

Promoting peaceful and safe seasonal migration in Northern Central African Republic



Results of Consultation with transboundary herders, semi-settled herders and settled communities in Ouham Pendé and Western Ouham



EDITORIAL

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Authors

Guillaume de Brier, IPIS Researcher (guillaume.debrier@ipisresearch.be)

Peer Schouten, Senior Researcher at DIIS IPIS Associate Researcher (peer.schouten@ipisresearch.be)

Peter Marsden, Concordis CEO and Director of Programmes (p.marsden@concordis.international)

Dirk Gillebert, Concordis Programme and Research Assistant (d.gillebert@concordis.international)

GIS analysis and maps

Alexandre Jaillon, IPIS Researcher and GIS manager (alexandre.jaillon@ipisresearch.be)

Concordis Co-Authors

Lucie Haye

Anna Moens

Timea Szarkova

Concordis Research Team

Tony Kasuza N’Kolo, Project Coordinator

Jeanne Remanda Renata, Program Officer

Tidjani Ibrahim, Assistant Project Coordinator

Raphael Boulganine Magoé, Program Officer

Donald Koe Miabe, Program Officer

Jean Oscar Ganaye, Program Officer

Bervin Galibassi Gbakou, Program Officer

Honore Toqui-Vicko, Program Officer

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Cover picture: Focus group with women animated by Concordis staff in Ouham Pende.

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OVERVIEW MAP

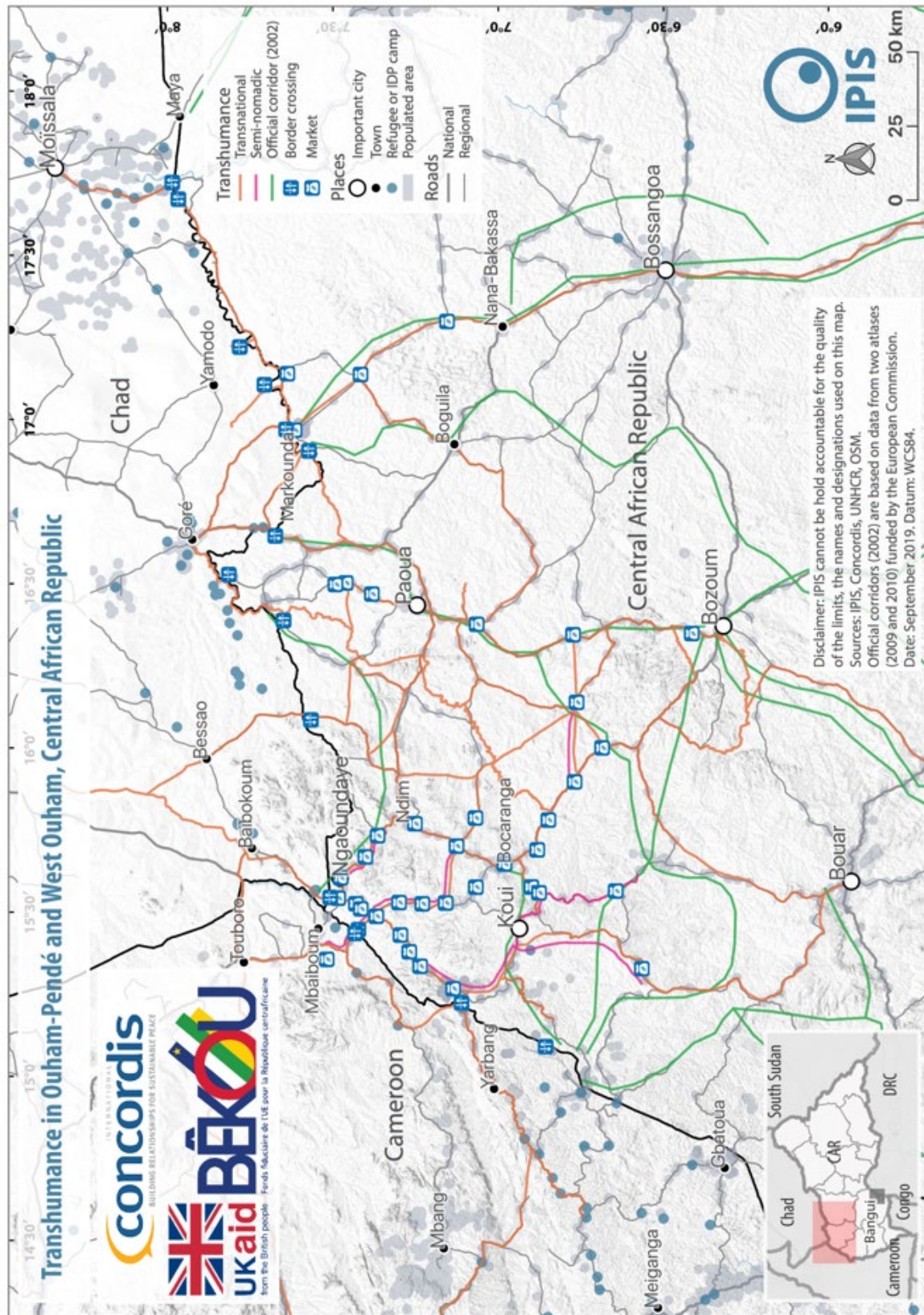


Figure 1. Map of transhumance routes in Ouham and Ouham-Pendé.

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BACKGROUND TO THIS REPORT

Since the 2012 crisis culminating in the 2013 coup d'état, the borderlands of the Central African Republic have turned into a hotspot of violent conflict involving migratory (transhumant) herders and farmers, armed groups and self-defence groups. This has further eroded already compromised social cohesion and governance institutions.

Against this background, FCDO's UK Aid Direct and the European Union's BEKOU Trust Fund awarded Concordis a three-year programme entitled, "Promoting peaceful and safe seasonal migration in northern Central African Republic". This programme aims to contribute to peace and poverty reduction in northern CAR by promoting community-based conflict resolution between nomadic herders and settled populations. It covers the borderlands between CAR, Chad, Sudan and Cameroon, focusing on the prefectures of Ouham-Pendé, Ouham, Bamingui Bangoran and Vakaga.

The first phase of the programme comprised a large-scale mapping and consultation exercise, collecting detailed quantitative and qualitative information through individual questionnaires and focus groups with those involved in or affected by seasonal transhumance, consulting over 1,300 people in the targeted areas between February and June 2019.

The purpose of this consultation is to identify grass-root challenges to peace and opportunities to promote social cohesion and economic development. It is intended to inform subsequent phases of the conflict resolution programme and provide a baseline against which impacts may be measured.

The present report is the result of the consultation in the prefectures of Ouham-Pendé and Western Ouham.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Results of Consultation with transboundary herders, semi-settled herders and settled communities in Ouham-Pendé and Western Ouham from February to June 2019

Ouham and Ouham-Pendé are central to seasonal livestock transhumance and a key part of the CAR government's National Plan for Recovery and the Consolidation of Peace 2017-2021. Ongoing conflict has disrupted traditional herding patterns and damaged patterns of trade and coexistence to mutual benefit.

This research provides an evidence-base for peacebuilding activities that are likely to be effective, and maps the main points of contention and opportunities for improvement based on consultations with all manner of stakeholders.



KEY FIGURES

Engaged with **1,319** people through interviews and focus groups: **532** women and **787** men.

97% of herders and **90%** of settled people consider trade between them is necessary for their subsistence.

94% herders and **95%** of settled people are ready for deeper social relations.

As **3** biggest requirements for peaceful transhumance, respondents identified mechanisms for: **dispute settlement; planning around herders' arrival; negotiation around agreed sharing of land and water.**

KEY FINDINGS



Herding and farming can be complementary

Through collaboration, transhumance and arable farming can be mutually beneficial production systems – increasing herds and crop yields, and strengthening livelihoods through commerce.



Access to land has become unpredictable for all

Power dynamics were changed by conflict, relations have come under pressure and previous mechanisms got into disuse. New ways must be found to settle land-use conflicts, or old ways must be rekindled.



Young herders provoke conflicts Groups of young men hired as herders to tend the cattle of wealthy foreign families were said to be most prone to maladaptive practices and hard to engage and communicate with.



But young villagers provoke conflicts too

Village youth are accused of rustling cattle by their own communities, often under the pretext of the collusion between herders and armed groups. This incites violent retributions from herders.



State service delivery versus armed group governance

Some armed groups have appropriated roles normally associated to state or traditional authorities, including offering divisive militarised protection against ‘the other’, while people feel FACA and MINUSCA are best placed to ensure their safety. In many areas, delivery of state transhumance services has ceased.



Armed groups predate on herders, but offer land and protection in return

Armed groups distort herder-farmer relations through racketeering and protection, reducing incentives for herders to engage with local authorities.



All communities define ‘security’ in function of livelihoods

For herders, the health of their herd is imperative. Farmers need farmland and an adequate harvest. Any threat to this, is a threat to their security.



New transhumance routes

Traditional transhumance routes have become unsafe or are cultivated by farmers. This drives herders to seek new routes, such as closer to villages and roads for FACA/ MINUSCA protection.



Fear for young herders Many communities become alarmed upon seeing young herders and can become defensive before any interaction while mistakenly identifying all young men herding their own cattle as waged herders.



Local dispute resolution mechanisms have eroded

Due to changing transhumance patterns and armed groups. There is a correlation between the presence of peaceful dispute resolution mechanisms, security and the quality of interactions with ‘the other’.



All want more interaction and peaceful settlements

Almost everyone interviewed is open to more social interaction. Most wish for a restoration of peaceful dispute resolution mechanisms and would partake in intercommunity dialogues. Grievances are defined by livelihood – herder or farmer – rather than by ethnicity or religion, in contrast to other areas.



Variations across time and space

There are notable geographic differences in attitudes, relationships, and trust. Bespoke, localised responses to address the unique challenges, and to prevent conflicts turning violent, are needed.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Settled, semi-settled and transhumant communities all prioritise **protection of their livelihoods and security** which, for them, are closely intertwined. Respondents' key to safeguarding these, and to preventing violent conflict, is to **(re)instate communication mechanisms that enable intercommunity understanding as well as planning and coordination of peaceful transhumance**. Beyond that, livelihoods and security should also be addressed more directly.

CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEES

Bringing together community and stakeholder representatives to share views, organise transhumance jointly and address challenges.

National authorities could

Engage with their Chadian counterparts about agreements on **security, taxation and regulation of cross-border movement**

Establish guidelines for consultative committees, with official status and a role description

Review legislation on seasonal migration, pastoralism, and farming

Connect Consultative Committees to **national technical, administrative and security actors**

International organisations can

Provide training in non-violent communication, particularly for those who tend to be excluded so they become active members

Support the **installation, training and coaching** of Consultative Committees

Help them **connect to other committees** to inform their agenda, and share mechanisms and solutions

Provide technical assistance and external experience

Perform community-based research to inform their agenda

DISPUTE SETTLEMENT MECHANISMS

The foremost challenge for consultative committees – these should be quick, predictable, not too expensive and mutually acceptable.

National authorities could

Set standard **tariffs of compensation** awardable for property damage

Create a **schedule of fees** chargeable by the authorities for arbitrating disputes

Publicise the identity of **relevant authorities** for criminal cases

International organisations can

Train potential intermediaries in **mediation and arbitration**

Focus on women to ensure a **gender-sensitive approach** to peacebuilding and justice

Build a **network of trained mediators** to share know-how and experience

IMPROVE SENSE OF SECURITY

This is a necessary pre-condition to improved quality of life and will unlock potential for social integration, economic interaction and, through these, strengthened livelihoods.

National authorities could

Implement a strategy of **safeguarding** locally agreed **transhumance routes**

Engage with local communities, **capitalising on the endorsement** of security forces and local authorities

Establish 'Weapon-free zones' like MINUSCA's in urban areas

International organisations can

Support consultative committees' engagement with **security forces**

Support consultative committees' engagement with **armed groups**

Implement innovative communication tools to **share info on security hazards**

BOOST ECONOMIC ACTIVITY

Increasing commerce between communities, vital to their subsistence, will bolster resilience to shocks and improve social relations.

National authorities could

Implement training and programs for **economic diversification**

Invest in infrastructure that improves **access to markets**

Create new **employment** and support **entrepreneurship**

Continue to fight **corruption**

International organisations can

Enable local organisations to **access bigger markets**

Support local organisations with **training in skills and entrepreneurship** with a focus on women and youth

TACKLE EXCESSIVE TAXATION

Transhumants are taxed heavily by authorities in CAR and Chad, and by armed groups. This leaves less money to circulate in communities and drives them to adopt new routes without notification.

National authorities could

Negotiate bilateral and multilateral **agreements on taxation** of herders

Establish an **affordable and transparent tax system** to guide all levels of authority

Secure corridors and incentivise armed groups to **abandon illegal taxation**

International organisations can

Support consultative committees in **advocating with armed groups** for reasonable taxation

Advocate with authorities for **corridors with little or no (il)legal taxation**

ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

Anti-balaka	Self-defence groups hailing from settled communities
ARPD	Popular Army for the Restoration of Democracy
CAR	Central African Republic
DDR	Disarmament, Demobilisation, and Reinsertion
DFID	Department for International Development
Ex-Seleka	Designation for armed groups hailing from the Seleka coalition
FACA	Central African Armed Forces (<i>Forces armées centrafricaines</i>)
FNEC	National Federation of Central African Breeders (<i>Fédération Nationale des Eleveurs Centrafricains</i>)
FCDO	Foreign Commonwealth and Development Office
MINUSCA	United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilisation Mission in the Central African Republic
MLPC	Movement for the Liberation of the Central African People
MPC	Mouvement Patriotique pour la Centrafrique, ex-Seleka armed group
RJ	<i>Révolution et Justice</i> , anti-balaka grouping
3R	<i>Retour, réclamation et réhabilitation</i> , Peulh armed group

1. INTRODUCTION

CAR's territory is 92% composed of savannah drylands, where environmental inputs for food production are highly variable in time and space. Animal breeding (pastoralism) and farming are food production systems that in CAR have adapted well to this variability by adopting seasonal mobility (transhumance in herding and shifting agriculture in farming) that complement one another. Herders and farmers in CAR have historically established peaceful and mutually profitable relations, based on complementary comparative advantages. However, decades of conflict have disrupted these relations, leaving competition for resources and mutual mistrust in its wake.

Within CAR, Ouham and Ouham-Pendé are the prefectures with the longest experience with pastoralism, as the first herders arrived here from neighbouring countries in the 1920s.¹ Because of their borders to Chad and Cameroon – countries with important pastoral communities undergoing, however, rapid change – these prefectures will remain a pivot for transhumance, as the seasonal migration of herders is called. Short of fully upending herding, enduring conflict in CAR has brutally disrupted most aspects of herding – the routes they take, the people involved, governance mechanisms, as well as relations to local populations. However, we lack exact knowledge as to precisely how. To fill this gap and provide an evidence-based groundwork for peacebuilding efforts, this report maps main points of contention and opportunities for improvement based on consultations with all manner of stakeholders.

Frictions between farmers and herders will never completely disappear – but developing flexible and resilient local institutions and mechanisms able to prevent them from getting out of hand is possible. Our research points to pathways to peace based on re-establishing profitable interactions and community-led new definition to the local 'rules of the game'. It also identifies the most important potential spoilers and roadblocks to achieving peace transformation.

1.1. Structure and methodology

This report presents findings from a baseline mapping exercise conducted from February to June 2019 in Ouham and Ouham-Pendé. Its objective was to ascertain:

1. The routes taken by different groups of herders during the last seasonal migration, both official and unofficial;
2. The dynamics and drivers of conflict between different groups of herders and farmers as well as the positive relationships between them, including social and commercial interactions in different zones;
3. Perceptions of fear, insecurity, and attribution of responsibility, as well as who trusts whom for protection and advice;
4. The mechanisms for conflict resolution (past, present and hoped for) with an evaluation of what works, what does not work and why;
5. The rationale and motives of those who choose to take up arms and those who choose not to do so, of women as well as men, of young as well as old.

To this end, between February and June 2019, a total of 1319 people were consulted through interviews and focus group discussions with as wide a variety of possible stakeholders, as defined by their (attributed) roles and stakes in seasonal migration.

The report is structured as follows. The remainder of this introduction is dedicated to defining the categories of stakeholders used in this report, as well as a historical background to the conflict. The next section discusses changes to transhumance dynamics and routes as a result of recent conflict. The third chapter delves into findings from the consultations around trading relations between farmers and herders; chapter four into mutual perceptions; chapter five into general tendencies of security perceptions. The sixth chapter zooms in on challenges that transboundary and semi-settled herders currently identify; chapter seven shifts towards the main experiences of settled people. Chapter eight delves into the lack of and

1 Chauvin, E. (2012). *Conflits armés, mobilités sous contraintes et recompositions des échanges vivriers dans le nord-ouest de la Centrafrique*. Paper presented at the Les échanges et la communication dans le bassin du lac Tchad, Naples, Italy, p. 12; Chauvin, E., & Seignobos, C. (2013). *L'imbroglia centrafricain*. *Afrique Contemporaine*, 248(4), pp. 144-5.

potential for communication between communities and zooms in on dispute resolution mechanisms past and present; and chapter nine summarises key findings, before we list the main recommendations we derive from our consultations in the last chapter.

1.1.1. Defining interlocutors

For outsiders it is difficult to distinguish between different kinds of herders. Even Central Africans often indiscriminately refer to all herders as ‘nomads’, ‘Peulh’ (the French term for Fulani), ‘Foulbé’, the Fulfulde term for speakers of the Peulh language, ‘Mbororo’ (a sub-branch of Peulh), or even just ‘Muslims’. Many herders in CAR and neighbouring countries are Peulh – speakers of the *Fulfulde* – but they typically self-identify in relation to their sub-group, clan, and family. Major such sub-groups (*legnols*) in CAR are the Wodaabe, Oudda, Djaafoun, and Danedji, who historically hail from different neighbouring countries (Chad, Cameroon, and Nigeria). Peulh are typically Muslim, whereas most settled people in western CAR self-define as Mboum (close to Cameroon), Gbaya and Banda, Sara (also Kaba, close to Chad) and as Christian confession.²

Pastoral systems are also often subdivided based on how mobile groups are, and how far they move. Typically, herders settle in the rainy season (July-September) and revert to the production of milk and/or farming, in a place called their *zone* or *terroir d’attache*.³ Once the dry season announces itself, they will embark on movement in search of fresh pastures. This cycle of seasonal migration is called transhumance, and typically follows relatively stable routes between the *zone d’attache* and relatively fixed pastures where they envision installing cattle camps for the entire season, moving from one strategic point to the next – watering points, fodder, markets, salt deposits, streams, etc. These strategic points – and thus herders’ routes – vary from season to season, depending on climatic variability. By contrast, fully nomadic herders have no fixed place they return to, and may vary between pastures. Herders who settle during the rainy season in drylands, may undertake trips to the south of hundreds of kilometres, taking them across national borders. This is called the ‘grand transhumance’ and is contrasted to ‘small transhumance’, which comprises smaller movements between pastures to valorise the remains of harvests, make place for sowing, reduce conflicts, or complement animal diets. The return journey typically takes place at the onset of the rainy season, when farmers start sowing. To avoid conflicts with farmers, the return journey often follows more fixed transhumance corridors.

For purposes of this report, a different set of distinctions will be used, which are more relevant to the context, because particular attention was paid to how livelihood strategies and attendant forms of land-use (i.e. farming and different ways of herding) may correlate with conflictual perceptions or opportunities for peacebuilding.⁴ Ouham and Ouham-Pendé is home to a population of herders that has been around for a long time, who stay for the rainy season and thus have their *zone d’attache* in the country (although where exactly may vary over time), and may speak a word of Sango, the official language of CAR. These will be referred to as semi-settled herders. Herders who by contrast have their *zone d’attache* abroad will be referred to as cross-border or transboundary herders. Within these groups, one can furthermore distinguish between herders who herd cattle owned by their community or those who are waged or ‘occupational’ herders, tending to the herds of others in exchange for a salary or payment in cattle.⁵ Whereas the former may travel with their families and *Ardo* (Peulh headman), the latter are typically groups of (young) men. However, some groups of young men herd cattle owned by their community and are testing whether the transhumance is safe enough to take their family along in subsequent seasons.

Finally, the settled population comprises people who live (semi)permanently in one place and typically engage in farming, but may also have other livelihoods, such as agro-pastoralism, or livelihoods not di-

2 See Boutrais, J. (1988). *Des Peul en Savanes Humides - Développement Pastoral dans l’Ouest Centrafricain*. Paris: ORSTROM; IPIS (2018) *Central African Republic: A Conflict Mapping*.

3 For a full yearly calendar of transhumance and farming, see Archamnaud, L., & Tidjani, I. (2016). *Étude des réalités agricoles et pastorales en Ouham*. London/Bangui: UKAid/Action contre la Faim/DRC/Solidarités, p. 25.

4 However, in order to avoid bias, respondents were asked how they self-identify and how they make their living, enabling the dataset to be disaggregated by age, gender, ethnicity, religion etc.

5 Also called ‘neo-pastoralists’ (Luizza 2018), they tend to cattle for absentee owners, including state functionaries, military men, diamond traders, or businessmen within or outside of the country who invest a portion of their earnings in cattle.

rectly dependent on land, such as teachers, butchers, shop owners, carpenters etc. Table 1 below breaks down the consultations along these distinctions; Annex I contains a more detailed discussion of the selection of interlocutors and the composition of consultations.

	Men	Women	Total
Settled population	543	451	994
Transboundary herders	144	16	160
Semi-settled herders	100	65	165
Total	787	532	1319

Table 1 - Number of respondents by category and sex.

Of course, these categories are not absolute. The village of Bady on the road between Bocaranga and Kouï, for instance, is populated by Mbororo who settled and reverted to farming after they lost their cattle in the aftermath of the 2013 crisis. And part of the herders who have their *zone d'attache* in CAR, have for years lived in new rainy season settlements in Cameroon because of the insecurity, compelling them to engage in transboundary transhumance until it is safe enough to return permanently.

1.2. Historical background

This section provides a brief overview of the entangled histories of pastoralism and conflict in Ouham and Ouham-Pendé, highlighting changes in pastoral systems and the role of armed groups in it.

