Pastoralist-farmer conflict in Southwestern Nigeria, 2017

FINAL VERSION FOR CIRCULATION

Field investigations on pastoralist-farmers crises areas and enhancement of MISEREOR’s partners interventions in Nigeria, Phase 5

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ACRONYMS

CJTF Combined Joint Task Force
NLPD National Livestock Projects Department
NGO Non-governmental Organisation
CBO Community Based Organisation
CSO Community Support Organisation
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The goals of the mission were to provide more in-depth information on the farmer-pastoralist conflict in the States of south-western Nigeria, and to hold a workshop to bring together experiences from the different dioceses and plan further collaborative action.

Extensive interviews were conducted with both pastoralists’ and farmers’ leaders in Ogun, Osun, Ondo and Oyo states, as well as revisiting the situation in Ekiti, where fieldwork was conducted in 2016.

A workshop was held in Oyo, November 30th and December 1st, 2017, to present analyses and research results.

The main findings were as follows:

The mission took place during a period when violent massacres had taken place in Central Nigeria, targeting women and children. Government is taking little or no effective response, which increases the urgency of action from Civil Society Organisations.

Since the series of missions began in 2016, public discourse against the pastoralists has hardened, with the passage of anti-grazing laws in three states and similar bills under consideration elsewhere.

The situation in the southwestern states is deteriorating, in part because the seasonal migrations of transhumants from north of the Niger-Benue have increased in the last years and are pressing into unfamiliar environments.

In particular, pastoralists are beginning to exploit river valleys, even within the dense tropical forest, coming into conflict with farmers who have begun to use these for dry season horticulture.

Charcoal production for the European market and non-transparent sales of land to international agribusiness without consultation are reducing access to land in some states.

The relative prosperity of south-western Nigeria has the consequence that very few NGOs/CSOs operate in these states. The presence of the JDPs therefore takes on greater importance in terms of conflict and environment.

However, the workshop showed that training in analysis and field research can make sharp differences to the capacity of JDPs.

On the basis of recommendations of the workshop it was agreed to aim for:

- A more systematic assessment of the role of traditional leaders in both reconciliation and exacerbation of conflict and dissemination of lessons learnt.
- Expand training in analytic report writing and visual presentation to a wide range of partner organisations as well as developing schedules of reporting.
- To disseminate more accurate information about the status of pastoralists in Nigeria.
- To disseminate lessons learnt to decision makers and opinion formers in Nigeria.
- To create more effective information sharing systems. The more effective use of vernacular media to communicate analysis and information to all sides in conflict situations.
- To develop a regional database of trusted interlocutors, especially among pastoralists and train offices in the use of this.
- To develop an internet presence, both to promote the goals of the organisation and to respond effectively to public enquiry as well as improving advocacy.
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1. Introduction: background to the mission

In the last two decades, Nigeria has seen a continuing expansion of conflict between farmers and the pastoralist Fulbe, the traditional cattle-herders who have grazed their herds in the semi-arid regions for centuries. With the changing ecology and security environment following the creation of colonial Nigeria, the herders were able to move south seasonally and exploit the rich grazing of the higher rainfall zones. This was made possible by a reduced fear of attacks on herds and veterinary advances, protecting the cattle against the trypanosomoses, which had previously kept them out. On the whole, this large-scale migration southwards was peaceable, and the government of Nigeria, both under the British and in the post-Independence era, made efforts to facilitate the process by demarcating cattle routes and establishing grazing reserves. Since Nigeria has a very large urban sector which requires both meat and dairy products, this was largely seen as beneficial to the overall economy.

However, this migration took place in an era when the human population was still relatively small and land was freely available. Nigeria has undergone rapid demographic change and there is now significant competition for land in almost all areas of the country. The northern, semi-arid and Sahelian zones have always had a greater population density and the rapid increase, together with rapid deterioration of pasture resources, has now pushed the herders further south. Inevitably, the pastoralist concept of free access to grazing and rivers upon which their lifestyle depends is in conflict with the farmers, who have concepts of more stable land ownership. Moreover, the rapid pressure on the areas of derived savanna has combined with large-scale timber extraction and other land clearance to open up new but contested habitats to cattle herds. Hence the dramatic acceleration in resource conflicts, which have become more numerous, widespread and violent.

