of livestock mobility and the promotion of a strategic reflection on the need for adaptation. This adaptation should keep in mind future higher levels of population as well as climatic and political migration.

Furthermore, one of the most important projects to diminish farmer-herder conflict is to create transhumance routes and secure certain areas for nomadic herders which results in economic gain for farmers and secure access to land and water for transhumants and their livestock. Other projects have been put into place to reduce such conflicts. Working with RECOPA I had the chance to experience first-hand their approach to such conflicts and the way they worked as mediators.

One interesting proposal that is likely to be implemented by RECOPA in partnership with different local municipalities is the one of creating market places in communal grounds and communal land ownership as a potential long-term equilibrium factor in the re-allocation of taxes. This would also work as a limiting factor to the risk of monopolization of land by arable farmers. The different municipalities, in agreement with a management committee (created by RECOPA, mayors of the municipalities and the regional advisory office), put in place a delegation for the management of contracts which define the specific allocation of the communal taxes between each communal market place created through this project and the mayor of each municipality. The creation of a delegation with representatives from each municipality aims to create a different type of management creating an opportunity for better action against illegality and avoiding preferential treatment of certain groups rather than others. Associations and organizations pay taxes to the municipality which can be used for the benefit of the community. This whole process benefits firstly the more modest farmers and herders and creates a better awareness for these social groups of the benefits of livestock markets in local communes. It also enables them to better understand the process of taxation that goes behind such communal budgets. Assuring better traceability, the herders and agricultural farmers will more easily understand their contribution to the local economy. This clarity has to be seen as a very positive contribution that can benefit the resolution of tensions between agricultural

farmers and pastoral herders since it highlights the contribution made by both sides in community projects.

Although these are very important aspects to be worked on, pastoralists also contribute and benefit from these projects. Their social and economic situation is very different from the ones of settled communities. Nomadic pastoral herders and in particular Fulbe herders, are often discriminated and struggle to be heard in both their country of origin and the ones they are hosted in during transhumance. This highlights the role of local organizations as a bridge between different communities in the hope of creating cooperation between farmers and herders.

Why is this organization so important?

Organizations like RECOPA are fundamental in maintaining transhumance in the Sahelian region. Governments, both in the past and in the present, are pushing for the settlement of nomadic pastoral herders and are prioritizing agriculture and agricultural farmers in the hope of improving the country's GDP and balance of trade. At the same time this is causing major conflicts within the communities and is creating a lot of issues with the communities in bordering countries. As mentioned before the region is subject to very dry periods. This means an increasing difficulty for people to be able to support the community only through agriculture. This creates a highly stressful situation for agricultural farmers who have to work with harsh climatic conditions. This often leads to violent fights between agricultural farmers and nomadic pastoral herders over natural resources. At present, nomadic pastoral herders are in continuous movement in search for better grazing land and water access for their herds. As natural resources are already scarce, higher numbers of settled cattle herds would cause more intense conflicts and could lead to serious repercussions for the whole society of Burkina Faso. In neighbouring countries, the situation is not better. As of this year laws for stricter control of the number of cattle and transhumants being allowed into Benin and Togo have been implemented. (CNT, 2016) This is leading to greater insecurity for the Fulbe communities that support themselves with transhumant cattle herding and this has of course an effect on the community that they leave behind. It is all connected since once the transhumants leave the country to create an income this will impact both the community at home and the ones they will come into contact with. As there is more discrimination and control over who can access the land and in which way, this has led to two important issues: corruption and conflicts.

Corruption for one, as reported by the herders interviewed in Burkina Faso, is on the rise. As the new laws for entrance/exit and numbers of cattle allowed into the country have only recently

changed, many nomads were not aware of such changes and found themselves stuck at the borders with Benin and Togo. Many official figures were reported to be taking bribes to allow people to enter the country before the official date. The Fulbe that had paid a bribe were technically illegally entering the country before the entrance date and therefore they were then easy targets for corrupt officials and locals who were, again, reported to be asking for bribes in order to allow the transhumants access to land and water.

In Burkina Faso during colonial times the transhumance routes or the commercial livestock routes tended to follow the same path as slave routes. After independence the routes became reinforced, secured and adapted to the necessities of the local populations and the nomadic pastoral herders that used them. These routes are still nowadays the same as they were before but they have often been damaged or parts of land have been taken by agricultural farmers who are expanding their agricultural land. Due to exportation towards bordering countries the request for meat has led many people to opt for the use of trucks instead of the traditional transhumance on foot. The ever-growing demand for livestock/meat, has led many livestock keepers to choose to breed heavier livestock which although they can be more profitable are not able to undergo long journeys on foot. This is intrinsically going against the whole process and idea behind transhumance.