In the 1920's, the French colonial administration began attracting Mbororo Peulh herdsmen from neighbouring colonies to Ubangi-Shari as CAR was then called, to supply the colony with meat.⁶ These first herders arrived via Ouham-Pendé, a natural entry point from neighbouring Cameroon (see Figure 2 below). Over the following 100 years, these herders have coexisted to mutual benefit with farmers in the region, exchanging meat, milk and manure for salt and farming produce such as mil, sorghum, manioc, vegetables and groundnuts.⁷ The term 'Mbororo' traditionally denotes a branch of Peulh that distinguishes itself from settled or semi-nomadic Peulh (or Fulani) in West and Central Africa, characterised by a more thorough commitment to nomadic life and the tendency to try and elude impositions by states or other authorities. However, over the years, many of the Mbororo in CAR adopted more settled lifestyles, intermarrying and beginning to speak some Sango. As one farmer in Mann recalls, herders were welcomed because *"their purchases help(ed) money circulate in the village. It encourages farmers to produce more in order to sell them the production so they can pay school fees for their children."*

6 J.B Suchel, "élevage des Bovins en République Centrafricaine", *les Cahiers d'Outre-Mer*, Paris, 1967, pastoralism 137. It concerned the Mbororo *legnols* (sub-groups) (Wodaabe, Djaafun, Danedji, Oudda), who were themselves motivated to escape the increasing weight of taxation and control elsewhere.

7 Boutrais 1994; Landais and Loste 1990; Bonnet et al. (2017). *Contribution à la relance du dialogue local à Berberati*. Paris: IRAM; FAO-DRC-CRS, *Situation de la transhumance et étude socioanthropologique des populations pastorales après la crise de 2013-2014 en République centrafricaine*, March 2015, p. 9.

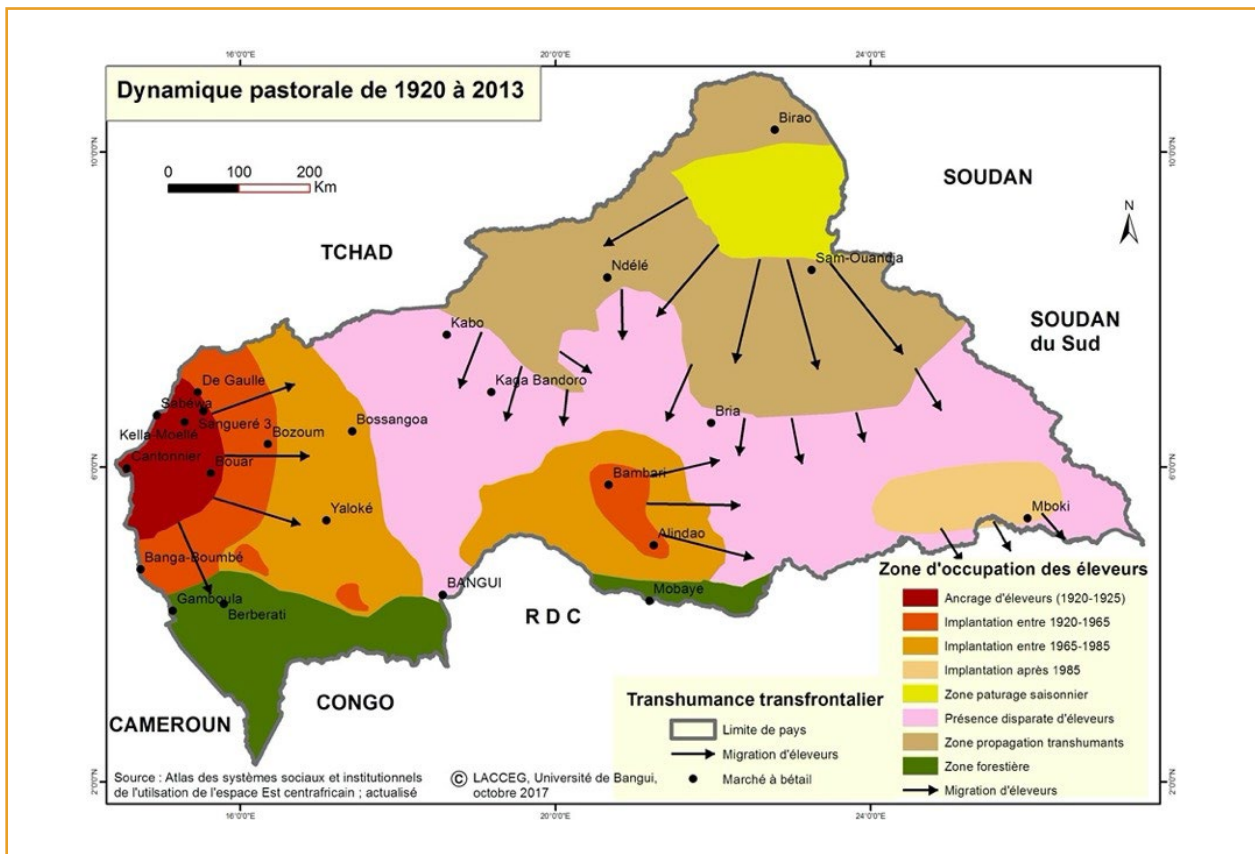


Figure 2. Expansion of pastoralism in CAR between 1920-2013. Source: Ankogui-Mpoko, G.-F., & Vircoulon, T. (2018). *La transhumance en Centrafrique : une analyse multidimensionnelle*. Brussels: European Union (ISS-FANSSA), p. 18.

Yet conflicts were just as frequent, resulting from the shifting land-use that both herders and farmers engage in in CAR. They relied on mutually accepted practices of compensation to farmers in case of a dispute, and just after independence in 1960, the government also attempted to attenuate land conflicts through spatial segregation, creating seven “communes d’élevage” in which only pastoralism would be permitted, formalising Mbororo claims to land and dotting *Lamidos*, or Peulh paramount chiefs, with administrative powers (see Figure 3 below).⁸

8 Bonnet et al. (2017). *Contribution à la relance du dialogue local à Berberati*. Paris: IRAM.

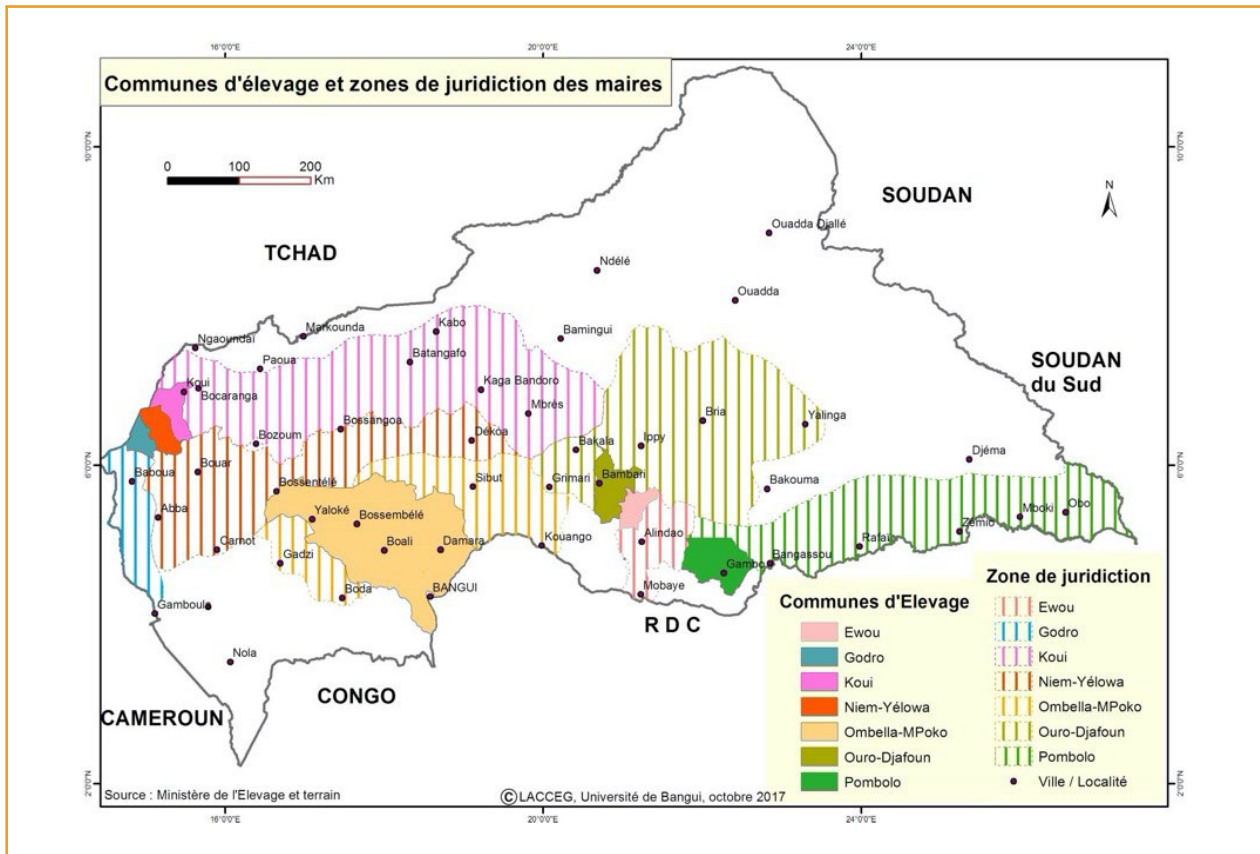


Figure 3. Communes d'élevage in CAR. Source: Ankogui-Mpoko, G.-F., & Vircoulon, T. (2018). *La transhumance en Centrafrique : une analyse multidimensionnelle*. Brussels: European Union (ISS-FANSSA), p. 21.

During the 1980s and 1990s, Mbororo elites gained more and more influence through government-recognised national associations that were involved in establishing seasonal cattle routes and the taxation of livestock markets, leading to relative stability and prosperity for Mbororo elites and the state: cattle contributed nearly 20% to GDP in this time. Yet ordinary Mbororo did not see their lives improved in return, for instance through schooling, healthcare or infrastructure. Some groups moved away from the livestock *communes* to avoid taxation. Droughts in the 1970s and 1980s also decimated their herds, leading some to seek employment as herders for wealthy townspeople, often Muslim traders. As authority of *Lamidos* and *Ardos* (group leaders) depended on the cattle they could spread in their community, youth from impoverished communities started to look for alternative opportunities. At the same time, droughts in Chad saw the influx of a first wave of Chadian herders into CAR (see Figure 4).⁹

⁹ Archamnaud, L., & Tidjani, I. (2016). *Étude des réalités agricoles et pastorales en Ouham*. London/Bangui: UKAid/Action contre la Faim/DRC/Solidarités; de Vries, L. (2020). *Navigating violence and exclusion: The Mbororo's claim to the Central African Republic's margins*. *Geoforum*, 109, 162-170.

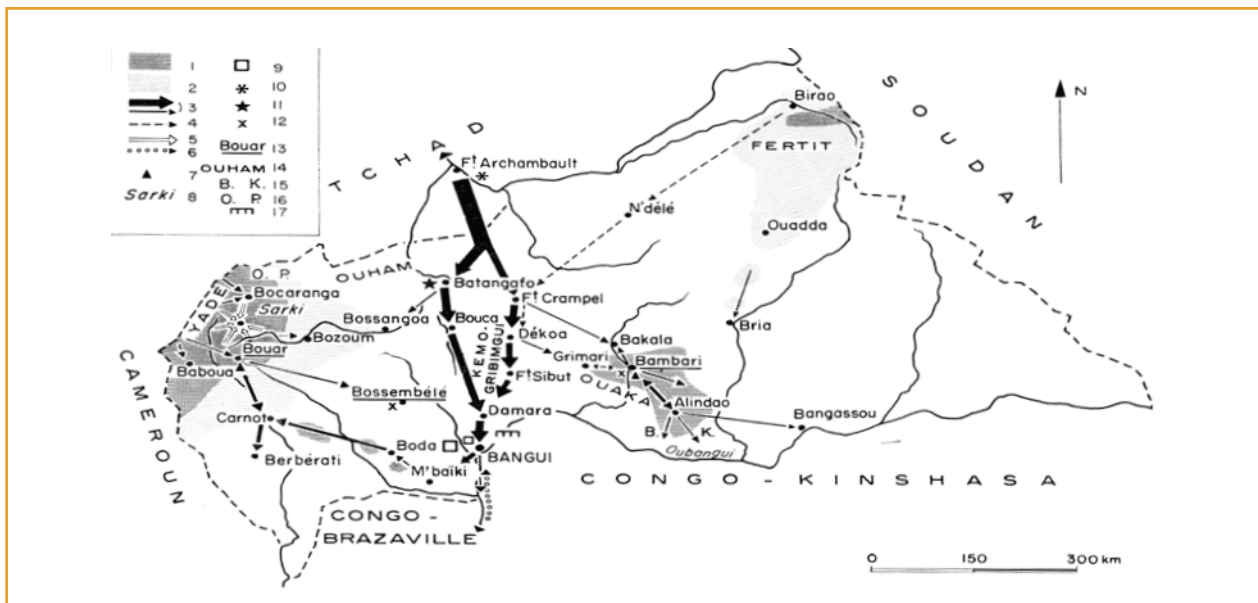


Figure 4. Influx of Chadian herders during the 1980s. Source: Freudenberger, M., & Mogba, Z. (2018). *The capture of the commons: militarised pastoralism and struggles for control of surface and sub-surface resources in the southwest Central African Republic*, p. 9.

In the early 2000's, President François Bozizé (president from 2003-2013) faced a rebellion organised by his predecessor, Ange-Félix Patassé. In this context, the *Zaraguina* or highway bandit movement emerged on the CAR-Cameroon borderlands, consisting of Chadian deserters and herders, as well as a small contingent of Central African herders.¹⁰ Settled communities as well as Wodaabe Mbororo set up self-defence groups in response, and Mbororo pastoralists (mainly Djaafoun and Danedji) were caught in the crossfire, accused of being *Zaraguina* while also being targeted for their cattle. Many herders fled towards Cameroon.

The 2012-13 coup d'état against President François Bozizé relied heavily on claims of neglect and marginalisation by Muslims and people of remote hinterlands of CAR. Staged from these margins with support and fighters from Chad, the ensuing *Seleka* rebellion then was perceived to principally target Christian ethnic groups alongside government institutions. In response, and with support from Bozizé, former police forces and settled communities locally mounted self-defence groups that collectively came to be known as *anti-balaka*, which, in turn, was perceived to target Muslim communities.

Ouham-Pendé was deeply affected by the ensuing violence between the *Seleka* and the *anti-balaka*. Many of its inhabitants, particularly pastoralists, fled across the border to Cameroon or Chad.¹¹ In order to benefit from the illegal taxation of transhumance, armed groups encouraged the reestablishment of transhumance routes as soon as they could demonstrate a certain control over the territory. Among them, the most active were Retour, Réclamation et Réhabilitation (3R), a Peulh armed group and Mouvement Patriotique pour la Centrafrique (MPC), an ex-Seleka group. They encouraged new groups of herders to come to replace the Mbororo who fled or lost their cattle during the crisis.

Chadian herders, some of them who had been associated to the *Zaraguina* bandits, then moved into the

10 For more on the *Zaraguina* movement, see Seignobos, C. (2011). Le phénomène zargina dans le nord du Cameroun. *Coupeurs de route et prises d'otages, la crise des sociétés pastorales mbororo. Afrique Contemporaine* (239), 35-59.

11 In Ouham-Pendé, only a few transhumant pastoralists groups stayed in the *commune d'élevage* of Kouï (Prefecture of Ouham-Pendé). In Besson and Niem-Yellowa, other *communes d'élevage* of Ouham-Pendé, some Djaafoun and Danedji groups remained with their cattle. In 2013-2014, CRS (Catholic Relief Services) reported a complete absence of the Woodabe, Djaafoun, Danedji (Mbororo) and Fulbe in the neighbouring prefectures of Nana-Mambéré and Mambéré-Kadai, where they historically used to be the dominant groups. Most of them crossed the Cameroonian border with their cattle and stayed around Garoua-Bouläï, Kenzo and Yokadouma. Interview with CAR Pastoralist expert, Bangui, January 2017, see I. Tidjani, *Impact de la crise politico-militaire de 2013-2014 sur le pastoralisme et la transhumance en République centrafricaine. Rapport d'étude socio-anthropologique du conflit*, Catholic Relief Services, January 2015, p. 16-17.

vacated pastures (see Figure 5 and Figure 6 below).¹² Often referred to locally as “foreign transhumants”, these Chadian herders appear, in part, to originate from the Lake Chad region, where seasonal transhumance has been disrupted by Boko Haram, military operations and security measures such as the closing of borders and harassment by state authorities.¹³ Some of these herders, often well-armed, ignored the transhumance routes established to avoid conflicts, trampled fields, and burned villages in conflict with local communities on their way. As farmers have difficulty distinguishing between different kinds of herders, this had negative repercussions for herders that had been around for a long time.¹⁴

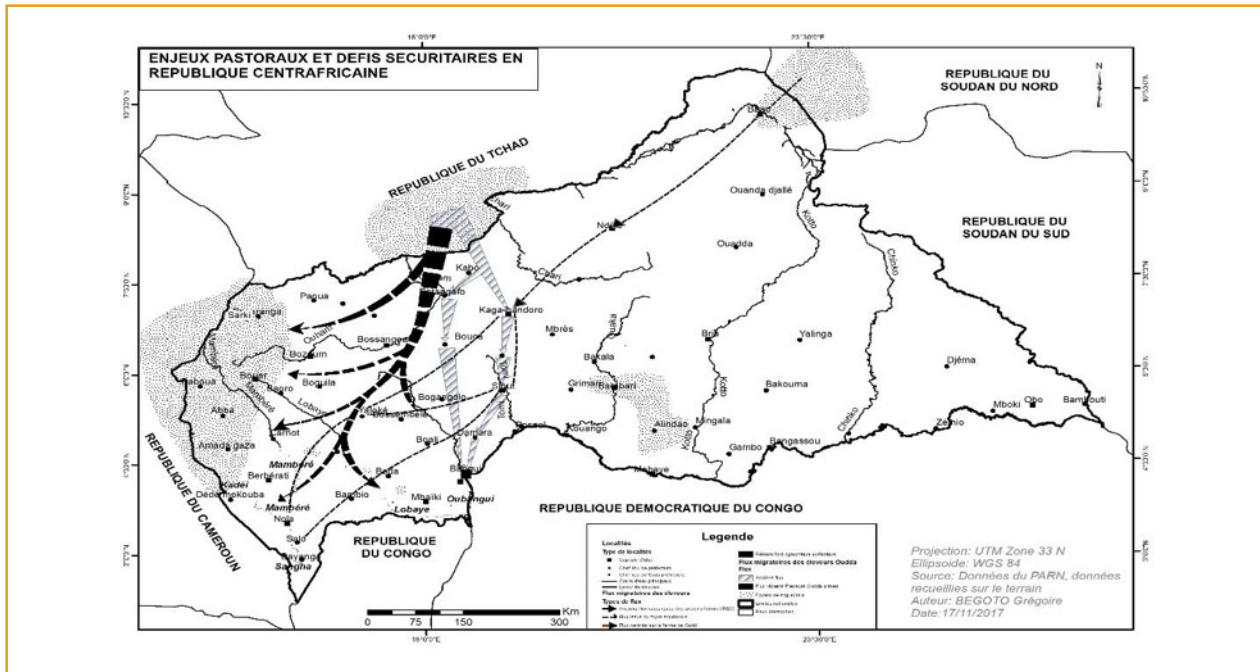


Figure 5. Chad-CAR movements in the 2010s. Source: Freudenberger, M., & Mogba, Z. (2018). *The capture of the commons: militarised pastoralism and struggles for control of surface and sub-surface resources in the southwest Central African Republic*, p. 10.

12 These appeared to have mainly been of the Hontorbe, Hanagamba, Bokolodji and Oudah subgroups (the latter group being a large reservoir of *Zaraguina* chiefs), but Misserya from Sudan have also appeared in Ouham-Pendé along the border with Chad over the past years. Little literature exists on the Bokolodji group, but they were expressly mentioned by settled groups, also see C. Seignobos & E. Chauvin, “L’imbroglio centrafricain”, *Afrique Contemporaine*, 2013/4, n°248, pp. 123-124.

13 They had been hosted in Logone (Cameroon) and Zinder (Niger), but these regions rapidly became overcrowded and they were forced to seek out new migration routes, which is why many of them progressively pushed their transhumance southwards to the Chad-CAR border region, arriving into Ouham-Pendé and Ouham. C. Rangé, *Insécurité dans la région du Lac Tchad : où en est le pastoralisme et comment penser son développement*, FAO-CIRAD, March 2018, pp. 2-3.

14 De Vries 2020; IPIS 2018 op cit.

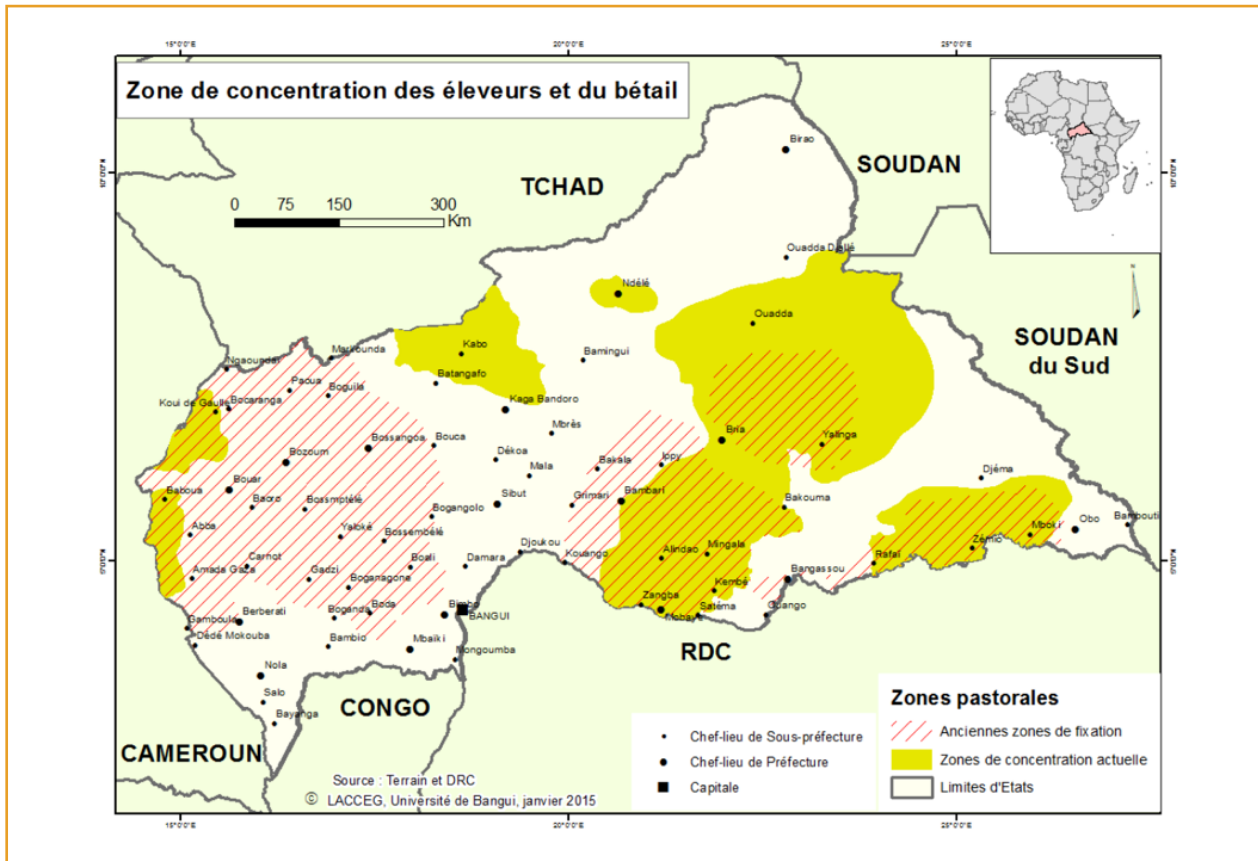


Figure 6. Map showing herding zones before the conflict (striped) and cattle distribution observed in 2015. Source: FAO, DRC, & CRS. (2015). *Situation de la transhumance et étude socioanthropologique des populations pastorales après la crise de 2013-2014*, p. 14.