The narrative of such conflicts is conveniently simple, and has been emerging from both sides. Typically, it is associated with a religious characterisation, Christianity versus Islam, or even more primally, the battle of good and evil. The herders are portrayed as naturally ‘wicked’, who behave as they do for lack of a moral compass. The characteristic response has been a corresponding growth in reconciliation and peace meetings, where available figures on both sides of the divide agree to resolve their differences. These processes have been manifestly unsuccessful, since violent incidents continue unabated. The explanation may lie in the fact that quite different conflicts are being played out within the context of the farmer/pastoralist conflicts. The potential wealth of Nigeria is such that both politicians and gangsters are willing to undertake extremely ruthless strategies against their opponents. These can be very effectively disguised by appealing to conventional stereotypes. There is strong evidence that both bandits and the dispossessed of diverse ethnic groups have been manipulated by politicians to serve narrow local interests. This in turn has played into the hands of both professional insurgent groups such as Boko Haram and regional criminal groups, including those involved in the drugs trade, thereby exacerbating the violence. All sides are served by characterising these conflicts as either over resources or religion or both.

The series of missions, of which this is the fifth, arise from a series of reports of violent incidents reported by diocesan communities across southwestern Nigeria. The Justice, Peace and Development Committees (the exact form of the name varies from state to state and the system is here abbreviated to JDPs) have made this known to MISEREOR and there have been scattered projects for peace and reconciliation. The current report follows those of April and August 2017, arising from feedback in various communities in the dioceses of the Middle Belt and Southwestern states. MISEREOR requested the consultant to investigate the situation in four states, Ogun, Oṣun, Ondo, Ọyọ states, as well as reviewing the situation in Ekiti, where fieldwork was conducted in 2016, with a view to developing a more in-depth analysis of the roots of the conflicts, to evaluate existing initiatives and to make proposals for policy options to improve the situation. A mission to Nigeria was undertaken from the 2nd of November to 2nd December 2017. The end of the process was a workshop was held in Ọyọ, November 30th, and December 1st, 2017, to present analyses and research results, where representatives of the JDPs

1 Roger Blench was accompanied throughout by the consultant, Mal. Umaru Hassan, a Fulfulde-speaker who has worked on pastoral issues for many years.
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were present. The Terms of Reference are given at the end of this document. An itinerary of field visits undertaken is given in Appendix II. Appendix III presents the schedule of the workshop, together with a summary of the discussions. In view of the content of previous reports, much of the general background to the conflict is only repeated here in summary form. The material on Ekiti and Ọyọ is updated and expanded from the report of November 2016.

2. The Southwestern Nigerian States

2.1 Ọyọ

2.1.1 State background

Ọyọ State in Southwest Nigeria was created in 1976, with its capital in Ibadan (Map 1). The population is very unevenly distributed, with some very populous traditional towns, such as Ibadan, Ọyọ and Ọgbomọṣọ in the east of the state, and rural areas, especially west towards the border of Benin Republic with only small rural settlements. The International Institute for Tropical Agriculture (IITA) is based outside Ibadan, and co-operates with NGOs to disseminate agricultural technologies, such as improved cassava varieties and agroforestry. The University of Ibadan is one of the oldest universities in Nigeria and has a long tradition of engagement with rural issues. Table 1 shows the basic demographic data estimated for Ọyọ State in 2006;

<p>| Table 1. Demographic data, Ọyọ State |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Population</th>
<th>Area km²</th>
<th>Density km²</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>6,000,000</td>
<td>28,500</td>
<td>211</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The north and west of the state is derived savanna with a typical rainfall of 600-1000 mm annually. A large national park around the remains of Old Ọyọ is situated between the Ibadan-Kontagora Road and the Ọyọ-Shaki Road, although it is a long time since there were any large animals within its boundaries. Map 1 shows an outline of Ọyọ State with the main interview sites added.

The inhabitants are almost all Yoruba-speakers, although there is a significant proportion of migrants from other states, as well as from neighbouring Benin and Togo. The Igede and Ebira peoples from Benue State have established agricultural colonies as well as working for cash. The main occupation of the inhabitants is farming, as there is little industry. Ọyọ State is an important contributor to the urban food supply in Southwest Nigeria. The main crops are cassava, maize, yams and in the north of the State, guinea-corn. Cocoa and citrus are the predominant cash crops. Agriculture has not traditionally been mechanised, and labour shortages on farms have attracted migrants and contract workers from other regions. However, the falling value of the Naira, and social programmes in neighbouring Francophone countries have caused those from Benin and Togo to return home. This in turn has given a boost to tractors, and in some areas, these are now significant in the production system and are hired out to farmers who do not own them.

