

CONFLICT BETWEEN PASTORALISTS AND CULTIVATORS IN NIGERIA

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SUMMARY

Conflict between pastoralists and farmers has existed since the beginnings of agriculture, but the prevalence of tsetse and low settlement densities kept the incidence of clashes at a low frequency until the twentieth century. In West Africa, the introduction of cheap trypanocides and other veterinary drugs increased herd sizes to levels that compelled herders to seek pastures outside their ecological range. At the same time improved human health has increased overall human population and thus pressure on arable land. Nonetheless, the slash and burn agriculture typical of much of semi-arid and subhumid West Africa allowed the two groups to co-exist, especially through the exchange of crop residues for manure. However, the marked expansion of riverine and valley-bottom cultivation since the 1980s has meant that herders and farmers are now competing very directly for access to river banks with a consequent increase in conflict. In Nigeria, in particular, this conflict has now been subsumed into a broader dichotomy of religion and disputes over access to resources are now framed in religious terms. Increasing availability of modern weapons has increased the intensity and violence of these disputes. It is often said that Pastoral Organisations, such as Miyetti Allah, can play a role in conflict mediation. However, their record in this area is very poor because they are in reality highly dispersed and their ability to lobby correspondingly limited.

1. Introduction: Pastoralists and farmers in West Africa

Nigeria has a restricted inventory of cattle pastoralists and only two groups where some sections are habitually nomadic. The most numerous and widespread are the Fulbe [Fulani] who live between Senegambia to Western Sudan. They have expanded westwards from the Gambia river over the last thousand years. The Fulbe are now pressing the limits of the territory that can be exploited through nomadic pastoralism, both in terms of available pasture east of their original homeland in the Futa Toro in the Republic of Guinea, and south to the limits of the tsetse belts, wherever these were located at a given historical period. Two features of their present society reflect this; extensive sedentarisation and an increase in conflict with the agrarian societies on whom they have traditionally depended for their supply of cereal staples. The FulBe and the arable farmers among whom they move have an interdependent relationship, based on the exchange of dairy products for grain, and a market for the animals that must be periodically sold to provide cash for domestic purposes, such as cloth or marriage payments. Moreover, in many regions, FulBe management strategies depend on access to cereal crop residues -something arable farmers permit because of the perceived advantages of manure as fertilizer.

However, in no case are the goods or services the pastoralist has to offer essential to the farming community, and therefore the pastoralist is obliged to remain on good terms with farmers if he wishes to continue to exploit the same locale in successive years. If FulBe herders are unable to build up exchange relations with the farming communities, they can only survive by becoming sedentarised, by flexible movement patterns that involve exploiting new arable communities every year, or by intimidation of the farmers. All of these strategies can be observed in operation in Nigeria, sometimes practised simultaneously by different FulBe subgroups.

It is tempting to try and interpret these relations in terms of a type of ecological determinism; the higher the pressure on resources, the greater the conflict between the two groups. However, comparative studies suggest that only by considering a broad range of contributing factors can the observed diversity be explained. Theoretical writing has tended to concentrate on arid zone pastoralists in West Africa (e.g. Gallais 1972) Apart from Frantz (1975, 1980, 1981a,b), whose work is confined to the reanalysis of previously collected data, there has been little published on the subhumid zone, partly because its colonization by cattle pastoralists is very recent. Comparative material must therefore be drawn from descriptive ethnography. Rehfish (1974:74) & Frantz (1975,1980) for the Mambila, Prioul (1971) for the Central African Republic, Boutrais (1974), Hurault (1964) for northern Cameroun and Kaberry (1959,1960) for the Cameroun grasslands, discuss examples of such conflict, mostly from the point of view of the aggrieved farmer, but no attempt is made to fit these into a theoretical framework.

It is possible to be entirely wrong in perceptions of the degree of harmony and co-operation between communities. Blench (1984) discussed the patterns of conflict and co-operation in a limited region in Adamawa, and the contrasting relations between the Fulbe and their Samba and Mambila neighbours. Since the period dealt with in that paper, matters have continued to deteriorate for both communities and, in particular, the breakdown of law and order on the Mambila Plateau has led to the wholesale movement of Mambila communities into Cameroon.

This review¹ describes five major elements that determine the relations between herders and arable farmers. These are;

- a) Dominance relations, both historical and current; the relations of power and authority, both within and between the various ethnic groups and classes.
- b) The production system; in the case of farmers, the crops planted, both for sale and subsistence, modes of land preparation, and the means of mobilisation of labour; in the case of graziers, the patterns of stock management, and the terms of co-operation with arable farmers.
- c) The allocation of economic rights and responsibilities within traditional social and political frameworks.
- d) Religion. Where neighbouring a pastoral group and the agriculturalists do not have the same religion, ideological differences may over-ride mutual economic advantage.
- e) Politics. The gradual transition from a military state, ruled by arbitrary decree, to a representative democracy has brought into focus both administrative units (states and local governments) and the requirement to find politicians able to represent sectional interests

Each of these factors will influence the way individuals perceive a potential conflict, and thus the means they may choose to resolve it.