There are strong indications that many conflict dynamics in CAR have subsequently come to revolve around the governance of transhumance – ownership of animals, access to pastures, paid forms of ‘protection’ and the taxation of cattle corridors. Because of the value concentrated in cattle, livestock has turned into a coveted prize in the conflict.¹⁵

This is certainly borne out in north-western CAR. From 2014, the Ndale Brothers, an armed group affiliated to the anti-balaka and complicit with state authorities, specifically targeted herders, raiding cattle and reselling it in Bouar, where they are headquartered, or in Bangui. In response, the Mbororo General Sidiki Abass (né Bi Sidi Souleman) established 3R, which claims as its sole purpose protecting pastoralists from attacks such as by the Ndale Brothers in the Bouar region and RJ (Revolution and Justice), a former anti-balaka group in Paoua, yet also engages in racketeering of herders, as the report of UN Panel of Experts shows¹⁶ and our data confirms.

From 2015, a new form of herding appeared, comprising very large herds escorted by well-armed Chadian contract herders to the vacated pastures in western CAR, at the behest of powerful figures in their home country.¹⁷ Illustrating the importance of cattle racketeering for conflict dynamics, between 2016 and 2017, RJ allied with the former Seleka group MPC of General Ahmat Bahar to jointly operate illegal checkpoints and the rackets on routes used by transborder herders from Chad. Subsequent in-fighting

15 Cf. Schouten, P., & Kalessopo, S.-P. (2017). *The Politics of Pillage: the political economy of roadblocks in the Central African Republic*. Copenhagen/Antwerp: DIIS/IPIS; IPIS/DIIS (2018) *Central African Republic: a conflict mapping*; de Vries, L. (2020). Navigating violence and exclusion: The Mbororo's claim to the Central African Republic's margins. *Geoforum*, 109, 162-170.

16 Report of the UN Panel of Experts for the CAR, S/2016/694, August 2016, p. 23.

17 Freudenberger, M., & Mogba, Z. (2018). *The capture of the commons: militarized pastoralism and struggles for control of surface and sub-surface resources in the southwest Central African Republic*. Paper presented at the 2018 World Bank Conference on Land and Poverty, Washington; Luizza, M. (2017). *Transhumant Pastoralism in Central Africa: Emerging Impacts on Conservation and Security*. Washington: USFWS.

between RJ and MPC between December 2017 and May 2018 led to massive displacement.¹⁸

In October 2018, 3R had built up so much power along the border with Cameroon that it could convince *Front Démocratique du Peuple Centrafricain* (FDPC), *Anti-Balaka*, RJ Belanga and RJ Sayo factions, which had split in late 2017, to accept an alliance (*Rassemblement Centrafricain pour la Paix*) under its lead. 3R also signed a separate agreement with the Ndale Brothers establishing a clear division of territories between them around Bouar, mainly involving a division of roadblocks and taxation on cattle movement.¹⁹ These agreements resulted in a temporary halt in armed confrontations, allowing herders who had fled the fighting to cautiously return to Ouham-Pendé.

However, this stable interlude ended on 21 May 2019, when 3R elements killed at least 41 civilians in Paoua sous-prefecture, allegedly in retaliation for incidents targeting herders there.²⁰ Most of the research for this report was conducted during this relative lull.

In sum, in the current moment, mistrust is generalised, in the sense that most armed groups have clearly abandoned their initial stripes as community defence groups (RJ and other anti-balaka typically hailing from farmers, and 3R from herders), instead evolving into warlords motivated by profiting from the value concentrated in cattle.

2. TRANSHUMANCE

2.1. Evolution of corridors and routes

Transhumant pastoralism is a production system that relies on mobility and optionality to exploit transient nutrient concentrations as a result of weather variability. Every year as the rains stop, herders from Chad begin moving southward in search of pastures in Moyen-Chari and the Central African Republic.²¹ Herders from Chad all point out that they would prefer to stay in Chad because their livestock fetches higher prices in the market, but that the quality and quantity of dry season fodder have gone down and temperatures up, leading to a rapid loss of cattle. In their equation, the health of the herd is the key performance indicator, meaning many feel it far outweighs the uncertainties and risks associated to accessing better pastures in CAR.

*Many transhumant pastoralists are coming to the CAR for the first time because their cattle are decimated by drought.*²²

At the same time, some of the herders coming from Chad are Central African herders that have been displaced because of the conflict.

²³They typically move through Goré, Sido, or Baibokoum on the Chadian side, planning their journey along water courses or hopping between watering points (such as the rivers Bang, Lim, Nana-Barya which forms the natural border with Chad, the Yémé, Béh). They then enter CAR along waterways and routes that grant them immediate access to weekly markets (Mbaiboum, Ngaoundaye, N'Dim and Létélé), to resupply in foodstuffs as well as the cash necessary to pay for taxes. Some simply follow the course of the

18 This alliance dissolved in December 2017, after the assassination of RJ leader Raymond Belanga by General Bahar, who, in the meantime, left the MPC to form the MNL (Mouvement National pour la Libération de la Centrafrique). Report of the UN Panel of Experts for the CAR, S/2016/1032, December 2016, para 202-203, Report of the UN Panel of Experts for the CAR, S/2018/729, July 2018, p. 112-113. And para. 42.

19 Report of the UN Panel of Experts for the CAR, S/2019/608, July 2019, para. 76-19, Annex 5.4, cf. Report of the UN Panel of Experts for the CAR, S/2018/729, July 2018, p. 107.

20 Report of the UN Panel of Experts for the CAR, S/2019/608, July 2019, para. 77, Report of the UN Panel of Experts for the CAR, S/2019/628, July 2018, para. 72. For an overview of CAR's armed groups, see IPIS/DIIS (2018) *CAR: A conflict mapping* and Vircoulon, T. (2020). *Écosystème des groupes armés en Centrafrique* (Paris: IFRI).

21 OIM, Tchad - Dashboard De Suivi Des Mouvements De Transhumance 3 (Décembre 2019 - Mars 2020), <https://migration.iom.int/node/8764>

22 Focus group with Semi-nomads, Danedji, 28th March 2019. Focus group citations are given as an illustration. Unless otherwise stated in the text, elements to support the statement were raised in multiple focus groups.

23 Interview data, also see Archamnaud, L., & Tidjani, I. (2016). *Étude des réalités agricoles et pastorales en Ouham*. London/Bangui: UKAid/Action contre la Faim/DRC/Solidarités.

river Chiboué or Lim for a while into CAR. At the same time, herders based in Cameroon also plan their journey in terms of stages between rivers (Mambéré, Mbiké, Lim). Most herders typically envision to set up a cattle camp for the season in the meadow of one of the streams, such as the Kouï, but may be forced to move if an area gets too crowded or relations with locals deteriorate.

Herders based in Cameroon - including both herders with their *zone d'attache* in Cameroon and displaced Central African herders, many of whom stay in Gado – typically travel along from Meiganga via Ngam, cross the river Mambéré and villages like M'poko, Dompta and Doumpoula before crossing into CAR, where they pass through Kaita-Hassana-Lim and Degaulle/Kouï before reaching Yadé/Mbodala.²⁴

The maps in Figure 7 below and at the beginning of this report show the information that herders provided about their routes. It shows the official cattle routes (*corridors de transhumance*) as they were established by the Central African government in 2002 (in green) as well as the information on routes practiced provided by transboundary herders (in orange) and by semi-settled herders (in red).

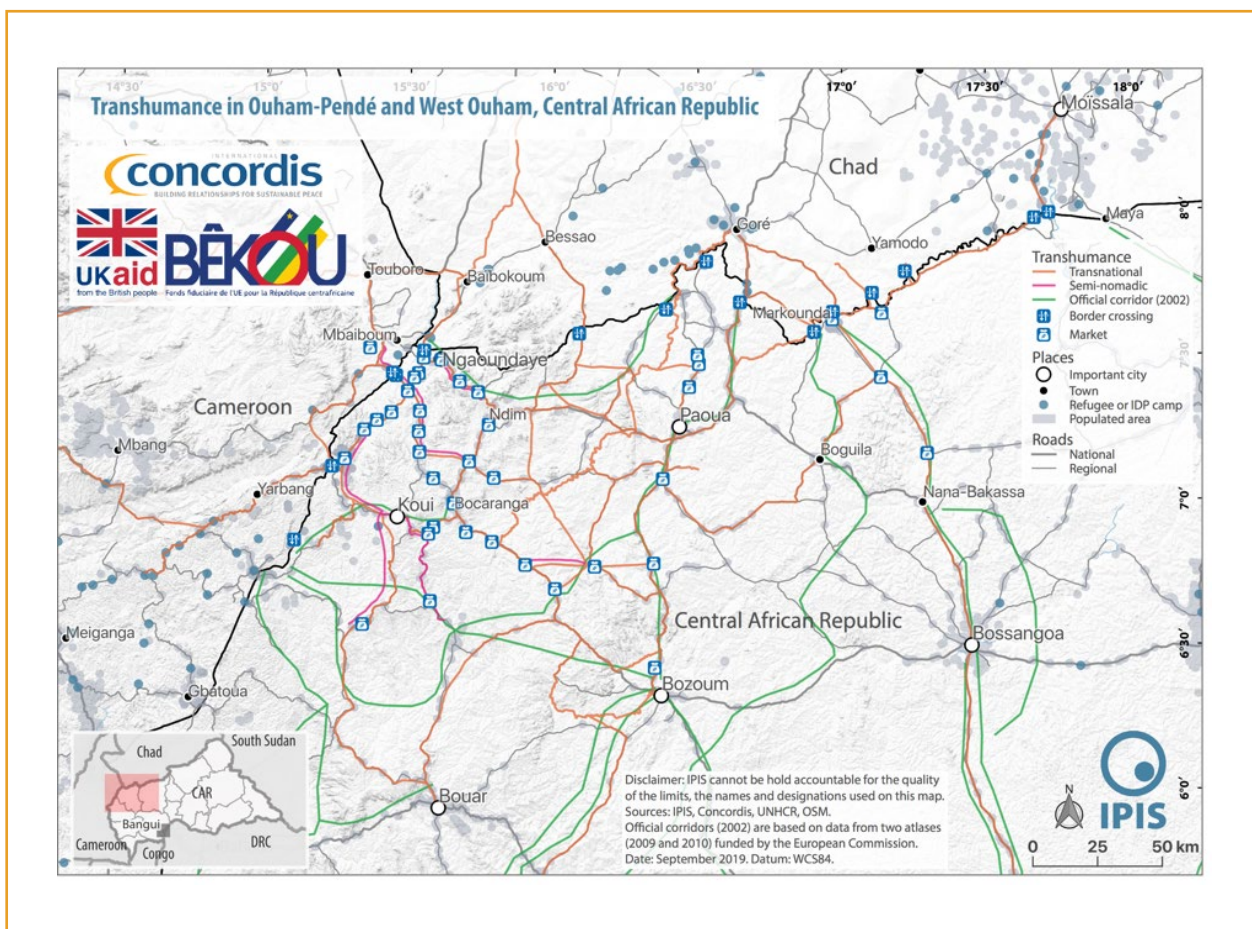


Figure 7. Map of transhumance routes in Ouham and Ouham-Pendé.

2.2. Uncertainty surrounding routes and pasture lands

Although agreements existed in the past around routes and pasture lands, these are not routinely adhered to anymore by herders– while they also no longer consistently announce their arrival. Farmers, on the other hand, have encroached on pasture land and corridors.

As explained in more detail in chapter 7, farmers, using their techniques of moving their farmland to cope with the ecological challenges of the CAR drylands, have started to occupy parts of former pasture lands and transhumance corridors. Transhumance had reduced during the years of crisis and these lands are generally more productive due to fertilisation – and hence a logical choice for cultivation while other lands lay fallow.

24 Focus group with Semi-nomadic Transhumants, Yadé (Mbodala), 1st April 2019.

Herders, upon seeing this occupation, have a hard time steering clear of cultivated land. However, this is not their most often cited reason for changing routes. Armed groups have set up checkpoints on certain corridors, which they tend to move around when they become aware of transhumants presence in the vicinity. Quite some herders, therefore, decide to stay closer to main roads and villages and hence FACA and MINUSCA forces for protection. This is also the key reason not to announce one's herd's arrival: the information may reach armed groups and thereby cause issues on the way. Other herders – many of whom are relatively new to the area, have only limited relationships with local communities, and are unfamiliar with previous agreements – have the opposite strategy. They pay the taxes to armed groups – in this case often 3R – who then allow them to graze anywhere and defend their interests in case of disputes. Chapters 6 and 7 examine these challenges further.



Figure 8 – Many herders have felt the need to look for new routes.

The result is an uneasy level of uncertainty for all communities around where to lead cattle, how to stay safe and avoid conflict, when cattle will arrive near local communities and how to engage with each other to make new agreements.

2.3. Evolving patterns in herder groups

2.3.1. CAR and transboundary herder groups

Many of the herders that consider having their *zone d'attache* in CAR have been uprooted and displaced for years, either to a different location in CAR or in neighbouring Chad and Cameroon. Over the past two years, they have begun to return for the dry season (becoming *de facto* transboundary herders), but indicate that they can often not return to the locations of their previous cattle camps because these locations have been overtaken by other herders, occupied by farmers, or have become otherwise inaccessible. Therefore, they now seek pastures elsewhere, on unfamiliar grounds, facing the same issues and mistrust as transboundary herders, among settled communities with whom they have not yet developed significant relations.

2.3.2. Young herders and family herders

Since the crisis of 2012-2013, more livestock is being herded by groups of, mostly young, men. Settled and semi-settled populations tend to perceive young herders travelling without family as dangerous and problematic, especially if they are armed. Some of these, especially in the past years, are travelling with the herds of their community and verifying if the security situation permits them to take along their family in future seasons. Others are occupational herders, hired by the owners to fatten their cattle. This same category, of occupational transboundary herders, was also identified as most problematic for settled populations by Archamnaud and Tidjani (2016).²⁵

A group of farmers in Gouzé summarised the various points that many settled populations made:

There is this new transhumants' group coming from Chad and Sudan. They are the source of conflict between the settled population and herders. They are young herders with numerous cows, and they carry weapons. They let their cattle graze anywhere, day and night, but keep moving so we cannot trace them. They are not cautious not to destroy fields, and farmers are afraid to approach them, because they are armed and don't speak Sango.²⁶

The local populations quickly judge the intention of herders, and even their ethnicity, based on their composition and the presence of women or lack thereof.

The young herders who travel without their family behave violently, but those with their family and older people are peaceful.²⁷

2.3.3. Herder group composition and ability to discuss damages

Settled people underscore the difference between transboundary herders who travel with their families and those who do not. Those who travel with their families are likely to be more risk-averse and open to negotiation, and often will be guided by an *Ardo* who can be approached for dispute resolution. Those who do not, tend to be young men, less risk averse, more often occupational herders that have no fixed leader, or anyone who speaks Sango, to negotiate with in case of conflict. They are also considered more prone to the destruction of farmland, violent retribution, and abuse of women, and are more likely to pack up and flee in case of a conflict – in which case, they are hard to track down as they are constantly on the move.

2.3.4. Control over herds

The interviewees tend to indicate that herds are not always very well controlled. This may be linked to their sizes, relative to the number of herders, to herders' understanding of herding and farming practices in the area or any number of reasons. It is worth researching these issues more in-depth and addressing them with herders and owners before transhumance starts.

2.3.5. Herd size and occupational herders

A fundamental change often mentioned is the transition from a traditional and familial transhumance to an activity carried out by armed young men. Occupational herders are hired by wealthy and influential Chadians to lead bigger herds than before in CAR during the dry season.

2.3.6. Perceived ethnicity and arms

Settled and semi-settled people sometimes identify these groups as Bokolodji and Hontorbé herders, as opposed to Hanagamba, who travel with their family. This may, however, be a conflation as a group of youth from Pendé explained: *"Young herders alone are Bokolodji. It is the family structure of the group that allows us to identify them."*²⁸ The Bokolodji interviewees (eight, from two focus groups) were young herders hired by wealthy owners to lead their cattle during the dry season. Their chosen route was noticeably different to that of other transboundary herders, as they mostly stuck to the old transhumance routes, whereas other herders explained they were trying to stay away from those paths to avoid any encounter with armed groups (see above). However, if the Bokolodji carried firearms (as was often attributed to them by farmers), these were not visible to the research teams, and they cite, *"praying to God (Allah)"* as

26 Focus group with Settled population, Gouzé, 4th March 2019.

27 Focus group with Settled population, Beboy 1, 10th March 2019.

28 Focus group with Youth from settled population, Pende, 22nd February 2019.

their only strategy to protect their cattle.²⁹

It should be pointed out that many foreign and semi-settled herders travel without family exactly because CAR is deemed too dangerous, potentially leading to a self-reinforcing cycle. However, the fear of armed young herders appears to be a powerful, often repeated factor for settled and semi-settled populations – a call to be heeded in addressing transhumance conflict dynamics in this region.

2.4. Envisioning peaceful transhumance

Looking towards the future, asked what would be necessary to make transhumance peaceful, various communities agreed that a mechanism for dispute resolution, for sharing natural resources – in the Ouham-Pendé context, essentially sharing land – and another for informing local communities of herders' arrival, are absolute priorities. In fact, 83% of settled respondents and 79% of herders gave at least one of these responses. Two thirds of settled respondents also indicated herders should travel without arms.

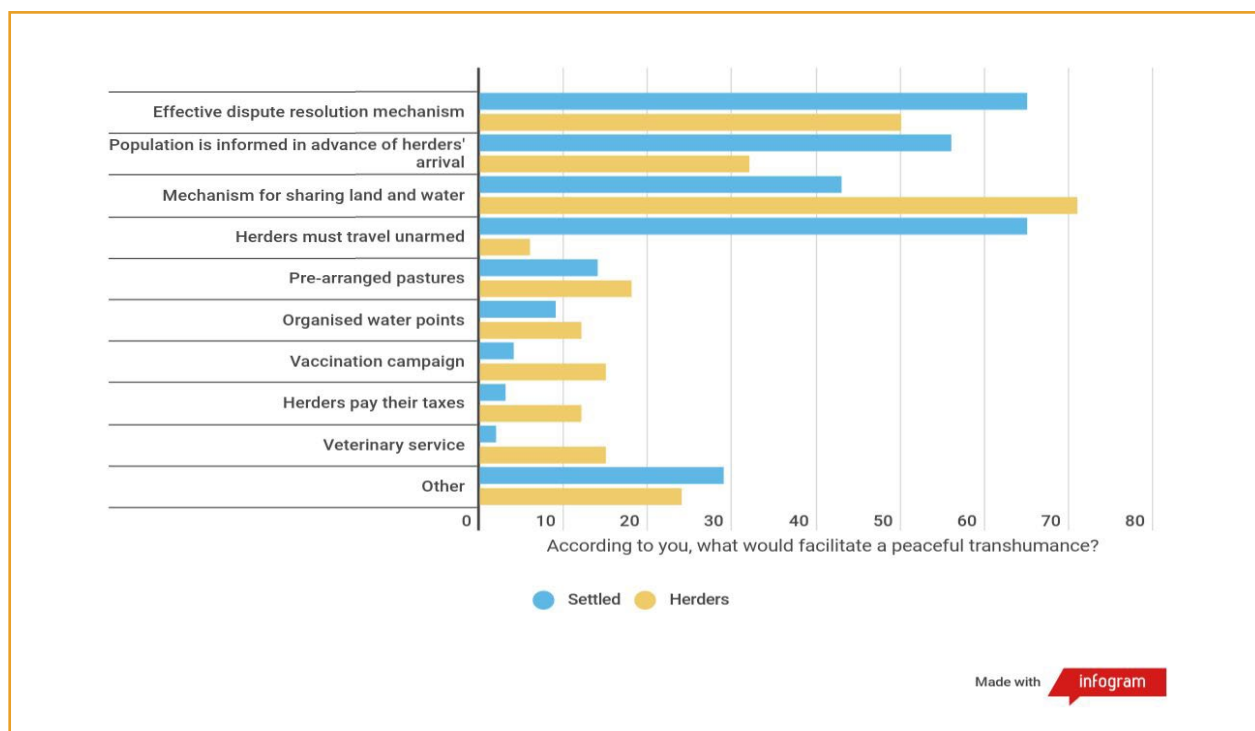


Figure 9 – Needed for peaceful transhumance.

2.4.7. Mechanisms for dispute resolution

About two thirds of settled respondents and half of the herders agree that a mechanism to settle disputes is essential. Generally, such systems were in place at some point in the past. However, they have been perturbed by the conflicts since 2012 and in many places have been taken over by armed groups – which are usually seen as biased. This is further investigated in chapter 8.