Ọyọ State is the location for a series of farm settlements. These institutions were designed at the end of the colonial era, but only implemented in the post-Independence period from 1962 onwards. Farmers were assigned 99-year leases on cleared areas of land, where they have undisputed tenure. By traditional standards, plots were relatively large, often as much as ten hectares. The original scheme was also to offer tractor services and to supply farm inputs at subsidised prices. The stores intended to stock the inputs can be seen on many Farm Settlements, but these have long gone out of use (Photo 1). Despite the operation of the farm settlements not going according to the original plan, they remain attractive to farmers. Land tenure is an important issue in densely populated areas of the southwest, and it is common for the owner of the soil not to have rights to the economic trees which grow on the farm. As can be imagined, this is often the source of disputes. Similarly, the large plots are attractive to farmers wishing to invest in growing for the market in staples. Moreover, it is possible to enforce by-laws in relation to livestock, which are difficult to implement in traditional areas. Most farm settlements in the southwestern
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states do not permit open grazing of animals; they must either be confined and stall-fed or simply kept outside the boundaries of the settlement (Photo 7).

Map 1. Oyo State

Farm settlements have their disadvantages. To acquire a relatively large area or land, the State Government inevitably must site them some distance from major settlements. Access roads are allowed to deteriorate and in the rainy season, farmers may find it difficult to transport their produce to market. Precariously balanced motor-bikes often represent the only viable means of going in and out of these areas. Farm settlements fall outside the authority of traditional rulers, and their residents do not have access to a dispute resolution system outside the conventional police and judiciary. These are slow and corrupt and do not offer the type of pre-emptive meetings that some rulers convene.
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Photo 1. Agricultural input supply store, Ilora Farm Settlement

Source: Author Photo

In recent years micro-credit has become a significant element in the system of agricultural production, with farmers growing staples on a larger scale using bank loans to buy farm inputs. The insecurity following conflict with herders described in this report is a major constraint in expanding production.

Two other issues are likely to affect the future competition for land resources in Oyo State. Charcoal production has been common in the Central Zone of Nigeria to supply small stoves in urban areas. However, the increased demand for charcoal in Europe to feed backyard barbeques has allowed a trade to develop in exporting container loads directly from Lagos. The type of environmental destruction this entails is wholly unnecessary and the consequences of this type of deforestation and loss of bee habitat will inevitably impact on the livelihoods of both farmers and pastoralists.

Equally disturbing is the trend for international agribusiness to buy tracts of land for large-scale farms. The exact companies involved in this are unclear, but possible owners are Brazilian, South African and Chinese. The road and rail links of Oyo to Lagos and the large urban centres of the south make this an economic investment for such enterprises. This has been seen in other African countries, such as Sudan and Ethiopia, but the high population density of Nigeria makes this problematic. The land is ‘sold’ by traditional rulers and Local Governments without consultation with populations who have potential claim on the land. The absence of public accountability in Nigeria makes it nearly impossible to discover the legal processes underlying these sales.

2.1.2 Conflict

The first Fulani pastoralists to reach Oyo were Borgu’en (also known ‘Yoruba Fulani’ and ‘Ilorin Fulani’), a clan herding the trypanotolerant keteku breed of cattle. They arrived from further west around the time of Nigerian Independence (1960) and settled close to the Yoruba villages, building up good relations with them and learning to speak Yoruba. They also began farming, and most are now settled with small herds and large farms. Their leaders were appointed by Yoruba traditional rulers to posts, such as Sarkin Fulani, within the local power hierarchy. Then, around twenty-five years ago, i.e. 1990, a new wave of herders came from the north, clans such as the Katsinanko’en, Hausa’en and others. Even so, relations were largely peaceful, though there was one violent conflict in 2001. Problems really began with the arrival of seasonal transhumants from Northern Nigeria about 2006 onwards. These people are usually known as ‘Bororo’, although this is a general term and they are divided into different clans. They come for the dry season (October to April) and return home north in the wet season. Research in August 2017 showed that the main states where these herds originate are Kebbi, Zamfara and Niger. The cattle typical of the Sahelian areas in Nigeria do not flourish in the subhumid environment of southwestern Nigeria.
Pastoralist-farmer conflict in Southwestern Nigeria Roger Blench Draft submitted

Unlike the other Fulani groups who typically move in whole family units, these cattle are herded by young men, and often hired assistants. They do not typically make links with the local communities or even the settled Fulani. They are usually armed, either with swords, cutlasses or rifles, and they are willing to use these in conflicts. It is also widely claimed that they take drugs and enter the towns for drinking binges. Almost all the crop damage episodes were attributed to this group. It is striking that the nomadic herders are clearly not just making ‘mistakes’, but are intentionally digging up cassava and yams and feeding it to their cattle, and often subsequently setting fields alight. Farmers who confront them are often attacked with matchets (cutlasses), swords and handguns. The reason for this malice is unknown, but pastoralists asserted that the issue had become really ‘hot’ in the last 3-4 years. A major issue is farming across established cattle routes; from the pastoralist point of view these are their ‘right’, but farmers see these as unclaimed land.