2. The Present Situation

2.1 Ethnographic background to pastoralism in Nigeria

One of the striking aspects of pastoralism in Nigeria is the contrast between its actual complexity and the simplified representations usually made of it. Pastoralism is strongly associated with the Fulbe [Fulani] who are generally presented as a unitary group with a unitary culture (for some attempt to explore the diversity with the Fulbe see Blench, 1990). There are in fact some fourteen other pastoral peoples in Nigeria (Table 1) apart from the Fulbe, who are themselves divided into numerous subgroups.

Table 1. Pastoral Peoples of Nigeria

Group	Location	Main Pastoral Species^o
Arabs		
Baggara	South of Geidam	Cattle
Shuwa	Eastern Borno/Cameroon	Cattle
Uled Suliman	Komadugu Yobe valley	Camels
Fulbe*		
Anagamba	Northeastern Borno	Cattle
Bokooloji	Northern Borno	Cattle
Maare	South-eastern Borno	Cattle
Sankara	North-western Borno	Cattle
Uda'en	North-Eastern Nigeria	Uda Sheep
WoDaaBe	Northeastern Nigeria	Cattle
Kanuri Group		
Badawai	Central Borno	Cattle
Jetko	North of Geidam/Niger	Camels

¹The information for this paper is based on fieldwork in Nigeria 1979-2002, but in particular my work with Nigerian pastoralists was enriched during my period as ground co-ordinator of the National Livestock Resource Survey of Nigeria in 1989-91 (RIM, 1992, Vols. I-VI). I am indebted to the numerous reports from field researchers in various parts of the country for information on the distribution of the Fulbe. For obvious reasons, my informants on the subject of very recent events remain anonymous.

Group	Location	Main Pastoral Species^o
Kanuri	Borno	Cattle
Koyam	South-Central Borno	Cattle
Manga	North-west Borno	Cattle/Camels
Mober	North-Eastern Borno/Niger	Cattle
Kanembu Group		
Kuburi	Extreme north-east Borno/ Niger	Cattle
Sugurti	Lake Chad shore	Cattle
Saharans		
Teda (Tubu)	Northern Borno/Niger	Camels
Berber		
Twareg	North of Sokoto/Niger	Camels
Others		
Yedina (Buduma)	On Lake Chad	Cattle
Source: adapted from RIM (1992, III)		
*Only a few representative groups noted.		
^o Almost all groups herd small ruminants		

2.2 The Fulbe

The Fulbe are the best known and most numerous of all the pastoral groups and their dominance in the Sahel stimulated a series of French studies covering the different subgroups (Dupire 1962, 1970; Benoit 1979; Bougeot 1981). The Fulbe, or Fulani, are the best known and most numerous of all the pastoral groups in Nigeria. They are described in a number of classic monographs, most notably St. Croix (1944), Hopen (1958), and Stenning (1959) who studied pastoral groups in the semi-arid regions. By contrast, for the humid and subhumid regions there is relatively little descriptive material. Fricke's (1979) study of pastoralism in Nigeria concluded from an analysis of tax and slaughterhouse records that there had been a general shift southward of pastoral herds. Awogbade (1983) described the Fulbe on the Jos Plateau, while some of the papers in Kaufmann, Chater & Blench (1986) deal with pastoralists in southern Zaria. Ezeomah (1987) reviews some of the settlement schemes proposed for the Nigerian Fulbe in the rather specific perspective of their educational implications.

These writings have a specific feature in common -they cement the strong identification in the minds of both researchers and the Nigerian public between Fulbe pastoralists and 'the North', however vaguely defined. Their distribution and identity is described in greater detail by Blench (1984, 1985, 1991) who points out that conventional stereotypes of the Fulbe as living in Northern Nigeria are becoming less and less true, year by year. Two major surveys commissioned by the Nigerian government have contributed to a major reformulation of the conventional stereotypes of Fulbe pastoralism (RIM, 1984, 1989, 1992).

The exact era when Fulbe pastoralists first began to expand into Nigeria is unknown, but their traditions placed their origin somewhere in the Fuuta Toro in the 13th or 14th century. For a long period, the Fulbe were confined to the edge of the desert. The factors preventing their southern expansion remain controversial, but it is likely that attempts to move out of the semi-arid region would have resulted in major losses from the trypanosomoses. Before the spread of firearms in Nigeria, human population densities were low and wild animal numbers still high. This would have created a high level of tsetse challenge for the non-trypanotolerant zebu owned by the Fulbe (Blench 1994).