2.4.8. Mechanism for sharing natural resources – sharing land

As explained above, old corridors have been abandoned and herders have sought new pastures for their

29 Focus group with Bokolodji transhumant pastoralists, Bady, 31st March 2019. The Bokolodji seem to uphold traditional Peulh considerations of pasture as God-given and at the disposition of all, and thus typically reject exclusive land-ownership claims. FAO, DRC, & CRS. (2015). *Situation de la transhumance et étude socioanthropologique des populations pastorales après la crise de 2013-2014 en République centrafricaine*. Bangui: Rapport Conjoint de Mission FAO-DRC-CRS, p. 11.

herds for a variety of reasons, including avoiding illegal taxation and parts of these lands have been occupied by farmers. However, as will be explained in the chapters 6 and 7, this situation is causing problems for all communities. This is why 43% percent of settled populations and 71% of herders consider a mechanism to make sound agreements around sharing such resources is paramount.

2.4.9. Mechanism for informing local communities of herders' arrival

The previously widespread practice of announcing one's arrival has become less prevalent for herders over the years. The many reasons range from avoiding illegal taxation and racketeering by armed groups to herders being unaware of local populations' sensitivities. Linked with the uncertainty of routes taken and the fear for young groups of herders and cattle moving by night makes this a very stressful situation for settled populations. More than half of them feel they need to be informed before the arrival and one third of transhumants agree this would help maintain peaceful relations.

3. FARMER-HERDER TRADING RELATIONS

Most herders and settled people realise their respective subsistence depends on one another: both communities admit that intercommunity trade is important for their livelihood. As will become evident below, women and butchers could potentially play important roles in the relations between the communities because of their specific economic activities and resulting contacts across the divides.

Farmers and herders are not naturally in competition over land and resources. Their production systems can just as easily complement each other through trade and fertilisation synergies, provided mechanisms are in place to improve the predictability of transhumance for local populations and include the necessary flexibility for herders.³⁰

3.1. Current dependence on trade

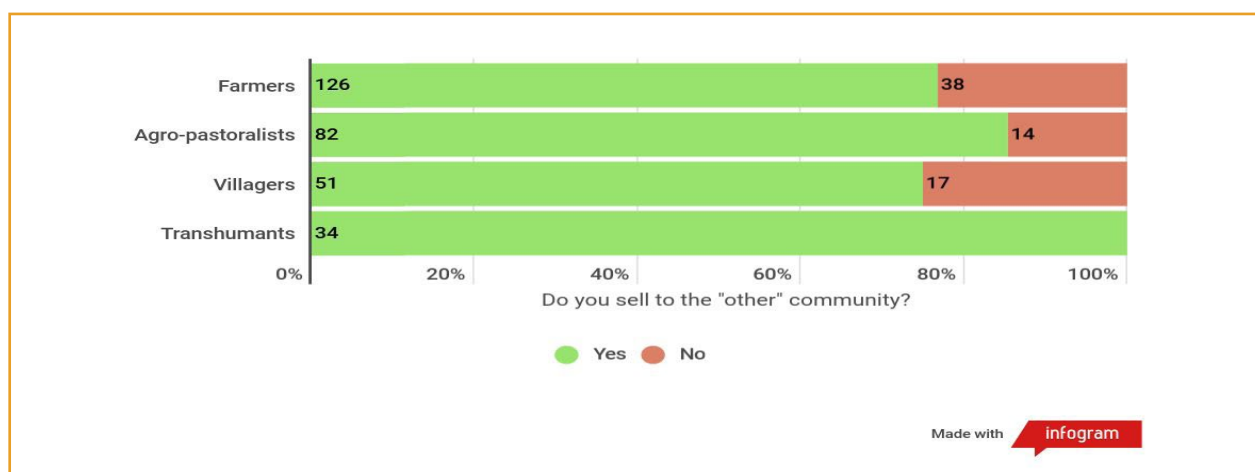


Figure 10. Selling to other communities.

All herders purchase vegetables such as manioc, mil, sorghum, as well as salt or natron for their livestock; 97% (N=34) of the herders interviewed said that the supplies they obtain at village markets are important for their livelihood, and 90% of them buy farming products at least once a week.

30 Krätli, S., & Toulmin, C. (2020). *Farmer-herder conflict in sub-Saharan Africa?* Sussex/Paris: IIED/AFD.

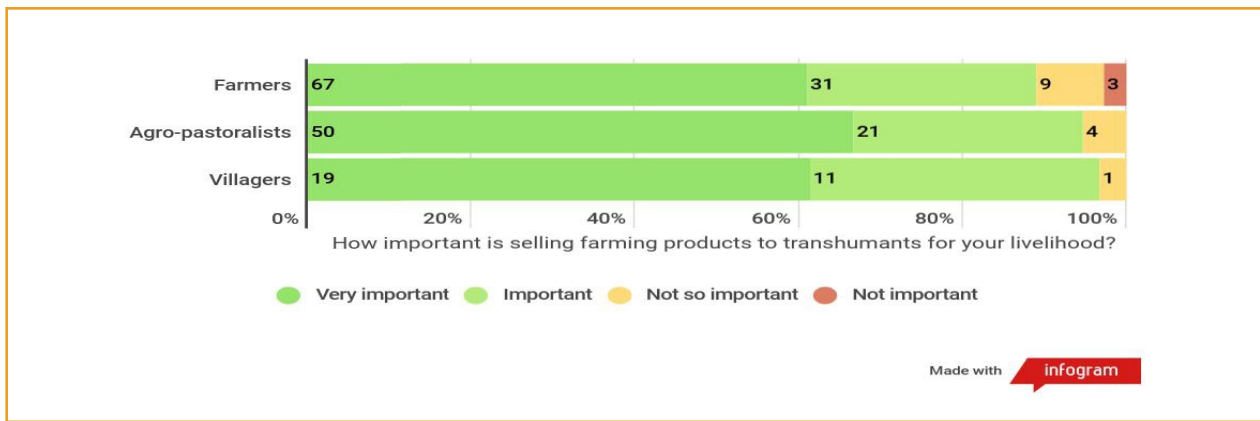


Figure 11. Importance of selling to herders.

90% of the farmers interviewed, for their part, consider selling their surplus to transhumants as important for their livelihood, and 29% even estimates that their livelihood depends on it. For the 22% of settled people who sell other types of goods such as *beignets*, tobacco, fruits, 49% hold that their livelihood depends on trade with herders. Seventy percent of settled people recognise they crucially depend on obtaining products from herders - mostly cattle (41%), meat (35%) and milk (19%), but also cola nuts.

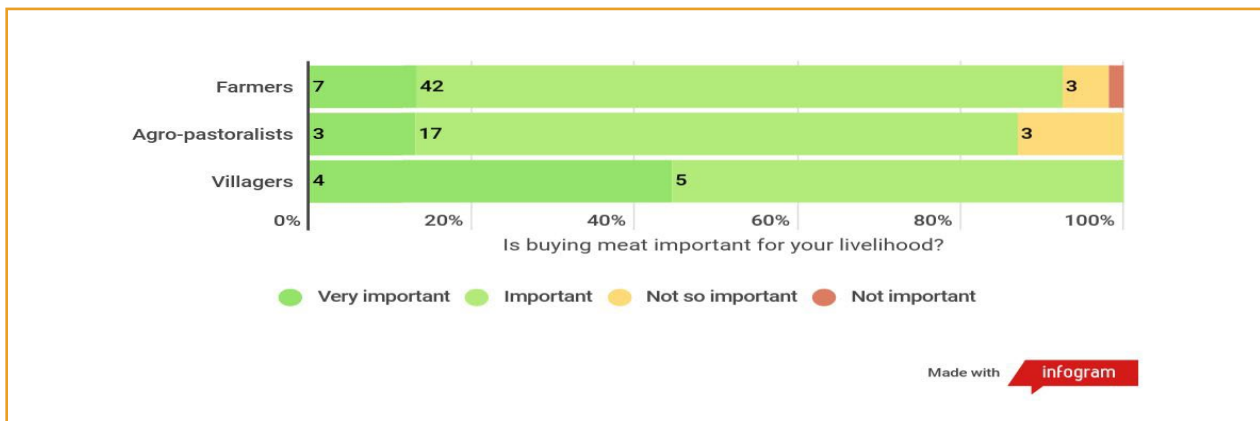


Figure 12. Importance of buying meat for livelihoods.

As rural trade was in the past done by Muslim traders who have fled during the conflict, many villagers now also depend on transboundary herders to obtain imported goods.³¹ As a farmer from Bele explains: *“The local population gets many benefits from the transhumance: we sell our farmed products, we buy their cattle for ploughing, to increase our own cattle, and of course to have meat. We used to enjoy their coming so we could make money from our sales of sorghum, corn and beans. Furthermore, our roads are in such bad condition that no one else than the transhumants were coming to buy from us.”* For 41% of the settled population, herders are the main suppliers of batteries, pens, notebooks, sugar, clothes and kitchen utensils. Most trade between herders and farmers take place at weekly markets, which is why the majority of sales take place on a weekly basis.

31 On the historical role of Arab-speaking people in trade, see Piermay, J.-L. (1977). *La Route Bangui-Kaga Bandoro : Structures héritées et mutations contemporaines dans une région de la savane centrafricaine.* (Doctorat). Paris X Nanterre, Paris; the contemporary dependency on herders has been asserted during numerous consultations.

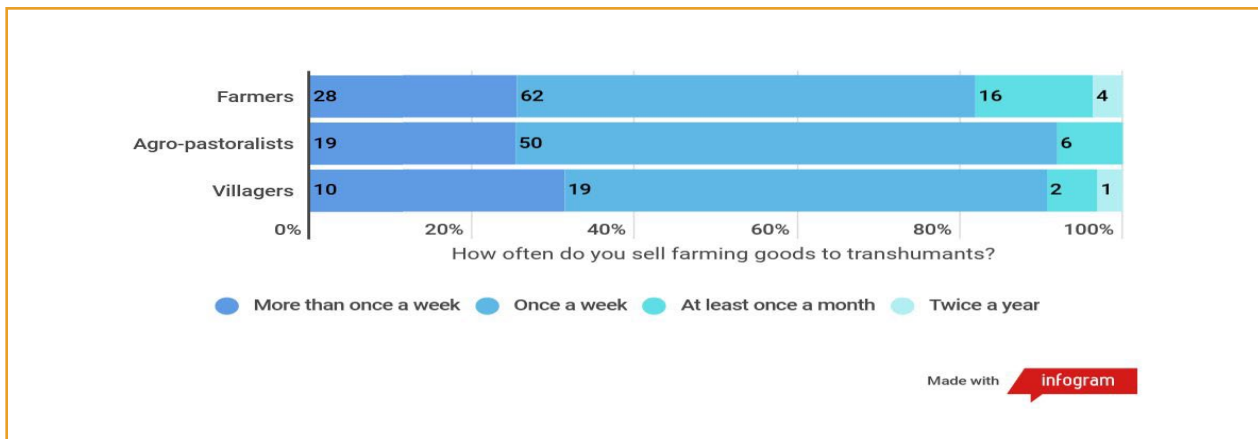


Figure 13. Frequency of selling to herders.

3.1.1. Effect on relations between settled and semi-settled communities

Archamnaud and Tidjani also argue that herders that stay over the rainy season have an important function supplying farming communities with nutrients they cannot themselves produce, thus allowing more vulnerable households to meet their needs. The interdependence is higher, and therefore, relations tend to be more relaxed.³²

Their social relations are examined further in the next chapter.

3.1.2. Multiple livelihoods

The vast majority of trade between the communities is linked to farming and herding. While one third of the settled respondents indicated selling other products or services, the frequency and importance of such exchanges for the seller's livelihood indicate a moderate to low relevance in the local economy. It does, however, indicate a significant potential for increased trade and economic diversification if more money were to circulate – which can lead communities to be more resilient to shocks and thus less dependent on one activity for their food security. Such secondary sources of income appear to be less important for herders, with less than 10% selling non-herding related products and services.

3.2. Women and farmer-herder trade

When herders travel with families, the women are responsible for feeding the family, either by subsistence cultivation if possible, or by exchanging milk for produce from the land at markets or in villages. This leads to small-scale trading relations with settled women who have the same responsibilities. Women in both farming and herding communities are responsible for subsistence of the family or group, by subsistence farming, fetching water and obtaining firewood, and in some zones exchanging milk and vegetables with women from the other community.³³ These interactions can stimulate trust between the two communities and become an important connector. One female transboundary herder explained that women from their group go to exchange with female villagers, but that these often have no money to pay for herding products (milk), but let them buy on credit "We (female transboundary herders) accept that the women villagers pay later for food and the meat they buy from us, because currently, they do not have a lot of money". These kinds of demonstrations of trust are key to establish good relations.

32 Archamnaud, L., & Tidjani, I. (2016). *Étude des réalités agricoles et pastorales en Ouham*. London/Bangui: UKAid/Action contre la Faim/DRC/Solidarités, p. 2.

33 *ibid.*

3.3. Butchers as brokers between communities

Within village communities across Ouham and Ouham-Pendé, there is one category of settled people that has a better relation to, and understanding of, herders than most of their peers. Butchers are exclusively men and typically relatively young, between 20 and 35 years old. Through their interactions with the herders, they have learnt their language, the Ffulde, in addition to Sango. These interactions also contributed to better social relations. By working together, they created stronger ties than the average population, putting them in an interesting potential intermediary position.

Butchers do not wield particular influence *per se*; however, from our consultation visits, they seem over-represented in influential positions such as village chief, group chief or youth president. In the village of Tatale, for instance, the local chief is a butcher, and so is the 'président de la jeunesse'; both of them speak Ffulde and exchange frequently with the foreign herders, making clear agreements on limitations and trade rules. Both settled populations and transhumants interviewed in Tatale are especially positive about the youth president as an intermediary.³⁴

They acknowledge that it is more difficult with groups of young herders (in contrast to herders who travel with family), but that "there are no traders and vehicles coming here from Bozoum or Bocaranga, which are the big market centres of the region, to buy our products, so we rely entirely on the herders to buy our produce".³⁵ As butchers profit from transhumance through their trade, they might see the benefit in the presence of herders while farmers confronted with everyday frictions with herders feel more insecure. It is important to consider both their economic interests with herders and their social interests in their communities when considering them as intermediaries.

Butchers are also subject to predation on livestock. In Kouki, they explained that Séléka has imposed itself on their business, demanding XAF 3,000 per cow slaughtered³⁶. In Touga, butchers indicated no cattle sale can take place without 3R presence, and demanding a payment of XAF 10,000 and 2 kilos of meat per sale to the butcher and XAF 5,000 to the herder (a prerogative usually associated to the mayor).³⁷ They also explain that 3R has prohibited them from going to cattle camps to purchase livestock, arguing that only Peulh can enter the camps. Furthermore, they explain that although they share the same background, butchers also fall victim to Anti-Balaka extortion when they return from weekly markets with cattle.

Figure 14 – Butchers are in a unique position as they are both linked to herders through their trade and part of the community.



34 Focus group with Farmers, Tatale, 19th March 2019.

35 It should be noted that many of the traders (*commerçants*) responsible for rural exchanges have abandoned villages and towns since 2013, because they felt threatened as Muslims; this increases reliance on herders for commercial exchanges. Cf. Archamnaud, L., & Tidjani, I. (2016). *Étude des réalités agricoles et pastorales en Ouham*. London/Bangui: UKAid/Action contre la Faim/DRC/Solidarités, p. 1.

36 Focus group with Butchers, Kouki, 12th April 2019.

37 Focus group with Butchers, Touga, 11th April 2019.

4. INTERCOMMUNITY PERCEPTIONS

While mutual nostalgia prevails among settled and semi-settled communities to a time of harmonious cohabitation, and both groups tend to be positively inclined towards one another, a more complex relationship is perceived with groups described as foreign transhumants. The latter, from their side, perceive relations with settled populations as very good. While recent conflict appears to be a factor in how communities perceive one another, importantly, there is a willingness to improve social relations.

There is a notable absence of references to ethnicity or religion when talking about problems with other communities, especially in comparison to areas further to the south-west of CAR, where religion is more in play, and further to the north-east, where ethnicity is more often mentioned. In the sub-prefectures visited in Ouham-Pendé and Ouham, only 4% said that Muslims were responsible for their insecurity, none referred to Christians and 8% referred to an ethnic group, while 58% cite foreign transhumants.

4.1. Settled and semi-settled communities

As explained above, over the years before the crisis herders and farmers had developed social relations through complementary comparative advantages and trade morphing into increasing interdependencies and co-habitation: *"In the village Toubanko, the Oudah semi-nomads used to cohabit peacefully with the local population. They even built houses and worked in the field with the settled people."*³⁸ Settled populations tend to be appreciative of their relations with these semi-settled herders, going as far as stating they live in *"perfect harmony"*.³⁹ In particular, relations with Djaafoun and Danedji herders are referred to with a certain nostalgia in comparison with the new groups of "foreign transhumants".

The transhumant pastoralists that we used to know were Danedji, Djaafoun and Hanagamba. We used to collaborate really well. But those coming now are Misseriya (Arab sub-group), Hontorbe and Sankara⁴⁰, and those only move armed with their arrows, spears, and even Kalashnikov, says a farmer from a village nearby Markounda.

Semi-settled herders with a history in CAR share this nostalgia for a harmonious cohabitation. *"We were living in perfect harmony with the other community. We shared many things with them, including Sango and Ffulde, and even the Mboum language that we also speak. Our cattle were grazing nearby the village. The grazing and farming zones were clearly delimited, and everyone respected it. Of course, field destruction occurred but it was solved amicably since we all knew each other by living together"*.⁴¹

Illustrating how herder and farmer land-use patterns can be complementary rather than exclusive, other semi-settled herders recalled that, before the crisis of 2013, *"we were giving our cattle to farmers for ploughing, and in return, they were giving us a grazing land. This practice greatly promoted peaceful cohabitation and social cohesion"*.⁴²

While such feelings and expressions are of immense importance and show a willingness to move towards peaceful cohabitation, it is important to note, however, that many herders have been deliberately displaced and dispossessed by self-defence groups in both retaliation for, mostly unfounded, allegations of support to Seleka and conflict profiteering.⁴³ These divisions were rooted in policies targeting Muslims leading up to the crisis.⁴⁴

Semi-settled herders feel caught between harassment and negative attitudes from all sides. They share their religion and commitment to herding with transboundary herders but a common past with settled

38 Focus group with Farmers, Tobanko 2, 31st March 2019.

39 Focus group with Farmers, Gouzé, 4th March 2019.

40 Hontorbe and Sankara are, in fact, the same group.

41 Focus group with Semi-settled herders, Létéélé, 28 March 2019.

42 Focus group with Semi-settled herders, Benamkor, 28 February 2019.

43 Focus group with Semi-settled herders, Létéélé, 28th March 2019.

44 Bonnet et al. (2017). *Contribution à la relance du dialogue local à Berberati*. Paris: IRAM.

populations: “When the crisis started in 2013, we were the very first victims of the Seleka. They stole from us all our cattle and racketed those of us who were traders. And when the Anti-Balaka arrived, they considered us to be similar to the Seleka because we have the same religion”. However, their daily context has not changed much because of it: “We see the villagers every day, especially at the weekly markets that occur on different days at Létélé, Ndim, Ngoutéré and Kounpara. We meet with the foreign transhumants for trade, but we also share the same place of worship for our daily prayers”.⁴⁵

Djaafoun and Danedji pastoralists, more appreciated by the local communities, enjoy their “great cohabitation with the settled populations, despite the numerous ethnicities. We have great business exchanges, and women meet on Thursdays and Sundays in the “cantines communautaires”. We also meet at the weekly market. And at the well, the entire population shares water without discrimination”. Yet, whereas past peaceful interactions were strong between semi-settled herders and settled populations, in the subsequent crisis these semi-settled herders have borne the brunt of pillaging and cattle raiding by farmers, as Archamaud and Tidjani (2016) have shown. Their sentiments of loss and anger, particularly among *ArDOS*, have implications for their attitude. Some of the semi-settled herders who have been unable to recuperate their cattle and rebuild their herds, will be less inclined to considerate behaviour towards settled populations.⁴⁶

So, while there is often a clear tendency of rapprochement, memory of past grievances is still an important factor. Another element in play, as indicated in the previous chapter on economic trading relations, is the fact that the interdependence between settled communities and herders that stay during the rainy season is even more important than with other transhumants.

4.2. Settled communities and herders

We asked how different settled communities considered their relations with (other) pastoralists today⁴⁷. The result is very mixed: 34% of all settled interviewees would qualify their relations with herders as hostile and 28% as familial and/or friendly while 22% considers them as only commercial and 26% as entirely non-existent.

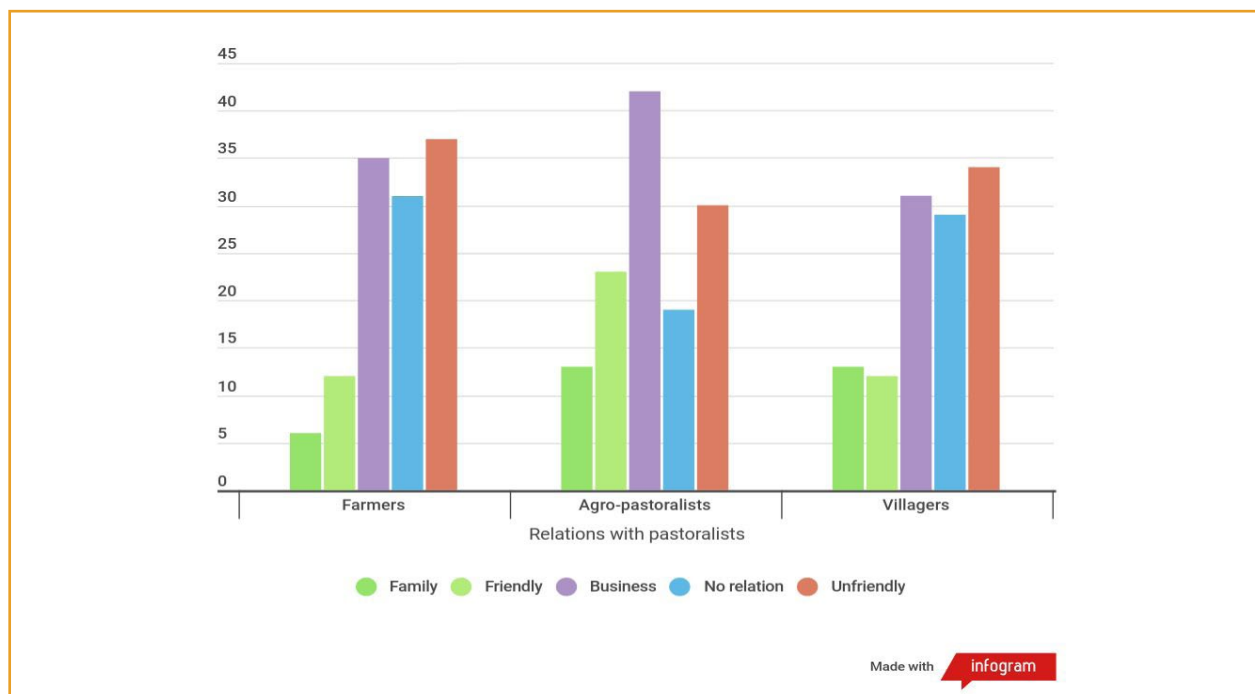


Figure 15. Relations with pastoralists.