In the southwest, the Yoruba have always had a more structured, hierarchical society than the Igbo and Tiv further east, and carrying of weapons is extremely uncommon. Farmers have chosen a more passive method of striking back by poisoning the cattle, either through putting rat poison in cassava or by poisoning water and grass by the rivers and ponds. This indiscriminate killing further enrages both sides and probably underlies some of the attacks by the herders.

Oyo State is one of the few southwestern states to have some grazing reserves and stock-routes. These are not effectively maintained, but as they are in remote rural areas, they have not yet been heavily encroached. Remarkably, as well, it has a functioning milk collection system, whereby herders supply milk to central collection points and they are trucked to Ibadan for pasteurization and sale. This type of model can potentially be expanded to a far greater area of the Nigerian Central Zone.

2.2 Ogun

2.2.1 State background

Ogun State, created in 1976 from the former Western State, borders Lagos State to the south and the Republic of Benin to the west. It has limited access to the sea in the southwest. The vegetation is largely degraded secondary forest, with some areas of derived savanna in the north and west. The landscape is heavily marked by granite inselbergs. Abeokuta is the capital and largest city in the state as well as being a major early centre for missionisation in this part of Nigeria. The state’s nickname is ‘Gateway to Nigeria’ because road links make it easy for businesses to access the Lagos market. A number of manufacturers, including Dangote cement, Proctor & Gamble and Nestlé, operate from the state. The Table 2 shows the basic demographic data for Ogun State estimated for 2006;

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Population</th>
<th>Area km²</th>
<th>Density/km²</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3,750,000</td>
<td>16,981</td>
<td>220</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Ogun State is split into two dioceses, Ijebu-Ode in the east and Abeokuta in the west, and there are corresponding JDP offices (Photo 2). The focus on rural and agricultural issues has typically been Abeokuta, while Ijebu-Ode works more with town populations. Map 2 shows the outline of Ogun State with the main interview sites added.
Pastoralist-farmer conflict in Southwestern Nigeria Roger Blench Draft submitted

Map 2. Ogun State

Photo 2. Meeting the JDPI, Ijebu-Ode

Source: Author Photo
2.2.2 Conflict issues

The movement of the Fulani into Ogun State is relatively recent, at least east of the Lagos-Ibadan Expressway. This is almost certainly because the vegetation is very unsuitable for cattle grazing. Unlike the derived savannah further north in Kwara and Oyo, this is secondary forest, often quite thick in places, difficult for cattle to digest. The ecology is relevant, because herders are more motivated to deliberately graze fields of maize and cassava, instead of natural vegetation. Interviews suggest that the Borgu’en only arrived around 2007, far later than Oyo and Ekiti, and that as elsewhere, this was relatively peaceful, with their leaders liaising with traditional rulers. However, around 2012, the first wave of seasonal transhumants from further north arrived, and since then there has been serious trouble, with armed conflicts and sporadic episodes of violence. The local leaders of the herders, i.e. the appointed leaders in the towns, have been claiming they are not responsible for these new invasions, a claim not believed by local farmers’ groups (Photo 3). This has led to protests from farmers, who feel, almost certainly correctly, the state government is not listening to their complaints.

A major issue relates to the growth of dry-season horticulture, or *fadama* farming. This practice has centuries of tradition in northern Nigeria, but was given a major boost in the 1980s by the introduction of affordable petrol pumps for lifting water. The north experienced exponential growth of vegetable production, as well as some staples. Much of this production was exported to the large urban centres in the south. In the 1990s and early 2000s it was common to see large trucks full of tomatoes and onions heading from the Kano/Zaria axis towards Lagos. However, the insecurity in the north and northeast following the irruption of Boko Haram led to periodic shortages and price fluctuations. Farmers in the southwest began to adopt dry-season farming along river valleys, selling to the nearby Lagos market. This first began around 2010 and has rapidly become a major source of income to rural households. Hence the arrival of transhumant pastoralists, competing for the grasses along the valleys of rivers such as the Ogun, has led to significant conflict. In a few areas there were reports of farmers selling access rights to pasture to herders, for quite large sums. Figures such as ₦250,000 were mentioned, the price of two medium bulls. However, in most cases, the farmers were anxious to prevent the cattle entering the area and trampling their farms.