By the early nineteenth century the Fulbe in what is now Nigeria had developed an urban, sedentary class, especially of religious scholars. Their commitment to Islam and the dedication of their followers stimulated the development of an effective military machine. The Jihad of Usman dan Fodio was

successfully launched in Sokoto in 1804. Within thirty years, the Hausa kingdoms and a number of peripheral kingdoms, such as Borgu and Nupe, had fallen to the Fulbe. This rapidly accentuated the difference between the pastoralists (Fulbe *na'i*) and the urban Fulbe (Fulbe *wuro*). The urban Fulbe took on many characteristics of the peoples they ruled and gradually lost their language, although they have retained a cultural bond with the pastoralists which persists up to the present.

One of the effects of political and military expansion was to clear a way for the southward movement of pastoralists. At this period the herders could only exploit the pastures of the northern wetlands (such as the Hadejia-Jama'are river basin) and the subhumid 'Middle Belt' in the dry season -when the rains came the bulk of the herds would be sent northwards into the semi-arid zone to prevent diseases carried by tsetse and other biting flies. After the pacification of the Nupe hinterland and the establishment of Raba as a capital of the Fulbe in the 1820s, pastoralists began to move down to the low-lying pastures along the Niger River (RIM, 1989). They may even have pressed further into the derived savannah of northern Oyo if Adams (1823:78) is correct in his reference to cheese-production in this region.

More attractive, however, were the high altitude grasslands, since disease risks were lower and pastures more palatable for the zebu. The Fulbe began to settle the plains around the Emirate of Bauchi and move up onto the grasslands of the Jos Plateau (Morrison 1982). A parallel expansion in Cameroon at the same time led to the gradual colonisation of the grassy uplands and humid savannas throughout the nineteenth century (Boutrais 1974, 1986). During its last two decades these pastoralists began to move westwards again and to colonise the Mambila and Fali Plateaux (RIM 1984; Blench 1991).

Box 1. The Mambila Plateau: a century of conflict

The Mambila Plateau, a high grassy upland in the SE of Nigeria, is almost ideal grazing terrain, with palatable grasses, high rainfall and low disease challenge. However, it has been settled by the Mambila people, who cultivate both its river valleys and increasingly the open grasslands. Percival (1938, cited in Rehfisch, 1974:11) dates the origin of the FulBe chiefdoms on Mambila to as far back as 1875. Although raiding may well have occurred even earlier than this, the establishment of permanent hegemony probably only dates from the immediate pre-colonial period and may have reflected the need for more pasture, after the rapid degradation of the highlands in north Central Cameroun (Boutrais, 1974). Interviews in 1990 indicated that the first groups of nomadic pastoralists to reach the grasslands from Cameroun were the Rahaaji clan, who arrived in about 1900, only a few years before the Germans. Mayo Ndaga, Warwar, Mbamnga and Nguroje, chiefdoms dating from this period, were formed originally as slave-raiding bases. The ruler of Banyo surrendered to the Germans in 1901, and shortly after this, several German expeditions reached the area (Rehfisch 1974:11). The grasslands were reconquered by British and French forces in 1915-16, and after 1919 came under British mandate. The slave trade ceased, but the dominance of the FulBe was maintained because of a lack of effective supervision by the colonial authorities. Even when permanent authority was established, the colonial policy of boosting the authority of Islamic elites meant that the administration of justice remained in their hands. The consequence has been a century of bad relations between the two groups. Mambila informants complained to Migeod (1925:164,166) in 1923 about FulBe allowing their cows to trample crops, and he observed at the time that the laws were written in such a way as to favour the cattle-owner. The destruction of the green manure plant *yom* was a particular grievance, because without it the fertility of the land could not be maintained (LIDECO 1972). Rehfisch (1974:16), also reports this situation, and matters remained the same until recently. Since the return to civilian rule in 1979 the rise to power of the Mambila people in Local Government has altered this pattern. The Mambila see themselves as the owners of the land, and the FulBe as intruders (Blench 1984). The former process of customary courts dominated by an *alkadi* seen as sympathetic to the herders has ceased, and the Mambila have been using the authority of the

Government to abrogate Certificates of Occupancy issued to pastoralists, and obstructing their annual movements to the valley of the river Donga. Sporadic outbreaks of violence during the 1980s and 1990s culminated in a major clash in early 2002, when the Fulbe were reported to have brought in mercenaries and a number of Mambila villages were burnt down. Many pastoralists have now left the Plateau or converted their herds into cash and invested in transport.

The second impetus to southward expansion of the pastoralists was the relative security of the colonial era. The threat of armed raids on grazing herds was largely eliminated, a factor which, according to Awogbade (1983 8-10), had kept the herds off the Jos Plateau until the colonial era. This was combined with the growth of entrepôts around railheads and a parallel expansion of Hausa traders who created a market for dairy products and acted as entrepreneurs in the livestock trade.