One of the reasons behind border crossing transhumance in addition to being profitable due to the demand for livestock in neighbouring countries, is the fact that the animals have the chance to grow on the way. Transhumance can take up to 6 months which gives the animal the time to grow and to feed on different types of grass and nutrients which might not be available in the drier parts of the country. This is especially true during the dry season which coincides with the transhumance starting time. (AFL, 2015)

The paper on “Commercial Mobility” presented by AFL (2015) shows that a migration of livestock tends to go from Mali/Niger into Burkina Faso and all the way to Benin and Togo. The animals then are usually transported to Lagos in Nigeria where they are sold for meat. There are markets that have been put in place along the transhumance route which are some of the most important that will be encountered during the route. These markets are specifically in these areas as they bring together people from the entire region so that animals can be either bought in situ or can be taken into the neighbouring countries. This process is then again divided into two different types of “transhumance”. Nomadic pastoral herders tend to maintain a more traditional approach and move their cattle on foot and they usually stop in Benin or Togo. There

are some who walk all the way to Nigeria but in recent times a lot of people tend to either use trucks starting already from Burkina Faso (these are usually bigger producers) or from important markets in Benin.

Different animals move differently. There are animals that are sold half way and ones that are brought by vehicle from certain points. Although it seems to be more logical to use vehicles when transporting large numbers of heavy cattle, it is not easy to rent or use trucks. The cost of rent and the road conditions mean that it is a very difficult journey to undertake. Bribes asked both by truck drivers and border patrols are again very common. With the seasonal cotton harvest, both in Mali and Burkina Faso it is very difficult to come across a truck during certain times of the year. In addition to this the demand for livestock is very variable which means that this is not a very profitable business for truck drivers. (AFL, 2015)

Examples of how these types of issues can be tackled are shown in projects like the ones put in place by RECOPA. As already mentioned RECOPA has put in place strategic shops which sell livestock feed and water for the animals. They also provide maps which indicate the transhumance routes and they work on ensuring that the routes are clear and are well signaled by posts throughout the route. There are currently projects put in place to continue the securitization of such routes and multi-country work is being done to create continuity in neighbouring countries too. The shops are better known as “magasin aliment bétail” which are very rigorously organized. There is one person in charge who has to look after the livestock feed and take care of the taxes which have to be paid to the municipalities. As mentioned before the livestock feed is sold at cheaper rates than in the normal market so that more people can access this product and in times of drought keep their livestock alive.

Local organizations not only implement different projects for the improvement of the conditions of transhumance but they also work at both regional and state level to make the voice of Fulbe herders heard.

I attended meetings organized by the international non-governmental organization GIZ in Benin thanks to my internship with RECOPA. At the meetings the need for communal laws throughout the Sahelian region to represent and protect Fulbe pastoral herders was discussed at length. Organizations from the Sahelian region see the need for a common pastoral code to protect the rights of Fulbe herders throughout the countries which host them during transhumance as well as in their country of origin. As Fulbe herders are mostly nomadic, they move around West Africa and due to different conditions they are pushing themselves towards

southern regions. The question becomes then, who is in charge of these people and who is there to protect their rights?

What do the herders think of this?

From reports given by Fulbe herders during interviews, the pastoral herders do not recognize borders and they do not want borders. These borders are technically legally correct as laws for the free movements of people between West African countries were put in place in the past. This free movement is valid only for 90 days for ECOWAS citizens, after which application for residency has to be submitted. The implementation of harsher laws makes it difficult for people to undertake transhumance and puts at risk the livelihood of many families and individuals. There have been increasing conflicts both in the home countries, as people are discouraged from leaving the country and in the hosting ones where people have been suffering from a great deal of discrimination and economic strain. What was reported by organizations in neighbouring countries to Burkina Faso and by the Fulbe herders themselves, is the need for organizations of all countries to work together to protect and promote pastoralism. At the same time, they must keep in mind the needs and difficulties of nomadic herders. Sensitivity to laws and pastoral rights has been a focal point in the transnational meetings. There is a need to create national and regional modules to be shared among transhumance countries. This can be done by creating and sharing communal texts on the rights and responsibilities of nomadic pastoral herders. It is fundamental for organizations in each of the Sahelian countries to move forward together and fight discriminating laws.