![Photo 3. Fulani leaders at Ijebu-Ode cattle market](source: Author Photo)

Unfortunately, the leadership of the herders is very weak in many places. They are aware of the problems caused by the transhumants, but seem unable to come up with a strategy to calm the situation.
2.3 Ondo

2.3.1 State background

Ondo State was created in 1976 from the former Western State, originally including what is now Ekiti State, which was split off in 1996. Akure is the state capital. The landscape stretches from derived savanna in the north, marked by numerous inselbergs, to degraded tropical forest and mangroves along the sea-coast. Most remarkable is the southern extension of the fan-palm (Photo 4), which is characteristic of environments further north, marking change in vegetation and rainfall patterns. The maritime area is virtually inaccessible from the remainder of the state. Table 3 shows the basic demographic data for Ondo State, estimated for 2006.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Population</th>
<th>Area km²</th>
<th>Density km⁻²</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3,460,877</td>
<td>15,500</td>
<td>223</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Photo 4. Fan-palms in derived savanna, northern Ondo State**

Source: Author Photo

Map 3 shows the outline of Ondo State with the main interview sites added.
2.3.2 Conflict issues

By comparison with the neighbouring states, Ondo has yet to experience major conflict. Generally speaking, the vegetation of Ondo State is degraded secondary forest which is inedible for cattle herds. Although the presence of inselbergs and very stony soils makes cattle transhumance problematic, since around 2013, seasonal transhumant herders have come to take advantage of the grass along the rivers. The conflict in Oṣun and Ogun, where local farmers have developed fadama cultivation, growing vegetables and staples along the rivers, is yet to develop in Ondo. Nonetheless, there were numerous reports of cattle entering the farms, either by accident or malice.

The leaders of the Fulani community are from very diverse origins; some of them speak Yoruba but others do not (Photo 5). These problems are relatively new and they have yet to develop a strategy for resolving disputes, or making permanent contact with the farmers’ leaders. Their authority over the nomadic herders is very shaky although they are blamed for crop damage. However, they have been trying to ensure action is taken in these disputes and are very willing to work with the Yoruba community to reduce conflict.
2.4 Oṣun

2.4.1 State background

Oṣun State was created from the former Oyo State in August 1991, with its capital at Osogbo. The vegetation is derived savanna in the north and degraded secondary forest in the south, reflecting an annual rainfall of 800-1200 mm per year. The ancient town of Ile-Ife is one of the important cultural centres of Nigeria and the location of Obafemi Awolowo University, one of Nigeria’s more respected tertiary institutions. The population is almost entirely Yoruba, and includes the Ife, Ijesha, Oyo, Ibolo and Igbomina sub-groups, although there are numerous migrants in the rural areas, mostly from further east, either working as labourers or farming on their own account. Table 4 shows the basic demographic data for Oṣun State, estimated for 2006.
Pastoralist-farmer conflict in Southwestern Nigeria Roger Blench Draft submitted

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Population</th>
<th>Area km²</th>
<th>Density km²</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3,417,000</td>
<td>9,251</td>
<td>369</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4. Demographic data, Oṣun State

Map 4 shows the outline of Oṣun State with the main interview sites added.

Map 4. Oṣun State

The JDPMC in Oṣun State is based in the capital, Osogbo. Following training in Abuja in November 2016, the team had begun research on farmer/pastoralist conflict which was presented to the mission on their arrival. The powerpoint is submitted together with this report.
Pastoralist-farmer conflict in Southwestern Nigeria Roger Blench Draft submitted

2.4.2 Conflict issues

The first Fulani to come to the Oṣun area were the Borgu’en, locally known as Yoruba Fulani, Ilorin Fulani. In some areas they arrived as long ago as sixty years, i.e. around 1960. They generally speak Yoruba (and have sometimes lost their own language) and are settled. They originally sought permission from local rulers, and maintain good relations. In many areas, there was another wave of herders from the Katsina/Sokoto region about thirty years ago, i.e. around 1990. These are locally known as Hausa Fulani, may not speak Yoruba, and originally arrived as migrants, but are now settled. The third wave arrived as little as seven years ago, i.e. around 2010. They come from Niger/Zamfara/Kebsi States. As in other states, this third wave is the main source of trouble. They come without families, are generally armed and do not respect the traditional herders’ authorities, the Ardos, or Sarkin Fulanis. They are seasonal transhumants, coming The vegetation of Oṣun State is largely degraded secondary forest which is inedible for cattle, so the herders are attempting to take advantage of the grass along the rivers. However, during exactly the same period, local farmers have developed fadama cultivation, growing vegetables and staples along the rivers using them for irrigation. So the cattle enter the farms, either by accident or malice, and problems ensue.