More controversial is the role played by disease. There is little doubt that zebu cattle are progressively threatened by disease in more humid regions -however, the exact diseases and factors responsible remain disputed. The colonial regime instituted both tsetse control measures and made available a range of new veterinary medicines. The tsetse control programmes themselves may have opened new pastures. Alternatively, the expansion of population in the Middle Belt coincidentally acted to eliminate both the vectors (by hunting out the wild animals) and the forest habitats (cut down for agricultural land) of the tsetse fly (Bourn, 1983). By the time of Independence in 1960, the Fulbe had begun to stay all year round in the derived savannah north of Oyo town and to line both banks of the Niger-Benue system.

During the decades 1960-2000 a new force began to come into play -the expansion of cultivation in the semi-arid zone. The semi-arid zone has always been more populous than the Middle Belt, as the major location for the towns central to the Hausa Emirates². However, projecting back the census figure to the precolonial era suggests that the human population for the whole Nigerian region may have been as low as five million in the late nineteenth century. Comparison with the 1991 figure of 88.5 million makes it clear how pastoralists and cultivators could have co-existed in the earlier period. As the pressure on arable land in the semi-arid zone increased, soil fertility decreased. Farmers were obliged to move to regions of uncleared bush or to increase their holding size, a problematic strategy in most areas. This evidently tended to exclude the mobile pastoralists who traditionally treated uncultivated bush as common resource. Pastoralists were then forced to seek new pastures, either further south or in neighbouring Nigerian countries.

The classic stereotype of the Fulbe migrations common in the colonial period was a seasonal migration between the semi-arid north and the dry-season pastures along the Niger-Benue system (see, for example, Glover, 1960). As the rains gathered pace, the tsetse populations expanded and herders were driven back northwards. Despite this, the gradual exploration of southern pastures led to individuals discovering methods of remaining in these regions all year round. The movement into the south-west was markedly earlier than in the centre and south-east of the country for both ecological and religious/cultural reasons. The climatic regime of the south-west is such that the derived savanna loops southwards west of Oyo, almost reaching the coast in Benin and the Togolese Republic. This creates relatively open land without the high humidity associated with forest proper and therefore reduces the disease risk to zebu cattle.

Combined with the ecology were cultural factors, particularly Islam. Islam is widespread among the Yoruba, and dominant in Ilorin and the surrounding area where the pastoralists first entered the region. Since almost all the Fulbe are also Muslim, the potential for establishing exchange relations with the local population was greater than further east. In regions where Islam has had virtually no impact, among the Igbo and Cross River peoples, such relationships are harder to build and conflicts more likely to arise.

²see density maps in Barbour et al., 1982, based on the 1963 census.

In the south-west, Fulbe pastoralists were established early in the nineteenth century in the region of Borgu. The semi-arid savannas of Borgu, the sparsely populated region between Ilorin and the Muslim courts of Nikki and Kande (in present-day Benin) favoured the development of large herds of keteku cattle (a stabilised cross between the zebu and the trypanotolerant humpless breeds). From there, the Fulbe moved to the region around Oyo and virtually as far as Abeokuta in the colonial era. Some of the community leaders in this region claimed to have been born there in the 1930s.

Further south, around Abeokuta, there appear to be two historical layers of Fulbe: residents who have been settled since the 1960s, and a second wave following the drought of the 1980s. During the first wave, some Fulbe were brought to herd cattle owned by Yoruba businessmen, but others came as transhumant pastoralists. They no longer have large herds of cattle, and have now established permanent farms on which they grow subsistence crops. They take on herding contracts with local Yoruba cattle owners, working in exchange for milk and a share of the offspring. Fulbe are at present permanently settled around Odeda and Egbado. The second wave of Fulbe were not originally cultivators and they presently maintain large herds, selling stock and dairy products for subsistence. However, the gradual process of incorporation into the community is continuing along the same lines as in earlier periods.

Apart from pastoralists, traders have also realised the potential of the vegetation in the humid zone. The demand for meat in the urban centres of the south is such that there are now recognised locations for 'fattening herds'. These are grassy patches within the forest zone where cattle are kept for various lengths of time to be fattened for the market. This practice has arisen because of the premium price of fat stock, rising transport costs and the economies of scale in herding close to markets.

2.3 Other pastoralists: Koyam, Shuwa etc.

By contrast, the other pastoral groups of Nigeria are barely described (though see RIM 1992). The Arabic and Kanuri-speaking and Yedina pastoralists in Nigeria are virtually unknown. None of the other pastoral peoples in Nigeria have expanded in the same way as the Fulbe and have also not attempted to move into subhumid regions. The Koyam, Shuwa and related peoples have remained in the semi-arid zone around Lake Chad. With a very few exceptions, they do not come into contact with cultivators, except for their own people, cultivating in river valleys or catch-cropping at the foot of dunes. As a consequence, conflict of the sort common among the Fulbe is not usually perceived as a problem.