45 Both citations from focus group with Semi-settled herders, Létélé, 28 March 2019.

46 Archamaud, L., & Tidjani, I. (2016). Étude des réalités agricoles et pastorales en Ouham. London/Bangui: UKAid/Action contre la Faim/DRC/Solidarités, p 3.

47 Respondents were presented with open questions. Rather than choosing from available options, interviewers logged their varied answers into the right categories afterwards.

Yet, individual responses reveal a slightly different picture, namely, that only the 15% of the settled populations' respondents who qualify their relations with herders as friendly, and the 9% who describe their relations as familial, do not feel fear or grievances. For many settled people, the violence experienced and perpetrated by herders or groups they associate to herders happened too recently and may be an obstacle in warming relations with herders. Male farmers explained that they are "afraid of the transhumants because we are unsafe due to their weapons. Before the crisis, we lived peacefully with them, but after 2013, they joined the Seleka coalition in order to slaughter us." However, most people differentiate between different kinds of herders, based on their origins: "the Mbororo who lived here before the crisis can come back, but the Chadian and Sudanese who have weapons, they are not welcome", insisted women living on the Paoua-Bebingui axis.

Herders assessed their relations with the settled populations much more positively than vice versa. The majority claims to have friendly relations (75% N = 34) with settled people. Only one respondent indicated a hostile relation with farmers, and none of them said that they did not have any type of relations with the local populations. Even herders from groups considered hostile by certain parts of the settled population said that they appreciate their relations with the locals.⁴⁸ One Hontorbé herder mentioned that « the relations with the village are excellent. If security is good, we will call our parents so they can join us. »

4.3. Social relations

Aside from the economic exchanges which mainly occur on market days, interactions between herders and farmers are much rarer today. Whereas participants mentioned numerous occasions to invite or to be invited by the other community, and showed significant willingness to accept such invitations, such interactions rarely occur. This makes for an important potential for social interactions creating stronger relations and building up social capital. There are, however, big differences between the various geographical areas.

4.3.1. Actual interaction

Among local populations, in the past 12 months, only 5% (out of 250) of the Christians interviewed joined Muslims to celebrate Ramadan or Tabaski, and 35% (out of 54) of the Muslims interviewed participated in the celebration of Christmas or New Year's Eve with Christians. Among pastoralists (N = 34), only two respondents participated in Christian holidays. Similarly, only a small proportion of interviewees have attended a wedding from the other community (11%, out of 328 of the local populations and only five herders).

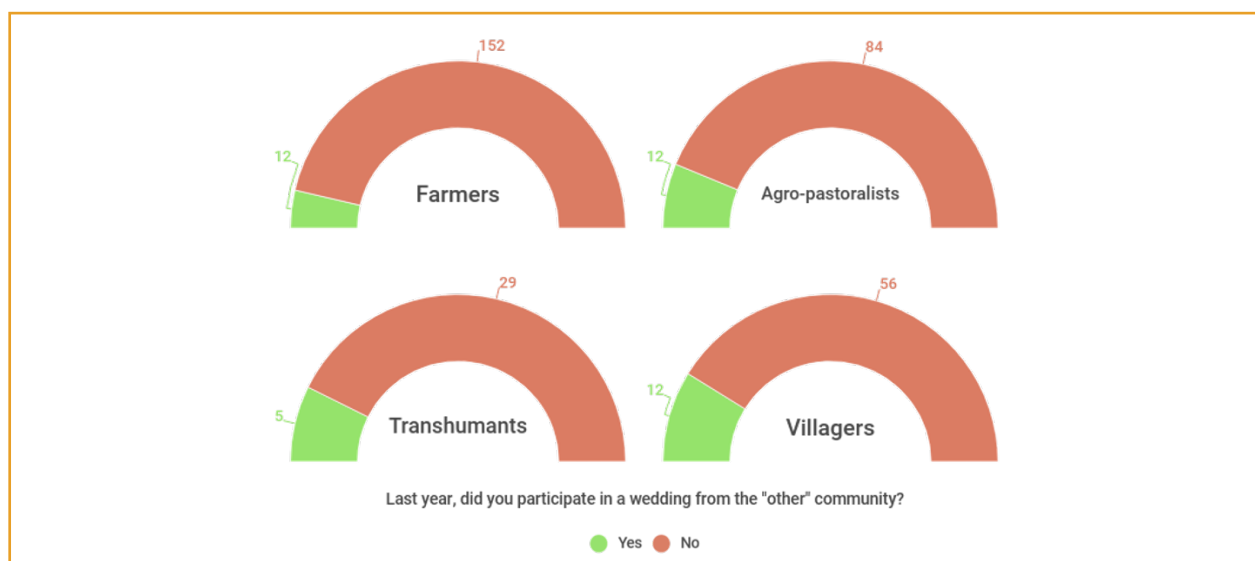


Figure 16. Intercommunity attendance of weddings.

48 Focus group with Bokolodji transhumant pastoralists, Bady, 31st March 2019, and focus group with Hontorbé transhumant pastoralists, Bedaya 1, 10th March 2019.

Funerals appear to be an occasion that is more likely to gather people from both communities. 17% (out of 328) of settled populations' interviewees (76% Christians, 18% Protestants, 6% Muslims) and a bit more than a third of the herder interviewees (N = 34) have participated in the funeral of someone from the other community.

4.3.2. Willingness to interact

Despite the general lack of participation in abovementioned events, most people who had not participated declared to be eager to join if they were invited by the other community. About 96% (out of 328) of the settled populations' respondents would accept an invitation to at least one of these events, host a guest or let their child play with a child from the "foreign transhumants" community. The herders demonstrated an equally high readiness to engage more socially with settled communities (around 97%, N = 34).

When one Mbororo woman had given birth, we were invited to a ceremony to give a name to the child, and in exchange, we were offering sorghum and manioc. Today, we would readily agree to participate again at similar events.⁴⁹

Breaking it down per type of event, all invitations seem to have similar chances of success with around two thirds of the settled population and 85-90% of transhumants likely or certain to accept.

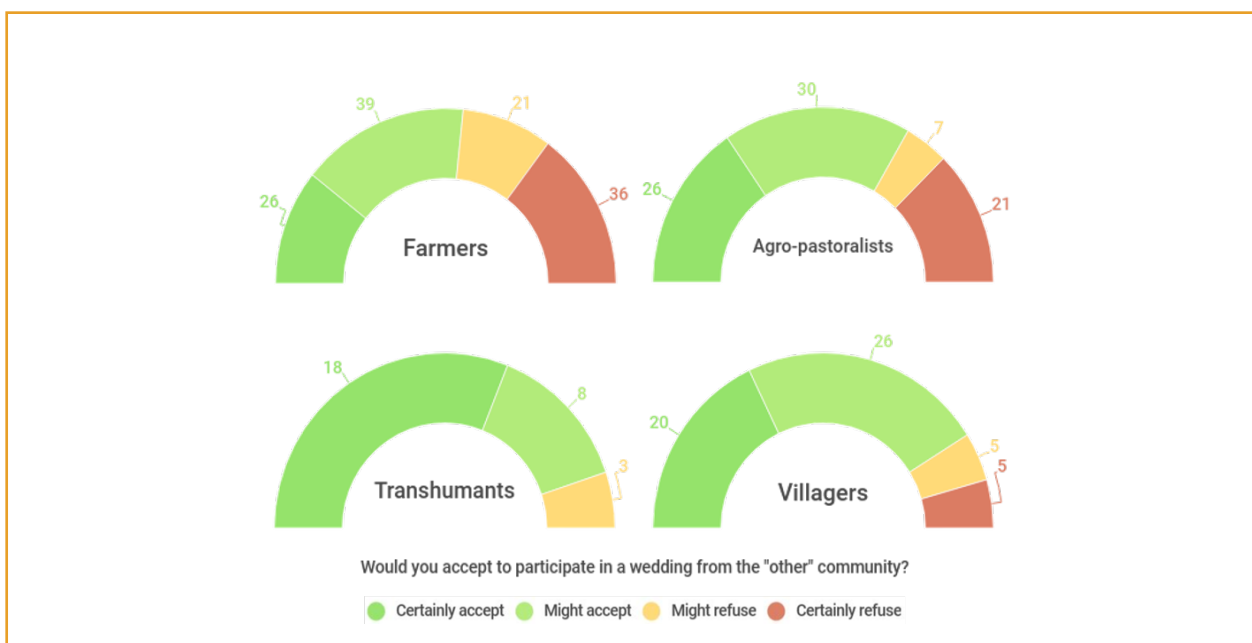


Figure 17. Intercommunal inclination to attend weddings (among respondents who had not attended one in the past year).

The exception is traditional dance. This is the type of social occasion most likely to encourage inter-community attendance. Indeed, in the course of the last 12 months, 57% (out of 328) of the members of settled populations interviewed and more than a quarter of herders interviewed have participated in at least one traditional dance event. And, as Figure 18 shows, most would accept an invitation from the other community for such an event, including more than 80% of the settled respondents.

49 Focus group with Settled women, Betokomia 1, 10th March 2019.

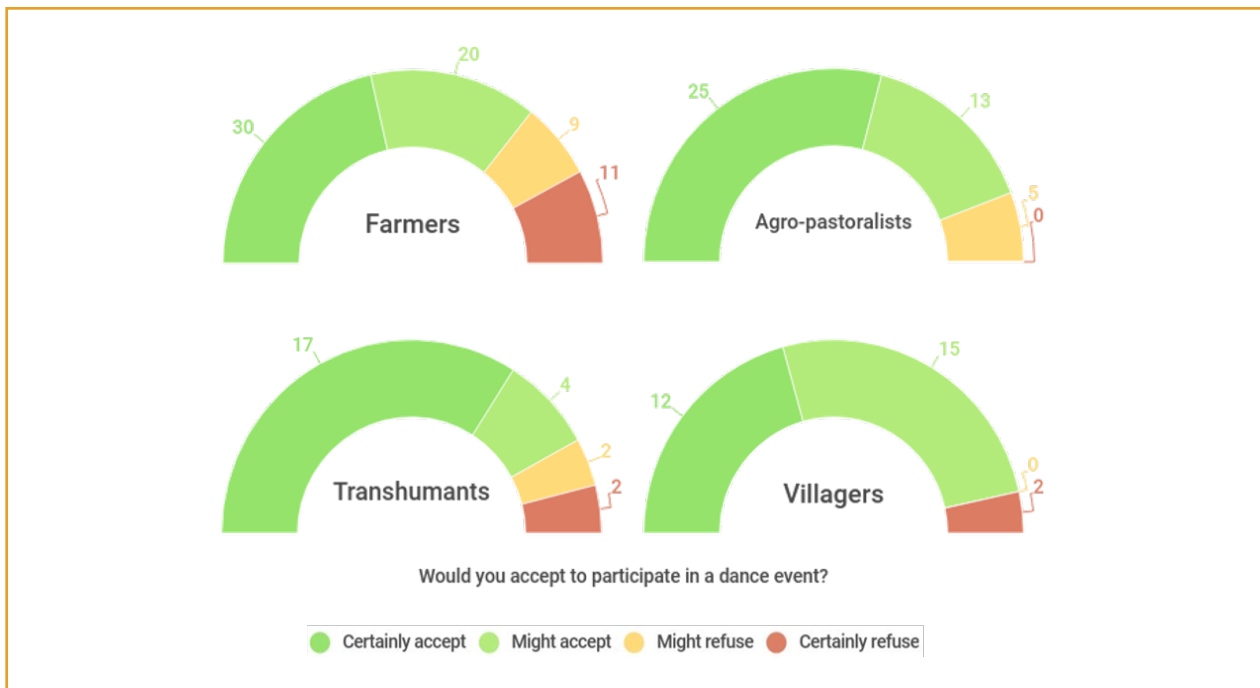


Figure 18. Inclinations to accept invitations for dance events (among respondents who had not attended in the past year).

4.3.3. Geographic divergence

Significant variations exist with some zones having warmer feelings towards social ties than others. In the border zones of Markounda (46 interviews) and Paoua (162 interviews), for instance, only 9% and 11% of settled respondents, respectively, consider their relations with herders to be familial or friendly, compared to 39% in Bocaranga and 33% in Bozoum. Similarly, respondents in Markounda are much less favourable towards the investigated forms of social interaction than in Bozoum (although the same cannot be said for Paoua and Bocaranga).

Our consultations indicate strong correlations between a closed attitude towards social interaction, the absence of functioning dispute settlement mechanisms and the feeling of having been victim of abuse – which are all correlated with the presence of armed groups as a threat to people’s sense of security. However, more research is needed to understand the nature of and causality between these fluctuations. Correlations with the proportion of disputes that are resolved peacefully are further investigated in chapter 8 on dispute settlement mechanisms.

5. SECURITY PERCEPTIONS

An important overlap exists across communities on what is hindering peace. However, settled populations are less optimistic about their security situations than herders. The former hold transhumants responsible, as well as a variety of armed groups, while the latter point to armed groups and bandits.

5.1. Obstacles to peace

When asked what are the biggest impediments to peace, respondents mainly point to the security situation they have to endure, with armed bandits and armed groups being the key challenges. Armed bandits are considered the biggest single obstacle, with 28% of settled respondents and 47% of herders mentioning them. However, many also consider armed groups: especially 3R, which is condemned by both settled people (30%) and herders (26%), and Seleka Renové, mentioned by 24% of settled respondents while only by 9% of herders. In fact, half of respondents (51% in settled communities and 41% of herders) mention one or more armed groups. Both communities also converge on the circulation of weapons as an important obstacle to peace (35% of the settled population and 41% of pastoralists).

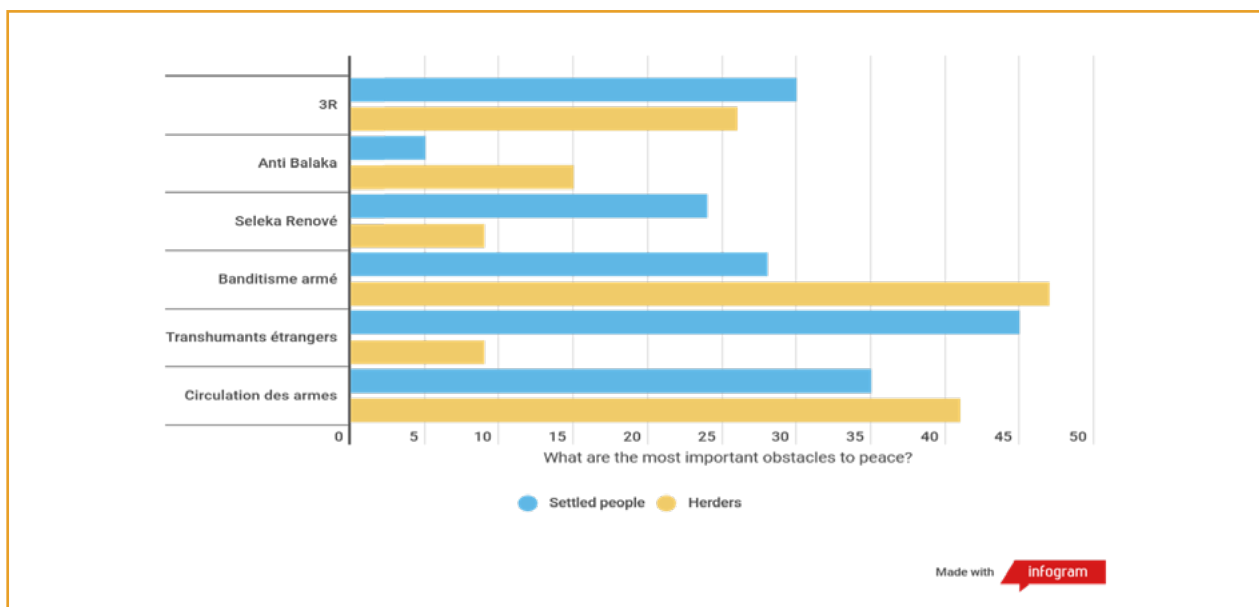


Figure 19. Obstacles to peace.

It is important to note that it can be difficult to discern bandits from armed groups and respondents may have incentives to identify aggressors more “neutrally” as bandits.

5.2. Feeling of and threats to security

On the question of ‘how do you perceive your security’, herders disproportionately answer positively while about half of settled respondents feel the same. Interestingly, particularly settled people who depend directly on farming consider their security negatively.

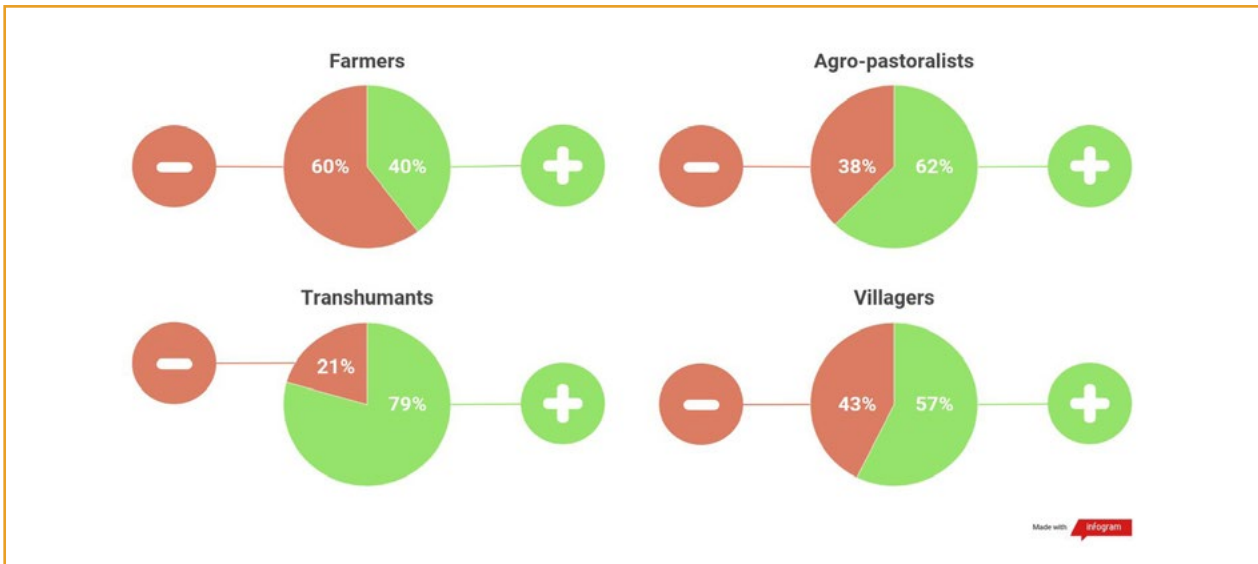


Figure 20. Security perceptions in general.

When we asked respondents of all communities what they considered the main security threats, the picture in Figure 21 emerged.

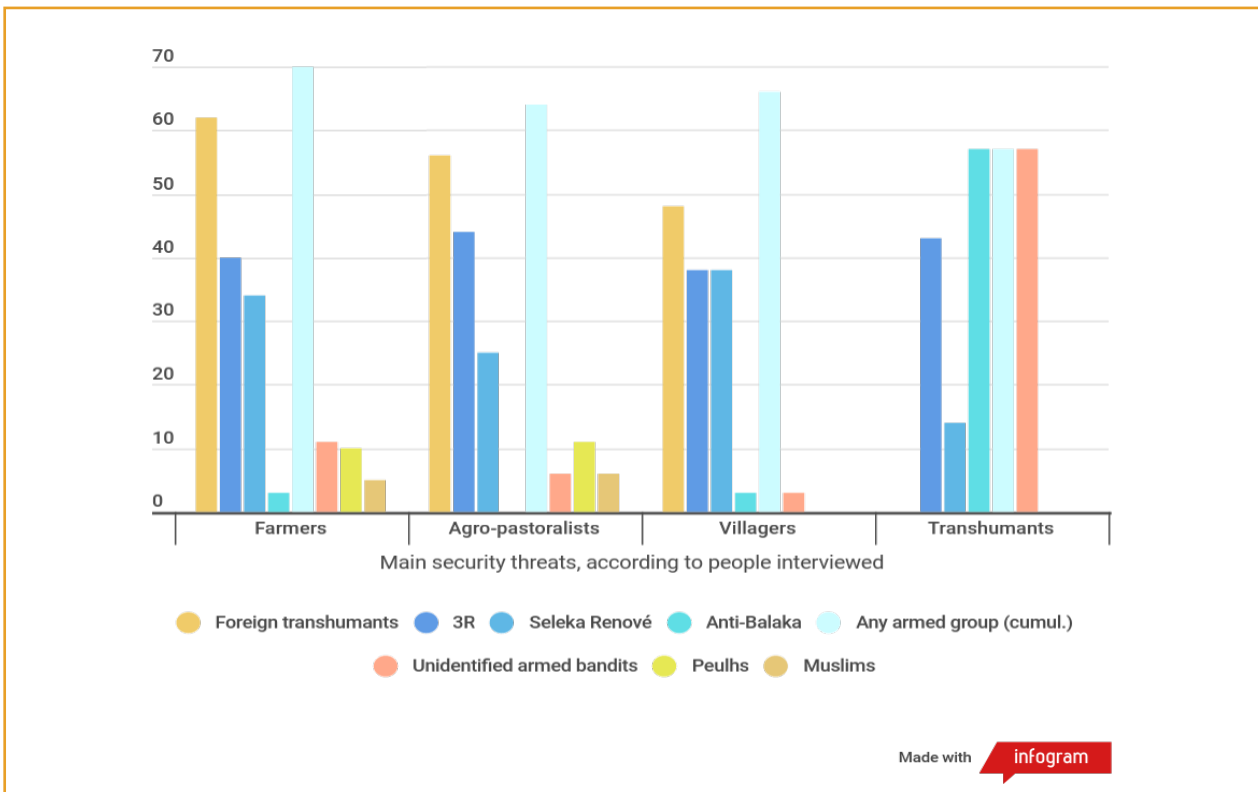


Figure 21. Perceptions of main security threats. Note: only 7 transhumants responded to this question.