Oṣun State, like other south-western states, has a system of farm settlements where farmers can have secure leasehold and choice to grow crops for the market. A common rule of these settlements is that livestock must be confined throughout the year and no outside cattle are allowed to enter. Photo 7 shows a typical poster in the Akinleye Farm Settlement, even if the breed of cow is a European type not seen in Nigeria. However, the recent wave of herders has been entering the settlements, and conflicts have ensued, fortunately so far without loss of life. As in Oyo State, the farmers have found it difficult to get redress, as the farm settlements are outside the traditional ruler system, which is often used to settle disputes elsewhere in the Yoruba area. Attempts to involve the police have been largely unsuccessful.

In some areas in the south-west the leaders of the Fulani community are proactive and in touch with farmers’ organisations to try and resolve disputes. Unfortunately, the Oṣun leaders are very ineffectual. They are drawn from the Ilorin Fulani, and many do not speak Fulfulde, only Yoruba. Their authority
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over the nomadic herders is non-existent although they are blamed in the event of trouble. They vary a
great deal in quality and attention to the problem, and some are very defensive, even suggesting the
farmers are lying. This attitude will definitely increase resentment against the pastoralists.

The State Government has been under strong pressure to respond to the growing level of conflict and in
in 2014 they formed a task force, composed of the major stakeholders. They are intended to respond
rapidly to complaints of crop damage and intervene to settle disputes. They claim there are 23 Sarkin
Fulanis in the State who are the first port of call for farmers and other complaints and that 5000 disputes
have been settled since 2014. But if this is the case, this system was not known to any farmers
interviewed. So at best there is a major communication gap between the farmers in the field and the
perception of government.

2.5 Ekiti

2.5.1 State background

Ekiti State in Southwest Nigeria was created in 1996, with its capital in Ado-Ekiti. Ekiti State is marked
with low ranges of mountains stretching along the northern part of the state and whaleback inselbergs in
the south. The annual rainfall 800-600 mm. Until the mid-twentieth century, much of the land area was
heavily forested, but extensive clearance for agriculture has created derived savanna in many areas.
Deforestation is responsible for annual flooding along the river valleys. The main occupation of the
inhabitants is farming, but the state has a reputation for economic innovation. The low population has
encouraged businessmen and women from other states to begin large-scale farming, especially of
cassava, to supply urban markets. The labourers associated with these operations are usually from outside
the state, especially the Ebira people from Kogi State or Tiv from Benue. Even more remarkably, there
are villages of Kabiye people from Kara in Northern Togo. Table 5 shows the basic demographic data for
Ekiti State, estimated for 2006.

<p>| Table 5. Demographic data, Ekiti State |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Population</th>
<th>Area km²</th>
<th>Density km²</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2,700,000</td>
<td>6400</td>
<td>422</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Map 5 shows the outline of Ekiti State with the main interview sites added.
Ekiti State is the location of one failed ranch, at Oke-Ako, which ended its career in the 1980s.

2.5.2 Conflict issues

Testimonies suggest that the first FulBe to reach Ekiti were Borgu’en (=Ilorin Fulani), a clan herding the trypanotolerant keteku breed of cattle. They arrived from further west around 1970, settling peacefully close to the Yoruba villages and building up good relations with them, learning to speak Yoruba. Photo 9 shows a typical community outside Oke Ako; the degree of assimilation to Yoruba culture is shown by the style of dress and the prominent role of women as spokespersons for the community. Many of these settled FulBe now only speak Yoruba.

The Borgu’en suffered high death rates in their herds and to restock, they began to herd cattle for wealthy

Photo 9. Fulani community at Oke Ako

Source: Own photo
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Yoruba landowners and businessmen. Then, around twenty-five years ago, i.e. 1990, a new wave of herders from the northwest, Hausa Fulani began to arrive. Some came only seasonally, others settled, but many were not farmers. These herds have integrated with the local community and their leaders are often the officials of the local office of pastoral associations such as Miyetti Allah. However, it was with the arrival of seasonal transhumants from Northern Nigeria about 2006 onwards that problems began. Herders began to enter farms at night and to respond violently when challenged. Both Yoruba farmers and settled FulBe are equally victims of the transhumant herders. However, because farmers often are unable to distinguish between different FulBe groups, the settled FulBe are often blamed for their actions. Photo 10 shows a newspaper report from as far back as 2012, which lays out the major issues. The situation has only deteriorated since that date.