The issue with these pastoralists is usually conflict with one another for grazing space. The Shuwa arrived in this part of Africa as raiders, and letters are preserved in the archives in Cairo from the Shehu of Kanem complaining of the raiding of pastoral Arabs in the thirteenth century. More recently, the desiccation of Lake Chad in the 1990s has created a vast new grazing area on the former lake bed (Blench 1991b). This has been the subject of competition between Kanembu pastoralists such as the Sugurti, the incoming Fulbe such as the Anagamba, the Shuwa and the inhabitants of the Lake itself, the Yedina.

3. Further sources of friction

3.1 The collapse of the *burti* system

In the colonial era, and perhaps before, it became evident that friction would be reduced if pastoralist and farmer could agree on stock-routes. If herders would keep to agreed routes and farmers avoid farming across them, then this would act to minimise conflict. A system of *burti* or migration routes was established by agreement between Fulbe leaders and local community authorities under the auspices of local government or its predecessors. If a dispute arose concerning crop damage or wandering stock, then these committees were usually on hand to resolve issues before they resulted in violence. Sometime in the 1970s, this system began to collapse as farmers increasingly felt they owned the land across which the cattle passed. Obviously, also, the high quantities of manure made it attractive to farm. So cattle migrating southwards increasingly wandered into newly created farms, leading to disputes and worse. Box 2 recounts a recent case history in

Kebbi State which illustrates the degree of breakdown of trust between Fulbe and farmers and the expanding role of the local authority.

3.2 Declining importance of dairy production

Classically, the basis of Fulbe subsistence has been the exchange of milk or other dairy products against cereals. Although barter is still occasionally practised in rural areas far from markets, today most producers sell their milk in the market or to dealers, and then buy staples and household necessities with the money, even in the semi-arid zone. Women are usually responsible for the processing and sale of milk or its by-products and the income they earn from this is at their disposal. Where milk is abundant, as in Borno, they can also control the amount of milk drawn off from the cattle, but elsewhere this is usually controlled by men, whose interest is in calf survival.

Even in the north, this trade has been declining as the terms of trade for milk against cereals have gradually worsened. The reason seems to be the increasing prominence of other status products both for personal consumption and to be served to guests. In the nineteenth century, travellers such as Heinrich Barth were regularly sent calabashes of milk as gifts, a custom still retained on the Mambila Plateau. The expansion of soft drinks, and packaged food has largely replaced milk as a status food, although it is still bought and sold. Indeed, population densities around Kano have made fresh milk a very rare and expensive commodity and for the wealthy it has acquired a new prestige. In the humid and subhumid regions, the prevalence of tuber production (and probably also lactose-intolerance) tends to preclude the exchange of cereals for milk. In addition, the market for fresh or soured milk is very reduced. As a result, dairy products can only be sold to small resident northern communities in the large towns, and milk off-take for human consumption is substantially less. This means that the exchange relations typical of the semi-arid zone no longer get a chance to form, as farmers are not anxious for cattle to trample their yam-mounds and the Fulbe find nothing to buy.

Box 2. Local government versus traditional authorities

The Nigerian Land Use Decree of 1978, combined with changes in Local Government powers, has shifted the balance of power significantly against pastoralists. The Decree essentially made the Federal Government the owner of all land and removed from chiefs their power to allocate unused or abandoned land. The Governor of a State has the authority to allocate up to 5000 ha. for agricultural or industrial use and a Local Government Chairman the same rights over 500 hectares. Local government reform removed enforcement powers of traditional leaders to fine and imprison, making their role more ceremonial than effective. Although chiefs are still respected in parts of the North, in many places the Chairman of the Local Government has effectively displaced them and local government is backed up by financial and legislative power. As a consequence, the Fulbe feel that decisions go against them and that even long-standing agreements can be negated in pursuit of short-term political gain. A recent example from Kebbi State shows how this can work against pastoralists. A long-standing Grazing Reserve has been gazetted in the southwest of the state at Yelwa. The National Livestock Projects Department (NLPD) has created a Livestock Service Centre with drugs and supplementary feeds to supply the Fulbe residents of the Reserve. In 1999, the speaker of the Kebbi State House of Assembly, who is from a farming community in the zone, announced that the Reserve was open to settlement by farmers. A rush for land ensued and a significant proportion went under cultivation. Despite protests by the pastoralists and NLPD, and a subsequent retraction by the State, the farmers are still in the Reserve and it seems will not be evicted.