Settled people we consulted consider transboundary herders the biggest threat to their security (58% included them), followed by the armed group 3R and ex-Seleka groups. However, when taken together, armed groups were cited by 68% of respondents. 50% of the 328 settled people interviewed perceive their security as bad or really bad. Of these, 63% (104 people) had personal experience of abuse, which disproportionately happens to women (58% of the victims).

Wide geographic variations exist. Comparing the different sub-prefectures; the higher the proportion of people feeling insecure, the higher the proportion of people blaming armed groups for the insecurity. Kouï, Mardkounda and Ngaoundaye – the sub-prefectures containing *communes d'élevage* – are on one end of the spectrum with only 18% of respondents saying they feel secure, and Bozoum is on the other end with 72%. These are correlations and, hence, no causal relationships have been determined, but it is clear that there are wide variations in both the level of insecurity and its perceived causes.

It is important to note that, just like herders measure their wellbeing in terms of the health of their herds, farmers always include food security in their definition of (in)security. Hence, as long as “foreign herders” are responsible for 90% of field destructions (see below), they will remain, in the eyes of the settled population, one of the main drivers of insecurity, sometimes superseding the threat of armed groups.

Almost 80% of herders consider their security situation to be positive, although focus group discussions detected a less positive view among semi-nomadic communities. Herders who responded to the question of responsibility, by contrast to the settled respondents, highlight anti-balaka and unidentified bandits, followed by 3R. In focus group interviews, herders were careful not to blame local populations. Instead, they put the blame of cattle theft or slaughter on anti-balaka, while according to them Seleka, RJ and 3R perpetrate illegal taxation, pillage and racketeering. Only one group of foreign herders accused youth from a local village of harassment, whereas in focus groups with settled farmers the latter often pointed the finger at their own youth for harassing the herders and thereby inviting retaliations and exacerbating tensions (see below).

5.3. Experienced abuse

When asked what kinds of abuse they have been victim of themselves, 60% of the farmers reported the destruction of fields (by trampling herds) as key, with nearly 90% identifying the perpetrator as “a foreign transhumant”. Destruction of houses, including by fire, was reported by 32% of those personally aggrieved. Physical violence (excluding sexual violence) was reported by 23%, 58% of whom were women.

54% identified the perpetrator as being armed groups, with many naming 3R; 37% blamed herders. Sexual violence was reported by 10% of women interviewed who had been personally aggrieved. Since interviews took place in a public setting, this percentage is likely to be an underrepresentation, due to the discrimination or shame such events generate.

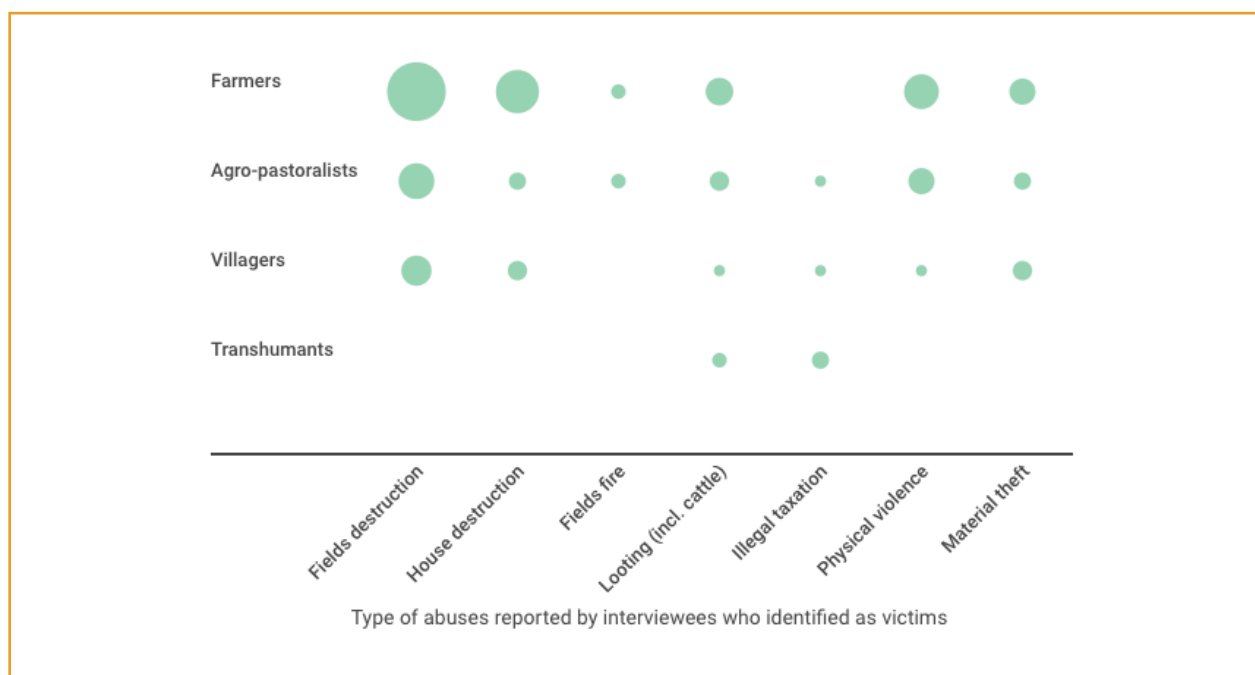


Figure 22. Key abuses reported.

Herders disproportionately emphasise illegal taxation as a key grievance, followed closely by cattle rustling and the killing of cattle. The taxation was attributed largely to armed groups including 3R, RJ and anti-balaka and the Chadian army upon crossing the border (see next chapter for discussion).

5.4. Support for armed groups

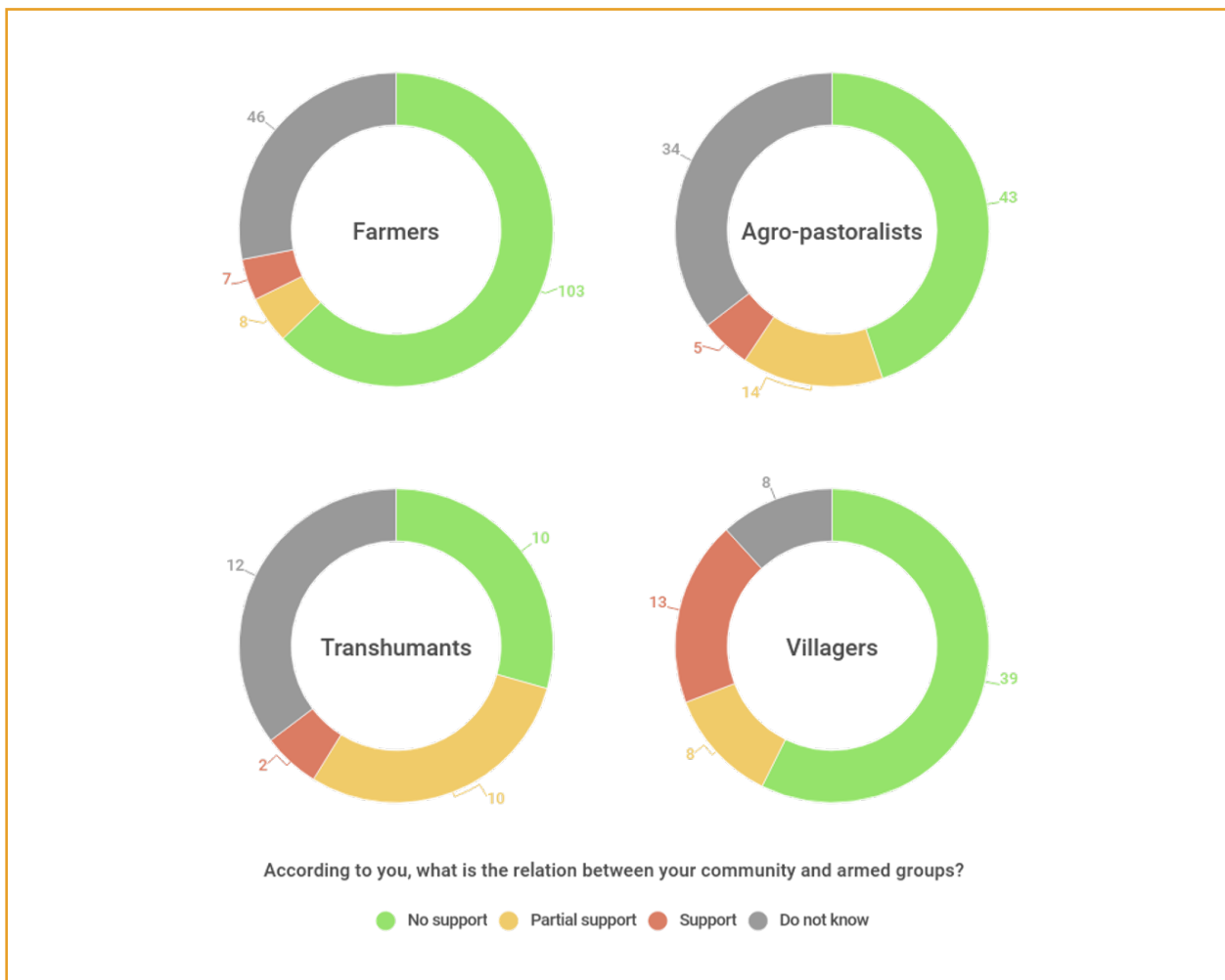


Figure 23. Support for armed groups.

We further enquired into support for armed groups (figure below). Here, the vast majority of settled people indicated they do not support them, and only a tiny percentage felt that some within their community supported armed groups. By contrast, nearly a third of herders expressed this sentiment.

A possible explanation is that the question if there is a relation between “your community” and an armed or self-defence group is an extremely sensitive question. Being accused of hosting armed or self-defence group members in a village, whether it is true or not, is considered as a justification for an attack by enemy groups. Keeping this in mind, 56% of the settled populations interviewed said that their community provides no support to any armed group, 27% said they did not know, 9% that some people from their community support a group and others do not, and finally 8% acknowledged their community’s support to one armed or self-defence group.

From the transhumants, on the other side, only one third said they did not support armed groups and another third said they did not know – leaving one third in some level of support.



Figure 24. Herders at a cattle market in northern CAR.

6. CURRENT CHALLENGES FACED BY HERDERS

6.1. Overall perceptions

This chapter will examine the key challenges herders face, looking separately at transboundary and semi-settled herders. The latter are considered those with a home base in CAR. Both have an ambiguous relationship with armed groups – 3R and to a lesser extent Seleka. While overall, this is a predatory relationship, they also sometimes turn to them for protection and mediation.

Traditional transhumance routes have fallen into disuse with armed groups putting up checkpoints in some places and farmers taking up some of these fertilised lands. Some transboundary herders, consequently, prefer to stay close to villages and main roads to benefit from some level of protection through interaction with the settled communities and MINUSCA and FACA presence; while others prefer to stay away from villages to avoid disputes. Furthermore, several groups of transboundary herders complained of cattle rustling and the inaccessibility of bigger markets.

Semi-settled herders appear to have significantly less friction with settled populations. However, the latter sometimes conflate them with transboundary herders, leading to apprehensions – for which semi-settled communities tend to blame transboundary herders.

6.2. Transboundary and semi-settled herders

6.2.1. Impositions by armed groups

Transboundary herders complain about multiple taxation and racketeering efforts by armed groups. 3R raises taxes composed of a number of cattle or a cash amount at the border-crossing of Herbo between Chad and CAR, which apparently is valid for three months; when they return, 3R demands the same tax. Multiple herders mentioned that it is difficult to escape these impositions, as 3R follows them into the bush (land away from main roads) to impose their taxes. The traditionally busy transhumance route Kabo-Kaga-Bandoro-Sibut is taken by few herders today because of the predominance of ex-Seleka armed groups, but those who did told us they had to pay XAF 100,000 to the Chadian army, and then the same amount (or its equivalent in cattle) to the MPC, FPRC and RJ, in exchange for a document allowing them free circulation for three months.⁵⁰

Indeed, transboundary herders consider themselves as the victims of armed groups. For example, Hanagamba, Bokolodji and Arab Misseriya herders coming from Chad explained they are regularly forced to pay 3R in cattle: “3R says they are protecting us, but the truth is that we are scared of them”.⁵¹

*We have to give six cows to 3R when we cross the border... Armed groups pretend to represent our interests, but they act more like thieves than protectors.*⁵²

However, 3R is not the only armed group racketeering transboundary herders. One group of Misseriya herders from Sudan said that the armed group RJ recruits young villagers on the premise of defending local populations, but then demands XAF 100,000 to let them pass.⁵³ Hanagamba interviewees in Tatale also said they had to pay XAF 105,000 to RJ.⁵⁴ In cases where conflicts arise with Anti-Balaka or an RJ faction, Seleka and 3R are sometimes seen as providing security. One group of herders recalled a recent event: “*Transhumants leading their cattle to the parc of the village to sell them, were attacked by Anti-Balaka. Thanks to the intervention of general Alhabib (Seleka), they were saved.*” Similarly, as discussed below, when conflicts arise with local populations, transhumants sometimes turn to the armed group they paid taxes to for resolution.

One group of transboundary herders mentioned that earlier that month, one of theirs had been kidnapped and beaten by RJ and ‘Seleka’, extorting XAF 40,000 for his release. These herders indicated that girls and old men are usually targeted for kidnapping, which is why many herder groups prefer to travel as young men alone.⁵⁵ Some groups of young herders adopt a ‘wait and see’ approach, indicating that if security turns out to be good they will return and bring their families along for the next season. However, as we will see below, it is exactly because of this risk mitigation strategy on the part of herders of not travelling with family that local communities feel threatened.

6.2.2. Transboundary herders’ perception of armed actors

A large majority of transboundary herders assesses its security as being good and gives credit to the MINUSCA, and to a large extent also FACA, for this improvement.

50 Focus group with Misseriya Transhumant pastoralists, Maitikoulou, 14th April 2019.

51 Focus group with Hanagamba Transhumant pastoralists, Wantiguira, 30th March 2019.

52 Focus group with Bokolodji Transhumant pastoralists, Bady, 31st March 2019.

53 Ibid.

54 Focus group with Hanagamba Transhumant pastoralists, 19th March 2019.

55 Focus group with Ouda Transhumant pastoralists, Galé 1, 11th April 2019.

*We feel protected thanks to MINUSCA.
Every two days, they pass by and inquire about our security.⁵⁶*

As indicated below, MINUSCA deployment along main roads has acted as a pull factor for herders aiming to move about in security.

Some transboundary herders have also expressed they feel safer in areas controlled by 3R, because 3R has proven to intervene on their behalf in conflicts with farmers. Yet, they admit that this comes at the cost of substantial taxation 'because we are foreign'.⁵⁷ Settled populations are generally unhappy with 3R in this role since they feel it acts as a biased intermediary and some complain the compensation payments are often not paid out.⁵⁸

Other transboundary herders have also sought recourse to ex-Seleka to obtain protection or resolutions of conflict. One group of herders explained they went from their cattle camp to the market of Kouki, but that they were attacked by anti-balaka on the way. They obtained the intervention from the ex-Seleka general Alhabib to solve the situation.⁵⁹

6.2.3. Semi-settled herders' relations with armed actors

Semi-settled herders have a similarly ambiguous relationship with armed groups. They voice clear grievances towards the different armed groups that have over the past years raided their cattle, forced them into displacement, and abducted family members to extort money. As the landscape of armed groups has changed so radically over the years, they point towards different perpetrators, ranging from different local anti-balaka factions, which are often difficult to distinguish from armed bandits, to RJ, ex-Seleka and 3R - the latter of which have allied at different points of time in recent years.

Of particular interest is the ambiguous relationship semi-settled herders have with 3R. On the one hand, many of the semi-settled herders have fled to Cameroon or Chad and now engage in practically the same kind of transhumance as transboundary herders. This makes them subject to the same kinds of exactions by 3R as 'foreign' herders. However, 3R seems to tax semi-settled herders much less than Chadian herders.⁶⁰

On the other hand, 3R is largely composed of herders from the CAR-Cameroon borderland, including many who have lost their cattle in the conflicts of the past years, and lost access to pastures in competition with 'foreign' herders. Indeed, many of the displaced semi-settled herders only returned after 3R gained control over these borderlands. Women from the semi-settled herder community explained that they feel fine going to the field to cultivate, because 3R patrols the bush in the area between Bocaranga and Kouki, and the *Ardo* of one semi-settled focus group explained that he sent some of his 'sons' (youth from the clan) to join 3R in order to protect their cattle.⁶¹

Nonetheless, subsequent to taxation, 3R allows the transboundary herders to pasture everywhere, and intervenes in the settlement of disputes.

6.2.4. Tensions between semi-settled and transboundary herders

Semi-settled herders clearly feel they have better relations with settled populations than with transboundary herders. Many herders with a background in CAR have negative perceptions of transboundary herders. The FAO, DRC and CRS (2015) report that, particularly in Ouham, Peulh have accused 'Arabic' or

56 Focus group with Semi-settled population, Markounda, 13th April 2019.

57 Focus group with Hanagamba Transhumant pastoralists, Bogang 3, 12th April 2019.

58 Focus group with Local authorities, Makélé, 30th March 2019.

59 Focus group with Hanagamba Transhumants, Kouki, 12th April 2019.

60 Focus group with Semi-settled population, Létélé, 28th March 2019.

61 Focus group with Danedji Semi-settled herders, 31th March 2019.

Chadian herders of souring their relations with settled communities, of complicity with ex-Seleka groups and other bandits, of exhausting pasture land, i.e. intensive pasturing that inhibits renewal, as well as of spreading cattle diseases because of bad herding practices.⁶² This sentiment is echoed in our focus groups in Ouham-Pendé. In some areas, as semi-nomads fled the conflict, they were replaced by these new herders. Their supposedly more confrontational behaviour has negatively affected semi-settled herders relations with settled populations. *“It is the foreign transhumants who are the source of conflicts in the villages. They are Oudah, Hontorbé and Hanagamba”*.⁶³ For example, Djaafoun and Danedji semi-settled herders interviewed share the same fears as the settled population towards foreign herders, with some saying that these new herders were invited to come to CAR by the armed groups.

Now the population believes that all the Mbororo are the same. Furthermore, they [the foreign transhumants] pretend to be nice to us, but as soon as we turn our back, the young herders hired by big men in Chad try to steal our cattle.⁶⁴

6.2.5. Uncertainty of and insecurity along transhumance routes

Whereas Ouham-Pendé and specifically the area around Kouï, have *communes d'élevage*, Ouham has historically only been a zone of passage for transhumance⁶⁵; however, due to abovementioned disturbances, these patterns have been disrupted. Many herders - from both countries - indicated they used to follow official cattle routes more closely in the past, but as today armed groups have purposefully occupied those, many herders instead keep close to roads and villages to try and benefit from the protection of MINUSCA and FACA⁶⁶ (while others do the opposite: staying away in order to avoid disputes⁶⁷). As Houdabe herders explained, *“We use the corridor of Gore-Paoua-Gani-Lia-Bilakare-Ngoutere-Tolle-Tataly because the security there is ensured by the presence of FACA and MINUSCA”*.⁶⁸ They even chose their routes according to MINUSCA's and FACA's presence. *“Seleka knows our corridors, so we make new routes near the villages in order to benefit from the protection of the MINUSCA and FACA.”*

That herders move closer to farms and villages, in turn, leads to apprehension among roadside settled populations.⁶⁹ Yet, herders also indicated (and community leaders acknowledge) that the years of crisis in which they were absent have been used by farmers to progressively occupy and cultivate on traditional cattle routes and sites of cattle camps, because the soils here are typically more fertile, fertilised by the cattle. This makes it difficult for them to envision routes without getting into trouble with farmers. The limits between pastures and farmland are usually pretty intuitive: water courses and main roads.⁷⁰ Yet, foreign herders without pre-existing knowledge of them nor the necessary language, communication, and negotiation skills, may easily transgress them.

6.2.6. Transboundary herder strategies of risk mitigation

Transboundary herders have multiple strategies to mitigate risks and conflicts. It has already been mentioned that traditionally, herders will move at a distance of settlements and authorities to avoid frictions. Yet, over the past years, the bush has become more unsafe because of the presence of armed groups. Therefore, for some a key strategy has become to move along roads where MINUSCA has a presence, or

62 FAO, DRC, & CRS. (2015). *Situation de la transhumance et étude socioanthropologique des populations pastorales après la crise de 2013-2014 en République centrafricaine*. Bangui: Rapport Conjoint de Mission FAO-DRC-CRS, p. 11.

63 Focus Group with Danedji semi-settled herders, Wantiguira, 30th March 2019.

64 Focus group with Djaafoun Semi-settled herders, Létélé, 28th March 2019.

65 Archamnaud, L., & Tidjani, I. (2016). *Étude des réalités agricoles et pastorales en Ouham*. London/Bangui: UKAid/Action contre la Faim/DRC/Solidarités, p. 1.

66 Here, the route Goré, Paoua, Gani, Lia, Bilakare, Ngoutere, Tollé Tataly is mentioned; an official transhumance corridor occupied by 3R and farmland is Goré, Boguila, Bodjomo, Tondrowala (Voudou), Gaga Dombourou, Yaloké, Boda.

67 15 out of 34 herders interviewed.

68 Focus group with Houdabe Transhumant pastoralists, Tatalé, 19th March 2019.

69 In some cases, they even complained about double standards when the MINUSCA is notified about cattle theft or field destruction.

70 Source: affirmed in various interviews with local authorities.

alternatively, stay within areas under control of 3R. 3R has taken up a very consistent role of broker on the behalf of herders, consistently adjudicating conflicts between herders and farmers and setting up rules for trade between herders and butchers. This role is resented by many in settled populations because they feel 3R is biased, leaving them defenceless in an unequal exchange.⁷¹

Those herders who travel with their *Ardo* explain that he is the focal point for addressing any issue arising with local populations or armed groups. The *Ardo* negotiates on their behalf on each matter, including with 3R. *Ardo* may also form part in local committees to resolve problems with farmers.

Foreign transhumant women going to the market to exchange milk for produce at Létélé explain they avoid the main road and instead take improvised footpaths to avoid harassment from the armed groups, both 3R and RJ; but this carries the risk of moving through fields and frictions with farmers.⁷²

6.2.7. Cattle rustling

As noted in the previous chapter, about 50% of the herders interviewed blamed unidentified bandits for the theft or slaughter of their cattle. It may be that they were reluctant to identify the perpetrators as being young people affiliated to local Anti-Balaka or other self-defence groups, but this could not be verified.

Some focus groups with settled people revealed they consider one of the key sources of dispute to be their own youth raiding transhumant communities' cattle, leading to spirals of retaliation, including burning houses and physical violence, and mistrust.