Chapter 7:

Analysis:

The interventions put into place by organizations such as RECOPA are fundamental for the well-being of Fulani pastoral herders but at the same time they can have negative effects on such communities. As Fulbe pastoral herders rely on organizations for interventions which will enable them to continue their traditions and way of being, the relationship between these groups becomes very close. On the other hand, the fact that such relationships are so close further deteriorates the relationship between farmers and herders. Not only are these groups in competition for natural resources but they can also find themselves clashing over funding by external donors. Fulbe pastoral herders are a minority and have been gaining popularity among foreign NGOS in the past few decades. This has increased the feeling of competition from agricultural farmers who may feel that they are not being treated fairly by such organizations.

RECOPA as an organization works very well on local levels. Most of the people who work for the association are either of Fulbe descent or have vast knowledge of both ethnic issues and farmer-herder conflicts. This allows RECOPA and its representatives to be present within the communities and have a better understanding of the issues which can be encountered when working in such environments. By having valuable contacts both at local and state level, these organizations are able to put in place effective projects which benefit not only Fulbe pastoral herders but also the wider community which they come into contact with. This highlights the benefits of having local organizations working closely with both communities to facilitate and mitigate conflicts which can arise from tensions and rivalry over natural resources as well as political and social factors. As local organizations can be found within the communities, they have a better and deeper understanding of the issues due to their representatives having often

experienced such situations themselves. They are therefore able to identify themselves with either or both parties involved. This also entails a certain bias within the projects as RECOPA is concentrated on pastoralism. Often the projects that are put in place have as an aim the well-being and functioning of transhumance, which can lead to a lack of representation on the part of agricultural farming communities. This is frequently the case at state level and organizational level too. When attending conventions on either pastoralism or agricultural farming the parties concerned are usually one sided and do not look at the opposite side of the issue.

As projects put in place by organizations interested both in pastoralist and agricultural issues have an effect on broader society and not only on the represented party, the need for cooperation between different organizations clearly seems to be a fundamental aspect when tackling the issue of conflicts between farmers and herders in the Sahelian region.

In addition, competition and poor cooperation between local organizations focused on the same interest area creates difficulties. While in Burkina Faso I was able to note the presence of different projects very similar to one another being put in place in the same villages. For example, I witnessed the creation of two livestock markets within the same village. Livestock markets are put in place mostly to assemble all herders for livestock trade and these markets are strategically built close to transhumance routes to facilitate transhumants during their migration towards other areas. As different organizations often tend not to collaborate with one another and carry out projects which are similar, this creates not only competition between the organizations but can lead to the failure of certain projects. As a result, there is a waste of resources which could be allocated to different projects and therefore improve the situation of both herders and farmers in the region.

Local organizations in Burkina Faso, in this case particularly RECOPA, have an important role in the resilience of nomadic groups. Through their projects and hands on actions they are able to facilitate and protect the nomadic lifestyle of Fulbe herders, while working towards cooperation between settled and nomadic communities. Local organizations come into play as being a fundamental link in the relationship between these groups. As previously stated, the state is often absent and local organizations often become the focus point in mediation processes. In situations of political instability, they may become the only state organ that advocates for and gives a voice to groups which would otherwise not be represented.

Conclusion:

Conflicts in the Sahelian region have been part of the relationship between settled agricultural farmers and nomadic pastoral herders for as long as it is known. With increases in environmental, social and political instability in the region, such conflicts seem to be on the rise. This has been creating tensions not only between the two groups but also within broader society.

In an area of the world where governments are not actively working towards cooperation between these groups, local organizations are the only active party in the search for mediation processes and for the creation of a more balanced and peaceful society.

As natural resources are degrading the tension between settled communities and nomadic ones are on the rise. The violent conflicts that are characterizing southern Mali, northern Burkina Faso and other areas of the Sahel are a good example of how these conflicts have been escalating in recent times. There is no clear solution to this problem but the work of local organizations such as RECOPA has been fundamental for the facilitation of the well-functioning of society in areas prone to conflicts and climate instability.

As I personally experienced in my time in Burkina Faso, the only long term solution seems to be the one of all local organizations of the Sahelian area working and cooperating together for the creation of a network which aims to mediate conflicts. They can contribute by sensitizing communities to such issues and keeping in mind the rights and needs of both settled and nomadic communities.

Transhumance and the nomadic way of life are slowly changing and there is a risk of such lifestyles being lost due to a variety of instability factors. This is why local organizations are

fundamental in such regions. They are the only means for the mitigation of violent conflicts through their policies, social action and better mutual understanding between settled and nomadic communities. At the same time, they are encouraging the maintenance of traditions which have been proved to be the most effective means of livelihood and production in a region of the world where life is predicted to become harsher in the near future.

At present the future does not seem promising. There is no easy answer to the conflict and the violence but through the work that local organizations are putting in place there is hope for better life conditions for both pastoral herders and agricultural farmers.

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