3.3 Migration and disease

Pastoralists are constantly exploring new terrain, initially on a seasonal basis. Although one of the clichés of pastoralist literature is maps striated with arrows of wet and dry season movements, the evidence is that movement is a great deal more complex than such diagrams can capture. In particular, pastoralists are driven not only by the nutritional needs of their herd but by the fear of epizootic disease. Movements in the densely settled forest areas have therefore been more tentative, exploring pockets of grazing between settlements. Within Nigeria, one of the keys to the gradual insertion of pastoral nuclei in high-rainfall areas is the availability of drugs. To keep their stock alive in the humid areas, herders need access to trypanocides and remedies for skin diseases such as dermatophilosis. In recent years both availability and price have become highly uncertain and pastoralists must therefore be ready to retreat at short notice back to less risky areas.

The benefits of keeping cattle alive in humid areas are considerable. For example, the high price of meat in southern towns such as Port Harcourt, makes it worthwhile for Fulbe to bring animals by truck to the edge of the city and fatten them there, even in such marginal grazing as the verges of motorways, using drugs to prevent skin diseases. However, the movement of cattle in these high-density zones with no cereal cultivation is a source of friction with local populations.

3.4 Growth of horticulture and *fadama* cultivation

The Nigerian savannah has always had some riverine cultivation, formerly based on techniques imported from North Africa, such as the *shaduf*, and producing small quantities of cereals or vegetables in the dry season. The Hausa and the Kanuri have been the main exponents of these techniques, which were often combined with clap-net fishing. The impact of this type of production was limited partly because of the high labour demands and transport difficulties that constrained supply to urban markets. A major transformation of this economy occurred with the introduction of small petrol-driven pumps in the 1970s, which allowed farmers to raise water in otherwise inaccessible locales and exploit more fertile areas. Combined with improved rural transport and an expanding urban market for horticultural products this has developed into a major sector of the economy. Credit for pumps was first made available in the ADP era, but has been supported by a number of other projects since the 1970s. There is also an active private market for pumps.

Pumps are now increasingly used also to expand *fadama* cultivation. The term *fadama* can refer to almost any naturally flooded piece of land but applies particularly to valley-bottoms, where rice is an increasingly common crop, also supplying urban demand. The expansion of both *fadama* and horticulture has had many positive consequences, notably in income generation, dry-season employment and improved nutrition. It has now spread beyond the Hausa and occurs along most of the rivers in the North and Middle Belt.

However, it has generally had negative consequences for pastoralists. The movement south in the dry season, characteristic of Nigerian pastoralism depended on unimpeded access to riverbanks, where grass could be found when the surrounding land was largely devoid of nutrition. Cattle could be managed with relatively small amounts of labour as there were no farms where they could potentially stray and cause damage. Increasingly, however, pastoralists are finding that the rivers where they grazed their cattle are now blocked off by gardens and farms. The problematic issue of customary tenure surfaces once again; pastoralists tend to regard their traditional grazing grounds as 'their' land whereas farmers view undeveloped land as available for cultivation, perhaps with permission from the traditional authorities in the area. Horticulture has expanded rapidly and there has been no process of negotiation with herders over migration routes, drinking and grazing access and indeed farmers tend to farm where cattle graze, because the land is particularly fertile. As a consequence, there have been increasing numbers of incidents between cultivators and Fulbe in these areas.

4. Co-operation and conflict

It would be romantic to imagine that relations between pastoralists and farmers have ever been uniformly good, in the past or present. However, between 1980 and 2000 there has been an unprecedented acceleration in the frequency of violent incidents. These can be attributed to a number of basic causes;

- a) Movement of pastoralists into new terrain, where language, religion, culture and landholding patterns are unfamiliar
- b) Increased desperation of pastoralists competing for a dwindling 'stock' of grazing land.
- c) The taking of power in Local Government administrations by indigenous farming peoples who do not favour pastoralists' interests
- d) The collapse of the system of *burti*, or cattle tracks
- e) Widespread availability of guns and other weapons combined with a general breakdown of law and order

Fatal conflicts between farmers and pastoralists are reported almost daily in the newspapers, but no effective action has yet been taken by government to analyse or remedy the causes of these conflicts. It is tempting to try and interpret these relations in terms of a type of ecological determinism; the higher the pressure on resources, the greater the level of conflict.

Nonetheless, it is possible to integrate with the indigenous community and form a cohesive unit, as is evident from the situation in the south-west. The oldest stratum of migrants, the Borgu'en, have fully adapted to the local life-style and have become integrated into the local communities. Some groups of recent migrants are trying to build links with farmers before moving into the area, as in Iwoye. Another model of co-operation is provided by the growth of caretaking arrangements. Cattle represent an attractive investment for farmers and civil servants, especially at a period of unstable exchange rates. Fulbe herders were usually employed to rear the animals either separately or along with their own. This co-operation is not only with the settled Fulbe, but also the incoming 'nomadic' Fulbe who are often more willing to remain 'in the bush'. For example, in Faşola, west of Oyo and in Sooro, south-east of Kisi, caretaking arrangements have developed where herders take a proportion of the offspring in exchange for rearing.