6.2.8. Difficulty accessing markets

One group of herders in Tollé expressed the desire to visit larger towns and cattle markets like Paoua, Bozoum and Bocaranga to fetch better prices for their livestock, but explain that particular harassment by armed groups around these towns has inhibited them from doing so since 2013.⁷³ Herders consulted in the vicinity of the Chadian border have also expressed that local markets are less well-stocked and more expensive than before, and some prefer to resupply in Chad.



Figure 25. Women from Boyele, near Bozoum, in a focus group.

71 Focus group with Local authorities, Mann, 15th March 2019.

72 Focus group with Danedji Transhumant pastoralists, Létélé, 28th March 2019.

73 Focus group with Hanagamba Transhumant pastoralists, Tollé, 18th March 2019.

7. CURRENT CHALLENGES FACED BY SETTLED COMMUNITIES

7.1. Overall perceptions disaggregated

Among respondents in settled populations, there are significant variations in perceived security when data is further disaggregated geographically, by gender and by age.

There are also significant geographic variations in security perceptions, as outlined in section 5.2. There appears to be a clear correlation between respondents having access to effective dispute resolution mechanisms and respondents having a positive view of their security.

In the sub-prefectures of Bozoum and Paoua, 72% and 59% of the settled respondents consider their security as being good or really good while 67% and 52% of people having experienced a dispute, attested there was a peaceful resolution to it.

By contrast, in sub-prefectures of Kouï, Ngaoundaye and Markounda, the settled population feel more insecure, with only 20% considering security to be good, with also only around one out of five disputes solved peacefully. This is measurably worse in Kouï and Ngaoundaye, where all but one of the 24 farmers interviewed assessed security as being bad or really bad. This underlines the importance of mutually acceptable dispute settlement mechanisms as well as attention for local contexts in addressing conflict dynamics.

The sense of insecurity and absence of functioning dispute resolution mechanisms is further correlated with experiences of abuse. For instance, 74% of respondents in Markounda feel they have been victim of abuse, versus “only” 44% in Bozoum. These regions are also more hesitant towards social interaction with the “other” communities: residents of Bozoum are most inclined to accept invitations, those from Markounda least.

Kouï, Ngaoundaye and Markounda are also sub-prefectures with *communes d'élevage* where pastoralism is traditionally implemented. These communes are run by Lamidos, traditional Peulh leaders. Anecdotal evidence seems to suggest that, in some places, 3R has appropriated the prerogatives traditionally reserved for Lamidos. Further research into the dynamics in these *communes d'élevage*, as distinct from others, could bring to light additional recommendations to stabilize transhumance in these particular areas.

In terms of gender and age, there is a notable difference in security perceptions between women and men: 58% of women feel insecure versus 42% of men. The most optimistic age group is that of people between 26 and 49, with 46% of women feeling secure, compared to 64% of men. People over 50 feels less secure, with 58% of women and 50% of men feeling insecure. But the youngest are the most fearful – those between 18 and 25 years old. 67% of young women feels their situation is not safe as well as a small majority of young men. Overall, it is notable that only 3% of respondents said their security situation was really good and only 4% said it was really bad. The vast majority gave a more moderate response.

	Negative	Positive
Women	58%	42%
Between 18 and 25	68%	32%
Between 26 and 49	54%	46%
50 years or more	57%	43%
Men	42%	58%
Between 18 and 25	52%	48%
Between 26 and 49	36%	64%
50 years or more	50%	50%
All	50%	50%

Table 2 - Security perception of respondents by age and sex.

7.2. Specific issues

7.2.1. Risk profile based on composition of herding groups

If settled people denounce the behaviour of their own youth, they also indicate that foreign herding groups composed of young men travelling without leaders equally form a source of insecurity. As explained in chapter 2, they much prefer herders travelling with older men and families, and want their former, semi-settled, herders to return.

The presence of children and women appears to be highly reassuring for the local populations. They reckon that it means herders will not try to harm them for fear of retribution, and if an incident would occur, it would be easier to negotiate a peaceful settlement.⁷⁴ In particular, female herders are consistently seen as more integrated into the local population and are not subject to suspicion. Herders with families - and this concerns both semi-settled or transboundary herders - actively seek integration with and acceptance by the local population to protect themselves.⁷⁵ They usually inform the local authorities of their imminent arrival and set up camps relatively close to villages. In contrast, young herders travelling in small groups typically keep a low-profile and stay away from villages and the main roads, some of them relying on weapons to protect themselves.⁷⁶

Transhumants travelling with family are also better accepted by the settled populations because they tend to know the area and have experience in leading their cattle in those regions without causing as much crop destruction. When it happens, they are more likely to respect the traditional mediation systems. Young shepherds, on the other hand, are usually described as inexperienced and ignorant of delimited zones, transhumant routes and traditional mediation, not mentioning the fact that they do not speak Sango.⁷⁷

It should be pointed out that, as stated above, many foreign and semi-settled herders travel without family exactly because CAR is deemed too dangerous, potentially leading to a self-reinforcing cycle.

7.2.2. 'Foreign' vs 'traditional' herders

Overall, the settled population considers "foreign herders" as the main culprit of their insecurity (58%), which, as indicated above, includes food insecurity, e.g. through field destruction. As documented by Archamnaud and Tidjani (2016), these are contrasted to 'Central African' or 'traditional' herders that have lived in the vicinity ('our herders').⁷⁸ However, when discussing what makes herders threatening to their insecurity, the composition of the group, as explained above, and whether they are armed, and with what, turns out to be more important.

The herders that we used to know were Danedji, Djaafoun and Hanagamba. We used to collaborate really well. But those coming now are Misseriya, Hontorbe and Sankara, and those only move armed with their arrows, spears, and even Kalashnikovs. says a farmer from a village nearby Markounda.⁷⁹

The criterium people from settled communities use is the ability to speak Sango. Herders who do not are called *sango mafi*, 'those who ignore sango'. "Central African pastoralists" is often specified as the Djaafoun and the Danedji clans, who have been in western CAR for a long time, although they are dispersed throughout Chad, Cameroon and CAR. Settled people state they used to live in "perfect harmony" with these communities.⁸⁰

74 Focus group with Farmers, Bedaya 1, 11th March 2019.

75 Focus group with Settled population, Tollé, 18th March 2019.

76 Focus group with Settled population, Benamkor, 21st February 2019.

77 Interview with the FNEC, Paoua, 13th March 2019.

78 Archamnaud, L., & Tidjani, I. (2016). *Étude des réalités agricoles et pastorales en Ouham*. London/Bangui: UKAid/Action contre la Faim/DRC/Solidarités, p. 23.

79 Focus Group, Settled people, Bondorokete, 15th April 2019.

80 Focus Group, Agro-pastoralists, axis Poua-Bozoum, 4th March 2019.

Conversely, “foreign transhumants” refers to groups of pastoralists who arrived more recently from the neighbouring countries, i.e. after the 2013’s crisis.

Since the outbreak of the crisis, we have been facing waves of new transhumants from the Hanagamba, Oudah and Hontorbe groups. They are essentially composed of young herders who do not respect local authorities and inhabitants. In the past, we used to live in perfect harmony with the transhumants. They were Peulhs, from the Wayla and Wouadouganko groups.⁸¹

7.2.3. Insecure land access

Villagers are unhappy about the non-respect of *zonage* into farmland and pastureland by herders, but herders express the same, so there appears to be mutual non-respect. Farmers explain cultivating far-flung fields has always been a widespread practice, intrinsic to the extensive form of swidden agriculture that can be practiced in this ecosystem – and this tendency has only become more accentuated with changing weather patterns. Because of armed groups and the fact that the transhumance routes of herders have become more erratic, the ‘bush’ has become more insecure, meaning that farmers fear cultivating more far-flung fields.⁸² Particularly women feel uneasy to farm, being at risk of sexual violence.⁸³

Our women do not go the Mboki River anymore. They are too scared to meet transhumants. More than once, they have tried to rape girls who dared to take water there.⁸⁴

Even hunters, in some areas, are afraid to go hunting.⁸⁵

7.2.4. Provocation of herders by settled youth

Interestingly, it is mostly settled people who indicate that part of the reason for insecurity is young men hailing from their own community who maim cattle from foreign herders, leading to violent retaliations. Some young settled men tend to assert that the herders collude with 3R⁸⁶; other members of their community challenge this, saying the herders are racketeered by 3R. It was often butchers or women who accused their own youth of attacking cattle camps. ‘Nowadays our youth prefers to raid cattle rather than working the fields.’⁸⁷ On the axis Paoua-Bilakare, women denounced the fact that ‘some villagers organise themselves in bands to steal and slaughter cattle from the herders. This causes retaliation that ends into murders and burning houses.’

7.2.5. Discontent with conflict resolution

Previously, herders would solve disputes by turning to local authorities such as the mayor. Currently, many transboundary herders who have paid taxes to 3R will also recur to the group in dispute resolution, which is biased towards the herders, bypassing traditional conflict resolution mechanisms. This is for instance the case in Létélé, where commander Adamou of 3R claims the right to settle disputes⁸⁸ and in Bondorokete, where Seleka appears to have forbidden village chiefs to mediate between herders and farmers.⁸⁹

81 Focus group with Settled women, Kokol, 15th March 2019.

82 Focus group with Settled people, Benamkor, 21st February 2019.

83 Focus group with Settled people, Bilakaré, 2nd March 2019.

84 Focus group with Local authorities, Ngoutere, 29th March 2019.

85 Focus group with Agro-pastoralists, Ngoutere, 14th April 2019.

86 Focus group with Young settled population, Pende, 22th February 2019.

87 Focus group with Local authorities, Makélé, 12th April 2019.

88 Focus group with Semi-settled population, Létélé, 28th March 2019.

89 Focus group with Settled population, Bondorokete, 14th April 2019.

As indicated at the start of this chapter, settled populations tend to feel more secure in areas where effective dispute settlement mechanisms exist. By contrast, especially when armed groups perceived to be biased towards herders, such as 3R and Seleka, have taken charge of such discussions, settled populations feel defenceless and, in some instances, have stopped seeking compensation since, even if it is awarded, it does not reach the plaintiff. A villager from Bondorokete, Markounda, explains:

*In case of dispute, it is them (armed groups) who charge exorbitant fines to the herders. Unfortunately, this sum never gets to the owner of the field or he only receives an insignificant amount compared to what the herder has to pay. As a result, farmers no longer want to complain, and armed groups have forbidden the village chiefs to settle between herders and farmers. We have been abandoned.*⁹⁰

This underlines the importance of mutually acceptable dispute settlement mechanisms.

7.3. Perceptions of armed groups

7.3.6. Transhumants and armed groups

Most settled people have nuanced views of the relations between herders and armed groups. They reproach semi-settled herders for having turned to 3R for protection after the crisis.

*It is as if, ever since the appearance of 3R in 2016, our Muslim brothers, with whom we had been living forever, have become too close to 3R and currently consider Sidiki to be their leader, and not the local authorities anymore.*⁹¹

Settled people also assess that transboundary herders are a key reason for the presence of the armed groups, and vice versa, but understand that transboundary herders are victims of armed group racketeering.⁹² For instance, the young men interviewed cited above emphasised that “*the relation between 3R and the Peulh is obvious*”. However, the same group recognised that the same transboundary herders often travel close to the villages in order to find protection and avoid being racketed by the 3R. As explained above, transboundary herders are imposed hefty taxes for temporary license to pasture freely in areas under their nominal control. Nonetheless, settled people reproach herders that they subsequently call on 3R to deal with any complaints from farmers over crop destruction, instead of solving issues on local terms. In Tollé, a focus group participant concisely summarised this set of relations:

*The advent of transboundary herders has created a new phenomenon: the 3R. This armed group pretends to protect them from Anti-Balaka, but the truth is that it steals from them. This [3R's] presence alongside transhumants has deteriorated relations between us [villagers] and the nomads. 3R has transformed itself into the authority, and imposes hefty taxes on transhumants, from XAF 150,000 to 200,000. Once paid, 3R sends them and their cattle grazing in our fields.*⁹³

The tax imposed by 3R supposedly ensures the security and grazing rights (granted by the armed group) for the cattle of foreign herders, in territory under its control. As such, when a farmer is brave enough to complain about fields destruction, these herders will call upon for 3R arbitration.

90 Focus group with Settled population, Bondorokete, 14th April 2019.

91 Focus group with Young settled population, Pende, 22nd February 2019.

92 Focus group with Settled population, Toubanko 2, 31st March 2019.

93 Focus group with Farmers, Tollé, 18th March 2019.

*Ties between 3R and foreign herders appear when a conflict must be solved. Herders will recommend that villagers wait for the arrival of 3R to rule on a matter. They use this threat if villagers insist on being compensated. It clearly shows that 3R are closely connected to transhumants.*⁹⁴

Another focus group participant stated that “the presence of the armed group is a ‘carte blanche’ for the transhumants who think they have every right to move around carelessly and without any restriction”.⁹⁵ As such, settled populations perceive their relation as a collaboration, one that renders them helpless: 75% of settled people felt powerless in protecting their community.

7.3.7. Settled populations and armed groups

Ouham-Pendé and Ouham prefectures have a long tradition of self-defence groups and form a stronghold of the anti-balaka movement. It should not be surprising that only 4% of the settled population consulted consider RJ or local self-defence groups just as responsible for insecurity as armed groups associated to herders - 3R or ex-Seleka. These self-defence groups do not have specific names and are usually identified by their original village name, or simply as anti-balaka. Villages can temporarily mobilise their own self-defence groups to respond to specific threats, only to demobilise again afterwards. This makes it impossible to estimate their numbers. Mobilisation is usually considered as spontaneous and voluntary, although peer-pressure and discrimination (for not being part of the group) can make it hard to avoid recruitment. Usually organised under the leadership of a strong man from the community, there is no clear hierarchy or chain of command.⁹⁶

7.4. Perceptions of security forces

Despite the high level of insecurity perception in the local populations, they displayed a continuous and strong trust in state authority (and to a lesser extent, in MINUSCA) to guarantee their security. Settled populations recognise that MINUSCA’s and FACA’s patrols have re-established peace along the main roads.

*The security situation has greatly improved in the village after the deployment of the Cameroonian battalion of MINUSCA and the FACA [in Benamkor]. But accessing the fields remains difficult.*⁹⁷

When asked who they consider the best actor to safeguard their security, the most frequent answers are all related to the State (FACA, *Gendarmerie*...), while only a few cited the armed groups. 63% of the local populations’ respondents who assessed their security as bad still believed that the FACA is the best actor to protect it.

The positive image of the national army should be contextualised at the prefecture level. Since the independence, every Central African president in power favoured his region and his family. Bangui has always demonstrated particular attention to Ouham-Pendé. This sous-prefecture is the birthplace of President Patassé (1993-2003) and remained a bastion of support for his political party, the MLPC.⁹⁸ After being ousted by François Bozizé (2003-2013), Patassé launched his military movement, the APDR, from Ouham-Pendé, while Bozizé used and armed the self-defence groups in Bossangoa, Bozoum and Boca-ranga to contain the APDR, but also to fight the *Zaragouinas* (*coupeurs de routes*).⁹⁹

94 Focus group with Settled population, Lia, 28th February 2019.

95 Focus group with Young settled population, Pende, 22nd February 2019.

96 See IPIS 2018, *Central African Republic: A conflict mapping*.

97 Focus group with Female settled population, Benamkor, 21st February 2019.

98 E. Chauvin, C. Seignobos, “L’imbroglio centrafricain : Etat, rebelles et bandits”, *Afrique Contemporaine*, 2013/4, p. 127.

99 International Crisis Group, “Central African Republic: The roots of violence”, *Africa report*, n°230, September 2015, p. 3.

Some of these self-defence groups armed by Bozizé later joined the national army, and when the *Seleka's* threat rose up, those who remained in Bossangoa created the first anti-balaka groups. After the FACA's defeat of *Seleka*, many former soldiers went back to Ouham-Pendé to join the ranks of anti-balaka. This explains why the local populations believe that FACA is best positioned to defend their interests.

Many settled interviewees expressed a tangible mistrust towards MINUSCA and other international actors pushing for the disarmament of armed and self-defence groups through Disarmament, Demobilisation and Reintegration programmes (DDR). Indeed, Ouham-Pendé has been subject to a demobilisation programme in 2017 that only targeted RJ and not their ex-Seleka counterparts - who were unwilling to participate - and which has since failed when RJ saw the need to remobilise in the face of increasing violence.

We [the youth] have been naïve by accepting to disarm too hastily, since no one is protecting us now from the transhumants, who are still armed. ¹⁰⁰

The feeling of failure to protect a community once its self-defence group has been disarmed is recurrent. The young men of a village who joined the RJ and handed in their weapons as part of DDR programmes stated that *"since then, the MINUSCA and FACA convoys who are supposed to protect us only cross our village to go from Paoua to Bemal. Until now, they have never stopped to assess our situation. We feel abandoned."* ¹⁰¹

8. COMMUNICATION BETWEEN COMMUNITIES

Many issues revealed by our respondents are in some way caused or exacerbated by a lack of contact and communication between communities. As explained in chapter 2, when asked what would facilitate a peaceful transhumance, the three key responses were a mechanism for dispute settlement, a mechanism for sharing natural resources and informing the local communities in advance of herders' arrival.

If semi-settled and settled communities appear to have more cordial relationships among themselves than with transboundary transhumants, this is in no small part because they share a history and a language, they understand each other's needs and grievances. Whereas it may be unrealistic to aim for similar relations with any and all transhumant groups, many interlocutors suggest that pursuing communication mechanisms can facilitate resolving active issues through dialogue, foster mutual understanding between communities and lead to mutually respected regulations and institutions. It is important to note, however, that such drives for transparency can only work if all communities can fully commit to them. Localised, inclusive discussions will be necessary to address fears and grievances. Agreements on transhumance routes, for instance, are only realistic if such predictability does not imply added risk of taxation or racketeering.

The first part of this chapter examines the potential of dialogue workshops to tackle current issues with all relevant stakeholders. Afterwards, it delves into dispute resolution mechanisms in particular.

8.1. Dialogue workshops

Respondents repeatedly referenced a lack of communication between communities in a variety of forms, such as the implementation of peace or conflict resolution committees, in addition to the examples above.

100 Focus group with Young settled population, Pende, 22nd February 2019.

101 Focus group with Female settled population, Bedaya 1, 11th March 2019.

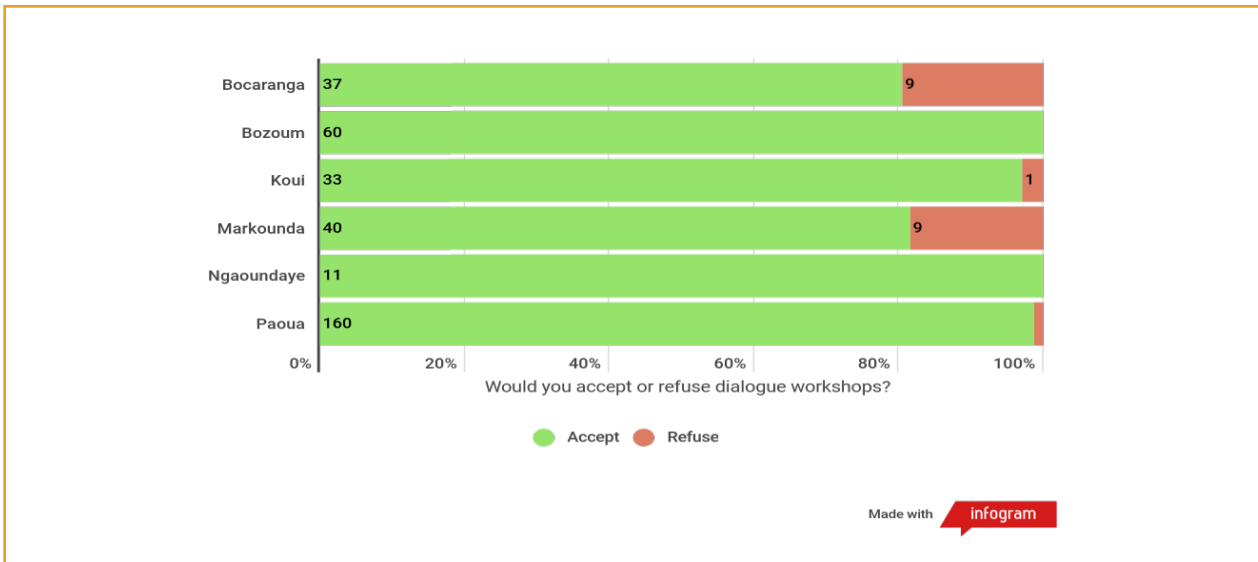


Figure 26 - Readiness of respondents to accept dialogue workshops bringing communities together.

As shown in Figure 26, most respondents expressed their readiness to partake in intercommunity dialogue workshops (94% for settled populations, and 100% of herders) – although strong minority opposition of 24% in Bocaranga and 20% in Markounda warrant extra vigilance in these sub-prefectures.



Figure 27 – Most respondents are ready to accept intercommunity dialogue

Most respondents chose a representative who already has some level of authority. On the side of herders, a small majority said that they could be represented by their *Ardo* or Lamido¹⁰² while 38% of settled populations prefer the Village Chief. However, in a patriarchal society, such as in Central African Republic, this usually excludes women from the role of representative, as well as youth. State representatives such as members of Parliament, the Mayor,¹⁰³ the Prefect and Sous-Prefect do not seem to be recognised as suitable spokesperson for the settled population (11%). Religious or ethnicity-based representation were barely mentioned (10%), and armed group leaders even less (1,5%) in both communities. Such workshops can build mechanisms to permanently facilitate dialogue – or identify already existing initiatives. These mechanisms, if all relevant stakeholders are represented, can effectively discuss and resolve active hurdles their communities are facing, including those discussed above. For instance, it can be the right platform to discuss how disputes should be settled within their area, what processes and steps should be followed and who would be the appropriate intermediary.

8.2. Mechanisms for dispute settlement

In the past, mechanisms for dispute settlement were more prevalent and used. Unfortunately, the disturbances since the 2012-2013 crisis have resulted in a decline of their use and effectiveness. Armed groups have also sought to take over this role, which has further undermined the perceived impartiality of these mechanisms. A majority of the settled population respondents and half of the herder interviewees complain that no solution was found to their conflicts (64% of the cases). Because preferences for mediators vary significantly, a localised and inclusive dialogue is necessary to rebuild these mechanisms.

As shown above, there is clear correlation between a lack of trusted mechanisms to resolve conflict peacefully, and feelings of insecurity in the community. In the sub-prefectures of Bozoum and Paoua, 67% and 52% respectively said their disputes were resolved peacefully and those are also the areas with the highest feeling of security: 72% and 59%. Markounda and Kouï are on the other side of the spectrum with only 18% and 25% of conflicts settled peacefully and low rates of perceived security (24% and 15%).