Photo 10. Newspaper report of Ekiti State conflict

Suspected Fulani herders and farmers in some parts of Ekiti State have been having a raising battle of sort. But the face-off has escalated, as some farmers are daily losing their crops to cattle, reports FEMI MAIKINDE

The situation has only deteriorated since that date.

Source: Punch newspaper, 2012
2.5.3 The anti-grazing bill

The anger in the farming community led to the passage of an anti-grazing bill in the State House of Assembly in December 2016. This severely restricts the rights of the herders, making open grazing and night grazing illegal, while herders carrying weapons are to be treated as ‘terrorists’. The governor has appointed rangers who are supposed to enforce these laws. However, interviews with the leaders of the Fulani community in November 2017 showed that the impact was so far minimal. A committee was formed bringing together pastoralist leaders, government officials and farmers’ organisations. This has met several times but the results were largely inconclusive. The issue is that the mobile herders who are the source of much of the trouble can easily elude ill-supported state rangers and the institutional Fulani leaders have no influence over them.

Research and further contact between the JDPI and the Fulani leaders has led them to the conclusion that confrontational tactics will not elicit the desired response. The JDPI has begun an awareness campaign, based in Yoruba and Fulfulde (Photo 11), to encourage the groups in conflict to build a more constructive relationship. This is evidently valuable, but it must eventually also influence state policy, otherwise continuing negative propaganda on the side of officialdom will negate its mission.

3. Security issues

3.1 Cattle-rustling and banditry

A more general breakdown of law and order has followed the insurgency in the Northeast and this has been manifested by the rise in banditry, cattle-rustling and kidnapping. Especially since 2010, there has been a major expansion of cattle rustling and associated kidnapping, reflecting a combination of youth unemployment, pastoralists who have lost their herds and a lax security environment. Given the lack of herding skills among farmers, it is credible that the rustlers consist of gangs which include FulBe who have lost their cattle in association with thieves, and connect to networks which can transport the stolen livestock the large markets in the south, where they rapidly disappear. Government response has so far been ineffectual, as the rustlers live in remote areas and are hard to catch by conventional means. Nonetheless, the stolen cattle must be fed into the marketing system and transported past checkpoints. If such cattle can move freely, this does not provide confidence that action is being taken. The unchecked growth of this practice, the suspicion that the powerful people behind it are being protected, all adds to a climate of distrust. The mission in August 2017 confirmed the role of Zamfara State in sheltering bandit gangs. It seems these can operate with impunity there, which makes it difficult for states which have a greater preference for order to counter their influence.

3.2 Drug use

In interviews in all the states visited, the use of drugs, both legal and illegal, was often mentioned as a factor in exacerbating conflict. Hard drugs, heroin and cocaine, are rare except in big cities, but marijuana is common, cheap and is locally grown. Similarly, legal prescription drugs such as Tramadol are in common use. Nigeria has no prescription system and once a drugseller has a licence, he or she may sell almost any commercial pharmaceutical to customers quite legally. Both pastoralists and traditional
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leaders consider this is an important factor in further exacerbating aggrieved youth. Drug use clearly plays a role in tipping potential conflict situations into actual violence. Although occasional rather weary posters are seen warning against drug use, there is no evidence these have any effect.

3.3 Security service response

Attitudes to civil insecurity and crime in the southwest are markedly different from other regions of Nigeria. The Yoruba are very strong believers in social hierarchy and the role of the authorities in preventing and punishing crime and disorder. To this end, they do not usually carry weapons when going to farm. Herders captured while grazing their animals in the farm, or indeed errant animals are usually carried to the police. Communities gather together to write letters to the House of Assembly to complain about the incursions of herders. This is very much in contrast with the southeast, where the communities usually respond by acquiring weapons and mounting violent attacks.

Unfortunately, Nigeria is not well equipped to provide a convincing response. The police are inadequately resourced, and are anyway, Federal, so have little empathy or link with local communities. They are susceptible to rapid payments, so that often an arrested herder is rapidly released on payment of a small consideration. Sometimes the farmer complaining has found themselves arrested. The sort of large-scale inter-communal conflict which has resulted in army intervention in Benue or Plateau has not yet arrived in Yorubaland. Letters to officialdom go unanswered.

4. Awareness creation

4.1 How should we disseminate information?

Both farmers and pastoralists entertain wrong information about one another and tend to propose highly impractical solutions to current problems. Most typical are plaintive comments that we should return to the former period of collaboration, co-operation and peace. Such days will never return and only realism is a practical response for fixing the problems. In addition, rumours and false accusations have a tendency to circulate rapidly, exacerbating distrust between the two communities.