West of Lagos, the system of cattle production has been radically transformed since the 1960s by the arrival of Fulbe and Hausa cattle-owners, and the introduction of new breeds, the n'dama and zebu. Most of the cattle are now crossbreeds and are looked after by caretakers, rather than managed by their owners, who now prefer to concentrate on tree-crops. Fulbe without herds who have recently come to the area, and have herding skills, are willing to take on this work. A combination of larger size, the possibility of milking, and the availability of herders led to the adoption of n'dama in preference to pure muturu. A profitable cash crop, coconuts, and the economies of scale that flow from communal herding of small individual holdings (usually 1 to 6 animals) has stimulated the rise of caretaking.

Box 3. A burnt-out case

In 2001, there were a number of serious cases of conflict between pastoralists and farmers in the region of Kadara, a small town in the centre of the Hadejia-Nguru wetlands. Usually these cases can be settled by the District Head, but in this case he was thought to be susceptible to financial inducements and his judgments therefore were unacceptable. As a consequence, one the parties called in the police, who subsequently established a base in Kadara, ostensibly to forestall violence between the two parties. However, the police soon learn that there was more extensive money to be made by expanding their extortion activities. Subsequently they began to collect payments from both farmers and pastoralists in order for them to be free of harassment. At some point an argument arose between the policemen over the division of the spoils. One became so angry that he shot his colleagues, set fire to their car and then shot himself. The burnt-out wreck of the car lay for a long time on public display in the street in Kadara, opposite the mosque, before being recently removed.

Box 4. Case Study: Conflict in the Langtang area

In June 2002, a serious conflict broke out in the Langtang area, some 200 km. SE of Jos, and was still current in December. The main inhabitants of the region are the Tarok people, principally farmers, but the large open savannah between Langtang and the Benue river has long attracted nomadic Fulbe graziers. There are also neighbouring smaller tribes such as the Boghom as well as substantial settlements of Hausa, notably at Wase (East of Tarokland) and Ibi (South). The Tarok have maintained good relations with the Fulbe for a long time and are now themselves substantial cattle owners, often as a result of sending their sons to be trained in herding by the Fulbe. The Tarok are overwhelmingly Christian, although traditional religion also plays an important role in maintaining social order, whereas the Hausa and Fulbe are strongly Muslim. The Tarok, moreover, have a long tradition of military service, and many of their leaders are ex-generals.

Apparently, a fight broke out in Yelwa, near Shendam (in SE Plateau State) at the end of June between Christian and Muslim residents, over the relationship between the Christian girls and Muslim boys. This resulted in the burning of churches. Fleeing Tarok families brought the news to Langtang South, inciting attacks on Hausa-owned businesses in various settlements in the region. Prompt intervention of the security services brought about a temporary calm. However, it appears that a substantial number of Hausa and Fulani, armed with modern weapons and some at least from outside the region, regrouped and began attacking Tarok settlements from a base near Wase. Local people claim that mercenaries from Niger and Chad were involved although this is hard to verify. At this point, Tarok church leaders seem to have turned funds collected for evangelisation to the purchase of modern weapons. Igbo traders appear to have had some guns in readiness for self-defence and were soon able to supply automatic weapons from Enugu. In general, government reaction seems generally to have been inaction, although there is a report of a pitched battle at Kadarko, near Ibi, where the Mobile Police were forced to retreat. Government-controlled media made no mention of the situation for some three weeks, when they reported (falsely) that things were back to normal. The lack of official action was so marked that one of the leaders of the Tarok, Rev. Maina, took the unusual action of placing newspaper adverts in the independent press pleading for a more effective response from government.

Since June there has been open armed warfare between Tarok and Hausa /Fulbe and the whole region is a no-go area. Women and children have fled into refuge areas and well-organised groups regularly burn down villages in remote areas. Soldiers have been sent to key flashpoints such as Wase, but since they will not enter the bush and meet the armed groups on their own terms this is largely ineffective. A proposed peace summit called by Plateau State Government between Jos-based leaders was held in the last week of August after being several times postponed. The summit produced twenty-four resolutions for action by the State Government but these have yet to be acted upon. Four mini-summits were co-ordinated in September by the Abuja-based Institute for Peace and Conflict resolution for traditional rulers, religious leaders, youth and NGOs. However, Langtang-based Tarok have said they are reluctant to accept any resolutions coming out of these. It is widely rumoured that Tarok are regrouping for a major attack on Wase in the New Year with counter-rumours that Muslims are planning attacks over Christmas.

Another consequence has been the arming of small communities and the development of weapons workshops. Although a few hunters had Dane guns, their manufacture is now widespread and even herdboys now go to the fields armed. This has probably been the spark for a second serious conflict. In October, a dispute over stolen cattle between Tarok and their northern neighbours the Boghom escalated into an all-out conflict with many dead. This is more surprising, since Tarok and Boghom frequently intermarry. The Boghom are predominantly Muslim, however, and this ethnic conflict was rewritten as a religious issue, with Muslim Boghom attacking Christians. This is a worrying example of how insecurity and the availability of weapons can function to expand conflict beyond its original boundaries.

At the same, the Fulbe / cultivator conflict seems also to have expanded westward. In October, a series of attacks by well-armed groups on villages in the Jos area began and has been continuing

through December with the Berom people the principal victims. The exact rationale for this is unclear, but the absence of a government response is even more striking, as these villages are only a short drive from Jos. It is widely rumoured that Federal Government inaction is due to internal political conflict in the Plateau State Government; whether true or false, that it should be believed is a sign of deeply-rooted distrust of government.

These episodes are illustrative of the current problems in dealing with community conflict. They show that underlying ethnic conflict is being enlarged through religious affiliation; the original issue may not have been the Fulbe, but they have been drawn in. The consequences of government failure to restrain expanding private ownership and trade in modern weapons is now highly apparent. They also show that the churches have now become wealthy and are no longer willing to remain passive. They are highly organised and willing to fund ethnic agendas and confront armed attacks. Government response has been wholly inadequate, the calling of peace meetings between representatives outside the area or the sending of soldiers to larger settlements. Such troops are neither well-armed nor highly motivated to go up against an effective guerrilla force with a detailed knowledge of the terrain and thus the killings continue. It is hardly surprising, therefore, that many people look back to the days of military dictatorship with some nostalgia.

5. Conclusion

Fulbe pastoralists in Nigeria are now pressing the limits of the territory that can be exploited through nomadic pastoralism, both in terms of available pasture east and south to the limits of the tsetse belts. Two features of their present society reflect this; extensive sedentarisation and an increase in conflict with the agrarian societies on whom they have traditionally depended for their supply of cereal staples. The Fulbe and the arable farmers among whom they move have historically had an interdependent relationship, based on the exchange of dairy products for grain, and a market for the animals that must be periodically sold to provide cash for domestic purposes, such as cloth or marriage payments. Moreover, in many regions, Fulbe management strategies depend on access to cereal crop residues -something arable farmers permit because of the perceived advantages of manure as fertilizer. As the press ever further south into the tuber-growing areas, the basis for exchange relationships decreases and the cultural gap between herders and farmers widens. If Fulbe herders are unable to build up exchange relations with the farming communities, they can only survive by becoming sedentarised, by flexible movement patterns that involve exploiting new arable communities every year, or by intimidation of the farmers.

Since 1999, and the gradual adoption of the Shariya legal code in many northern states, including those with a Muslim political elite but a large proportion of non-Muslims in rural areas, natural resource conflict has been drawn into the politico-religious arena. The small-scale clashes that typically occurred every dry season and were seen by both parties as about access to resources, are now being everywhere re-interpreted in terms of the larger dichotomies in Nigerian society. Government is unable, or unwilling, to act decisively to curb the expansion of ambition on both sides and the lessons from other regions of Africa are certainly not encouraging. The type of chronic insecurity that has now engulfed the quadrilateral formed by Uganda, Sudan, Ethiopia and Northern Kenya may yet become characteristic of much of the Nigerian Middle Belt. A major difference is that the majority of the populations in Nigeria are settled farmers with access to considerable resources and willingness to protect their communities.

What conclusions can be drawn from all this?

- ❖ Conflict between farmers and pastoralists in Nigeria has been documented from the pre-colonial era onwards
- ❖ Dispute resolution mechanisms functioned until the 1970s, though there is evidence that they were weighted towards herders' interests

- ❖ Since the 1980s, the frequency of violent clashes has increased, with a further acceleration since the introduction of democracy at the end of the 1990s.
- ❖ Widespread availability of modern automatic weapons and improved communications are increasing the intensity of conflicts
- ❖ Conflicts are being increasingly interpreted as religious and/or political even though the underlying drivers may be conflicts over access to resources
- ❖ Ethnicity remains a major factor in recruitment to the conflicting parties and is crucial in raising funds
- ❖ Government is unwilling to acknowledge the scale of conflict for reasons that relate to its external political presentation. The local press has played an important role in making public various situations but they are seen as partisan. World media have taken almost no interest in these matters.
- ❖ Action by the authorities to quell violent conflict has been minimal or ineffective, leading to a perception by communities that they should take responsibility for their own security.
- ❖ Judicial commissions held subsequent to conflicts do not result in effective action
- ❖ Strategies of conflict resolution, however framed, will have little impact unless the political will to both follow up and enforce agreements is present. This would require a major change in political culture in Nigeria.

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