4.2 The potential of radio

One solution that has been so far little explored is the use of vernacular radio. Reaching rural populations is most effectively achieved through radio and television and the internet are still rare in many areas. Broadcasts must be in the vernacular, and in a style that convinces hearers of the sympathy of the speaker. Nigeria has a lively broadcasting scene, and recent trends have been to include more and more languages, both on Federal and private stations. Oṣun State JDP has pioneered the use of raido programmes in Yoruba as well as interactive phone-ins to reach rural areas. According to interviews, these broadcasts are widely listened to. In Ekiti State, the JDP has already begun broadcasting in Yoruba, although so far on non-controversial topics. The proposal to make radio programmes in different state languages is widely acceptable. Peacebuilding organisations have so far made little use of this cheap and effective method of countering false assertions.

4.3 The mobile phone

Nigeria is a quite connected society, where the internet and smartphones play a role in social interaction among urban populations. Mobile phones began to be widespread in Nigeria from 2005 onwards, and they remain relatively cheap and practical, with good national coverage. Smartphones are common in urban areas, and Nigerians are enthusiastic adherents of social media. However, in rural areas, perhaps surprisingly, a lack of literacy among both herders and farmers has meant that the importance of mobile phones is restricted to voice calls. Even so, access to a phone now plays an important role in herders’ lives. The primary use of the phone is for information concerning grazing and water, something individuals previously would travel long distances to find out. Market prices are an important secondary use, since FulBe economy depends on the sale of small stock for meat. The potential of the smartphone for circulating security information as well as correcting exaggerated claims in the media, as well as linking together pastoral leaders in widely dispersed places has yet to be realised.
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4.4 Internet presence

Despite the importance of the internet in spreading ideas in Nigeria, the JDP system has no internet presence. This is indicative of the passive approach taken to the goals of the organisation. It is recommended that each JDP has a website and training sufficient to update it with current activities. Ideally, each body would also have a Facebook page and would be able to promote actions and policies as well as responding to the queries of the public and outside organisations. At present the paradox is that organisations with a mission for advocacy and social change have precisely no tools to achieve these goals.

4.5 Research and analysis

Long-term solutions require effective analysis and this is often sorely lacking in Nigeria. There is a general assumption that conflict resolution and peace-building are desirable and they have accumulated considerable resources. But the continuing violence argues that they are only temporary solutions. Reporting in Nigeria is usually narrative; suitable for agriculture but of limited value in a humanitarian situation. Unless reports dig down to the drivers of conflict, proposed solutions are of no proven value. It is better to try and prevent future conflict than simply to keep on trying to patch up the situation after the event.

5. Conclusions

The mission in October/November 2017 was able to establish the situation in more states in the southwestern zone. The interviews clearly showed that herder/farmer conflict has increased dramatically since 2010, because of the seasonal migration of herders from states such as Zamfara, Kebbi and Niger. The cause of this migration is undoubtedly the collapse in availability of pasture, due both to demographic growth and vegetation change. However, the occupation of derived savanna south of the Niger-Benue has rapidly placed similar pressures on the landscape there, which is less resilient than natural savanna. In the quest for pasture the herders have rapidly moved into the riverine areas that thread through the degraded tropical forest, placing them in direct competition with the resident farmers. Neither side has any historic experience of managing inter-group relations and the result has been violent conflict and state antagonism.

This deterioration can be described as an ecological cascade, exacerbated by social changes which allow herds to be managed by young men without the restraining influence of their parents or indeed elders in the wider pastoralist community. Significantly, this cannot be addressed by the usual pattern of peace and reconciliation dialogues, since the wrong parties are being invited to such meetings. The issue can be resolved by a more proactive stance on the part of government, working with the herds to provide proper identification of those on the move, effective punishment of those who commit crimes. The laissez-faire attitude to the activities of individual states, in particular Zamfara, and the failure to oppose anti-grazing laws will only exacerbate the situation. However, the NGO/CSO sector can work to raise public awareness of the causes and consequences of these movements. Pastoralist leaders need to develop more effective liaison with leaders in the home areas of the migrants to ensure that they exercise more effective control of their herds; at present they are clearly in denial. Characterising this as a security issue is the main approach of government, but this has manifestly not worked. International bodies, such as ECOWAS, are also being influenced to treat this as a security problem. Treating this as simply an issue of community conflict is more typical of the NGO sector; this has been similarly ineffective. Basic research to uncover the roots of the conflict at both an ecological and societal level is essential to devising and implementing solutions.
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References