These are further correlated to the proportion of respondents seeking mediation in case of conflict and those attesting to having been victim of abuse. In a sense, the lack of a functioning dispute resolution mechanisms appears to be part of environments where perpetrators are generally not held accountable and people have lost trust in their ability to be heard and have their grievances redressed. Restoring these mechanisms is thus an important step in re-establishing some form of rule of law and give people a leverage for their agency when feeling wronged.

Furthermore, people who feel less safe tend to have less economic interaction, which can have repercussions for their livelihood, and they also tend towards lower acceptance of social interactions as seen in the previous chapter.

8.2.1. Traditional conflict resolution

As described previously, disputes between nomadic and settled populations have existed since transhumance emerged. The frequency and intensity of disputes, however, has changed. In the past, dispute settlements mechanisms were based on dialogue and compromises.

“Before the crisis, if there was a problem, the two parties would find an amicable arrangement. If they could not agree, the authorities would rule with the support of the technical agents of the pastoralism (FNEC) and agriculture (ANDE). In cases of theft or slaughter of a cow by the population, we always found a solution. After, we would organise a symbolic banquet to settle the agreement around a plate of meat or kola.”¹⁰⁴

With some variation, a typical fashion in which local conflicts were resolved was as follows. If a field was destroyed by cattle, firstly, the victim had to look for an amicable settlement with the pastoralist. Should this fail, the second step was to seek after local authority’s mediation (either the village chief, the mayor and/or the *Ardo*). In some cases, a representative of the ANDE, and a representative of the FNEC

102 In several interviews, the Lamido of Kouï was namely mentioned as the best representative.

103 The mayor can be considered as a “local” person; however, he has not been elected by the people of the circumscription, but appointed by the government in Bangui.

104 Focus group with Settled population, Bondorokete, 14th April 2019.

would join to visit the field to assess the real damages, evaluate the loss and propose a compensation. In Ouham-Pendé, there was no third step, such as involving the state judiciary system as it has been mentioned in the Vakaga. Furthermore, no one has even mentioned the possibility to contest the decisions of the traditional mediators.

Settled population communities reckon that this dispute settlement system was efficient, and so did the semi-settled herders familiar with this mechanism. But many other herder groups are either ignorant of it or would deliberately ignore it. A group of Bokolodji, for example, insisted that they would try to solve the issue on the spot, adding *“we do not give more than XAF 60,000”*.¹⁰⁵ Settled populations accuse transboundary herders of not recognising the authority of local chiefs. *“So we, the farmers, do not want to file a complaint anymore”*, summarised a farmer living along the Markounda-Maitikoulou road. Consequently, this traditional dispute settlement organised by local authority has completely crumbled,¹⁰⁶ and a large part of the settled population (39%) did not search for mediation in disputes that occurred over the two previous years. In these cases, respondents are consistently unhappy and would prefer to settle such conflicts one way or another.

8.2.2. Current conflict resolution mechanisms

It is hard to assess the results of traditional dispute settlement mechanisms, despite the large consensus around their efficiency, because traditional authorities are *de facto* relegated to the side-lines. In their stead, new actors have started to be involved in dispute settlements, such as MINUSCA, FACA, armed groups, or higher state authorities. Higher echelon state authorities and politicians are not trusted because they remain in urban hubs and hardly ever show up. *“A delegation with the mayor and sous-préfet and FNEC came to Benamkor to sensitise both communities on social cohesion. It slightly improved the situation, but today, we still don’t have any peaceful dispute settlement mechanism”*.¹⁰⁷

Nowadays, herders and settled populations have to report incidents to MINUSCA where they are present. This is highly criticised amongst local populations because they feel that peacekeeping forces take cattle theft more seriously than field destruction.

The Cameroonian Battalion of MINUSCA has double standards. When herders report the theft of a cow, MINUSCA and FACA are prompt to report back to local authorities for an inquiry. But when villagers complain about fields destruction, there is a clear lack of efforts from MINUSCA to find the perpetrators.¹⁰⁸

Settled populations lament that efforts for appeasing the situation are only required from their side: *“We attended the awareness campaign for peacebuilding organised by the mayor, the sous-préfet, MINUSCA and FACA. They asked us not to steal or kill cattle, and we have respected that. But despite the same message for herders, they do not respect their engagement”*.¹⁰⁹

Conversely, herders have a positive opinion of MINUSCA, and willingly use it as an intermediary: *“In the case of cattle theft, MINUSCA and FACA will directly alert the Mayor or chef de group to solve the issue”*.¹¹⁰

Another reason for the crumbling of traditional dispute settlement mechanism lays in armed groups’ attempt to monopolise the position of intermediary in any conflict in the area they control, and *“not only for the disputes between farmers and herders, but also for family or couple issues”*, testified a butcher living

105 Focus group with Bokolodji Transhumant pastoralists, Bady, 31st March 2019.

106 In the surveys, 131 incidents were reported from 98 respondents in the last two years. 14 transhumants and 84 from settled populations interviewees have declared a conflictual incident within the last 2 years. 8 transhumants and 25 settled population respondents have declared an additional one. In total, 22 incidents were reported by transhumants and 109 by the settled population.

107 Focus group with Settled population, Pougol, 22nd February 2019.

108 Focus group with Settled population, Pende, 22nd February 2019.

109 Focus group with Settled women, Benamkor, 21st February 2019.

110 Focus group with Djaafoun transhumant pastoralists, Benamkor, 21st February 2019.

on the Bocaranga-Ndim axis. In some areas, 3R and Seleka have forbidden other intermediaries or forms of dispute settlements. Despite this unilateral imposition, none of the settled communities considers armed groups as a reliable, fair or respected authority, and therefore all settled people prefer to avoid their mediation. *“The 3R are completely biased. They always rule against the farmer”*.¹¹¹

However, that perception seems overblown, as settled people also complain that when compensation is due, little to none of it reaches the plaintiff. One group complained that *“it all goes in the hand of Sidiki (leader of 3R), nothing is left for the victim”*; another reported that *“when the compensation has been fixed to XAF 100,000, the plaintiff will only receive XAF 10,000”*.¹¹²

8.2.3. Potential process and intermediaries

There are some differences between the communities in preferences of how to settle disputes. Herders are more inclined to try to settle the issue amicably (26%), which does not seem to be a viable option for settled populations (5%) as they assume herders cannot be trusted for friendly arrangements, especially if they carry weapons. Nearly half of the settled population participants prefers to refer the case to the village chief, in spite of the prohibition on their mediation in areas controlled by armed groups.

The two crucial elements of dispute settlement mechanisms are the process and the intermediaries. Many respondents indicate the need of a multi-level system as used in the past and explained earlier in this chapter.

As for intermediaries, although many prefer the village chiefs, this is far from a unanimous preference and there is significant variation across regions. Different towns have different preferences, e.g. in Markounda only 2% prefer the village chief. Some respondents also mentioned specific people, including from other communities. Others suggest the implication of state agents, such as from FNEC and ACDA. Additionally, butchers have demonstrated privileged relations both with herders, with whom they share the same language and do business, and high standing among local populations, among which they are fully integrated as commercial heavyweights and often linked to locally powerful families. Hence, they could play an important role in any future dispute settlement mechanism, while it should also be observed that they may place commercial interests over the wellbeing of farmers.

Intermediaries' success tends to depend more on the personalities involved than on the station or role of those personalities. In one town, a functionary might be highly effective and well-regarded, in another town, someone with the same status might be partial, corrupt or lazy. In Tatale, for instance, the youth president – a butcher – was considered an effective intermediary by both transhumants and farmers because he speaks both communities' languages and maintains a pacifying discourse towards the youth, who are considered potential instigators of conflict.¹¹³ This shows how context-dependent the question of intermediaries is. There is no consensus. Therefore, a localised and inclusive approach is necessary to build mutually accepted mechanisms.

111 Focus group with Settled women, Makélé, 12th April 2019.

112 Focus group with Semi-nomadic women, Kouï, 31st March 2019.

113 Focus group with Farmers, Tatale, 19th March 2019.

9. SUMMARY OF KEY FINDINGS

9.2.1. Herding and farming can be complementary

Seasonal herding and farming can be mutually beneficial production systems in Ouham and Ouham-Pendé. Herders engage in it to maintain their cattle through the dry season and they understand their dependence on local communities for certain products. Settled communities are aware of the benefits herders can provide as purchasers of their produce and as vendors of meat, milk and, because of their long-range mobility, important secondary supplies including manufactured goods.

Additionally, both production systems can co-exist in space and time *if* clear agreements are made: herders can pasture on fallow farmlands and fertilise it to the benefit of farmers, as well as providing oxen for traction.

9.2.2. Herders and farmers define 'security' in function of their livelihoods

Both herders and farmers have faced considerable violence against their community, but for most respondents, their primary grievance relates to crop destruction, cattle rustling or illegal taxation. Faced with sparsely grown drylands and seasonality of inputs, both groups depend on flexible and shifting access to land and both groups have definitions of security that derive directly from the needs of their livelihoods.

For herders, the health of their herd is imperative; faced with restrictions – whether due to climate change, conflict or political impositions – access to safe pasture is their primary concern. Farmers, equally, frame their security in terms of access to farmland to harvest sufficiently for food and, ideally, for market. Many in both groups are trying to recover from the conflict, rebuilding their herds and farming capacity.

9.2.3. Access to land has become unpredictable for all

Before the crisis, many farmers and herders could build on decades of carefully built-up relations, agreements and conflict-resolution mechanisms. Since then, farmers have encroached upon pasture lands (*communes d'élevage*) and transhumance routes and, in turn, herders encroach upon farmland.

Meanwhile, new groups of herders have begun to exploit the pasturage of Ouham-Pendé, who are often unfamiliar with the agreements and mechanisms from the past. Armed groups also change the incentives and power dynamics within these relationships. New ways have to be found to settle conflicts over land-use, or old ways should be rekindled.

9.2.4. New transhumance routes

Herders seek safe transhumance routes that provide enough forage and water for their herds. Traditional transhumance routes in Ouham and Ouham-Pendé have now become either unsafe or occupied by farmers. Similarly, farmers have encroached on traditional pasture lands and corridors. This, in turn, makes it possible for herders to defend their encroachment on farmlands by pointing out the unavailability of traditional corridors and pastoral resources.

Certain herder groups tend to stay close to villages and main roads to enjoy some level of protection from FACA and MINUSCA as well as greater interaction with local communities. Whereas local communities strongly prefer to be informed of herders' arrival in advance, herders do not regularly comply, fearing attracting the attention of armed groups for additional taxation or racketeering.

Other groups – often having started transhumance in the region more recently – appear less knowledgeable or less mindful of previous agreements. They consider that, once they pay taxes imposed by armed groups, they thereby obtain a pass to graze anywhere in a given area.

9.2.5. Young herders provoke conflicts

The changing character of pastoral systems has important consequences for relations between herders and farmers. Occupational transboundary herders, hired to tend cattle owned by wealthy Chadian families, instil fear in local communities and were identified as most prone to maladaptive practices; they travel in groups of young men, are more likely to be armed, not to speak local languages, trample fields and flee at night, lack clear spokespersons to engage in dispute resolution with and flee in case of disputes.

By contrast, herders travelling with women, children and older members of the family are more risk averse, tending to have more social and commercial interactions with settled communities for, among others, economic and security reasons.

9.2.6. Fear for young herders

On the other hand, the negative perception of waged herders' behaviour leads many local communities to become alarmed upon seeing young herders without their family – they can become defensive, even before any interaction. This leads them to sometimes fail to distinguish between hired herders and groups of young men who are tending to their own family's cattle, monitoring security for a potential return to safe transhumance with their families in future. This is to the detriment of semi-settled herders and transboundary herder-owners.

9.2.7. But young villagers provoke conflicts too

Village youth have also emerged as a source of conflict and they are accused by people from their own communities of attacking or rustling cattle, often under the pretext of the collusion between herders and armed groups. This incites violent retributions from herders. Some respondents explained this by referencing the lack of livelihood opportunities in the region.

9.2.8. Local dispute resolution mechanisms have been eroded

In many places in north-western CAR, herders and farmers developed, over time, accepted dispute resolution mechanisms, embedded in social cohesion and mutually beneficial exchange of produce. Changing patterns of seasonal migration and the encroachment of armed groups into security and judicial roles traditionally played by the authorities, have eroded these systems, leading to less than one third of disputes being settled peacefully.

This consultation shows direct correlation between respondents' access to and confidence in a peaceful dispute resolution mechanism, with experience of abuse and those respondents feeling safer and with more economic and social interaction with 'the other'. This is, in turn, important for the functioning of livelihoods in all communities.

The lack of a functioning dispute resolution mechanisms appears to be part of environments where perpetrators are generally not held accountable and people have lost trust in their ability to be heard and have their grievances redressed. Restoring these mechanisms is thus an important step in re-establishing some form of rule of law and give people leverage for their agency when feeling wronged.

9.2.9. State service delivery has been displaced or replaced by armed group governance

Some armed groups have actively sought to appropriate roles and prerogatives normally associated to state authorities, including security, conflict resolution, taxation, governance of cattle markets and licensing cross-border transhumance. In some places, settled populations complain this has created a new public authority which is perceived to be biased in favour of herders, to their own detriment.

At the same time, delivery of other state services has ceased in many areas, including veterinary and the maintenance of water infrastructure, often due to insecurity caused, at least in part, by armed groups. This is leading to increasing risks of human and cattle-borne diseases.

In the absence of effective state governance in certain areas, armed groups have developed protection roles to cater to specific constituencies: 3R and ex-Seleka groups for herders; and RJ and anti-balaka groups for farmers. This militarisation of protection of one group against the other damages social cohesion between the communities and erodes local mechanisms to mediate peacefully in conflicts.

Many settled groups referred to an asymmetric disarmament and demobilisation, involving only armed actors hailing from settled communities. With FACA and MINUSCA insufficiently present, they feel defenceless and sometimes even abandoned. Most settled populations and a significant part of herders look to FACA, and to a lesser extent MINUSCA, for security.

9.2.10. Armed groups predate on herders, but offer them access to farmland and sometimes protection in return

In many places, armed groups have ventured into racketeering, which tends to focus on capturing the wealth concentrated in cattle. These rackets are more or less sophisticated, but all undermine local peace and relations between herders and farmers. 3R, in particular, has imposed transhumance taxes promising, in return, protection and free access to pastures for a fixed period. This reduces the incentives for transboundary herders to have regard to local authorities, customary taxes and conventions around land-use, instead referring to 3R for conflict resolution.

In some places, herders feel genuinely safer with 3R in charge, when they consider their experience of the alternatives. In other places, the opposite is true and herders are intimidated by 3R.

3R has also encroached on the marketing of cattle, prohibiting butchers and traders from accessing cattle camps directly in some places, and replacing local authorities as controllers and taxation of cattle markets.

Whereas anti-balaka groups are generally less organised, RJ has also been involved in similar racketeering operations.

9.2.11. Everyone wants more social interaction and peaceful settlements

Despite two thirds of respondents having had direct experience with conflict, almost all villagers and herders assert an openness to more social interaction, both casually and engaging in rituals or festivities. Such interaction rarely occurs at present, but they have a potential to increase social cohesion.

Similarly, most herders and nearly all farmers wish for a restoration of peaceful dispute settlement mechanisms and, hence, an improved security situation, and would readily partake in intercommunity dialogues. As indicated above, lack of such peaceful resolutions goes hand in hand with lower (acceptance of) social interactions. People who feel less safe, in turn, tend to have less economic interaction.

Communities appear to have a nuanced understanding of each other's needs and constraints, which is conducive to finding common ground. Many settled people understand the predatory nature of the relationship between herders and armed groups, especially 3R, and are aware of the high taxes they are required to pay. At the same time, settled people resent it when herders turn to the armed group for dispute resolution. Herders, on the other hand, are careful not to blame settled communities for their misfortunes.

In Ouham-Pendé, grievances and resentments are expressed against groups as defined by their livelihood – herder or farmer – not in terms of their ethnicity or religion. This contrasts with the situation in other parts of the country.

9.2.12. Variation across time and space

There were very notable geographic differences in the attitudes each group had towards the other, the social and commercial relationships they enjoyed and the trust people had in different conflict resolution mechanisms. Different experiences and different actors along different axes and in different areas have led to a wide variety of responses.

Respondents from different places also propose distinct remedies to their issues with various actors involved. All need bespoke, localised responses to address their concerns and needs, and to prevent conflicts turning violent.

10. LOCALLY OWNED AND WORKABLE RECOMMENDATIONS

Settled, semi-settled and transhumant communities are all looking to ensure their livelihoods and their security, which, for them, are closely intertwined. For some, this means maintaining the health of their cattle; for others it is about growing sufficient crops for the next season; others, still, have diversified their livelihoods and have multiple occupations.

These activities do not necessarily put the various communities in competition with one another – quite the opposite, as respondents are keenly aware of their economic interdependency. However, whereas friction between communities has existed since the dawn of transhumance, the security situation, changing transhumance dynamics and recent history of Ouham-Pendé and Ouham have seen a breakdown of previous relationships and agreements, and caused a rise in violent conflict over the past years.

The key to both lasting peace and economic regeneration is rebuilding these relationships in ways that are valuable to all communities. Interdependency between livelihoods is a firm foundation for boosting economic and social interaction, thereby making communities more resilient and increasing the opportunity cost of violence.

Respondents identified a number of recommendations in the following three key thematic areas:

1. Mechanisms for improved communication between communities;
2. Improved security;
3. Livelihoods and economic activity.

Geographically bespoke solutions

Respondents from different parts of the prefecture gave widely varying information about the challenges they face and their recommendations as to how best to tackle the challenges in their specific context. In turn, the situation in Ouham-Pendé is very different to that in Vakaga or Bangui. Those seeking to intervene should avoid the temptation to take a ‘one-size-fits-all’ approach; implementation of these recommendations will need distinct approaches in each area, taking into account existing initiatives and local needs. This will require discussions to be held at the local level with all necessary stakeholders, to plan interventions tailored for each unique situation.

10.1. Mechanisms for improved communication between communities

In every area, respondents referred to issues linked to a lack of communication. Many settled people, for instance, complained they do not know which routes herders will take, that some herders are not aware of previous agreements or that they are forced to participate in a dispute resolution procedure they do not deem fair. Herders (50%) and farmers (65%) both complain about the lack – or dysfunctionality – of such mechanisms.

Herders (71%) also note that there are no mechanisms to negotiate the sharing of natural resources, especially to know where they can go with their herds without coming into conflict with farmers.

The challenges faced by both communities evolve rapidly due to political, climatic and seasonal variations. Most respondents therefore propose putting in place longer term mechanisms for contact between communities, which can be used to help the communities adapt and respond to issues as they arise. Such mechanisms can build resilience to conflict by rebuilding agreements that are necessary for the transhumance to occur peacefully and in a way that enables all communities to benefit from its advantages.

Any interventions need to:

- Respond dynamically in an evolving, fragile, conflict-affected context;
- Be tailored to the unique local situation;
- Be inclusive, to avoid unintended consequences, particularly for women and other potentially marginalised groups;
- Be mutually beneficial, creating 'peace dividends'.

Multiple respondents therefore suggested setting up consultative committees, bringing together representatives from the myriad different communities and stakeholders, to work through the nuanced challenges and to tailor specific recommendations to each local situation. All herders and 94% of settled communities interviewed are ready for such intercommunity dialogue.

10.1.1. Consultative committees

The committee's role should be to bring together voices from different communities and build consensus around workable solutions to their common challenges. This is in line with the National Plan for Recovery and the Consolidation of Peace,¹¹⁴ which has included "the establishment of concerted structures for the management of transhumance" in its objectives.

Committees should act as a conduit for information to and from disparate communities, and engage proactively with the authorities, development actors, more formal peace processes and any pre-existing peace committees. They should remain accountable to the communities they represent and engender predictability for all communities by sharing intentions and making agreements.

The committee's composition will need to ensure its roots in local communities, providing information from a diverse range of stakeholders and remaining accountable to those who sent them. They should be a representative sample or cross section of the communities they represent, rather than being their formal representatives, in order to ensure the voices of marginalised groups are also heard.

The committee's primary task should be to identify and respond to the challenges faced by their communities including, but not limited to:

- Establish a mutually acceptable framework within which disputes between herders and farmers may be resolved (see following section) and define a fixed set of tariffs or calculations for damages to fields and crops or cattle. This should include an evaluation of any pre-existing mechanism, perhaps with proposals for its adaptation to make it more inclusive and fit for purpose.
- Establish or re-activate migration conferences or other communication mechanisms that ensure villagers have advanced notice of the timing of herders' arrival so they can prepare themselves. Special arrangements should be made when incoming herders are groups of young men or if they are new to the area, to understand their intentions, identify a Sango-speaking spokesperson and inform them of rules, existing mechanisms and the surrounding geography.
- Engage with owners of very large herds of cattle in Chad, working collaboratively with them to plan the movement of their livestock in a way that does not cause conflict or put either their cattle or local populations at risk. This should include agreements on route plans, timing and traceability, the composition of herder groups to include a Sango-speaking spokesperson, ensuring any hired shepherds

114 Plan National de Relèvement et de Consolidation de la Paix 2017-2021.

have the skills and numbers sufficient to guide and control the herd, explaining the consequences of herders travelling without families, discouraging the (open?) carrying of arms and moving at night.

- Design mechanisms to build consensus around sharing land and other natural resources. Some traditional corridors and pastures have been largely abandoned by herders and some parts have been taken up as farmland. Agreements may need to be negotiated on a season-by-season basis – in the spirit of the 2004 Decree on the Regulation of Transhumance¹¹⁵ – to respond to evolving security needs, to avoid crop damage to maximise opportunities for synergetic dynamics between grazing and farming as cattle fertilise fallow land.
- Engage with young people, including with youth representatives to the committee, to ensure youth have a forum within which they may air their grievances and to seek peaceful ways to redress perceived injustices without recourse to violence. This engagement should include a plan to create awareness among local youth of the consequences of conflictual practices, such as interfering with cattle or taking ‘justice’ into their own hands.
- Engage with armed groups to discuss their purported role in providing security and mediation services in exchange for taxation, including in the light of the Khartoum Agreement.
- Negotiate security plans along transhumance corridors, finding mutually agreed consensus between the different communities and the different security actors, including FACA, the gendarmerie, MINUSCA and, perhaps, also armed groups.
- Organise occasions for social interaction for members of all communities, such as traditional dances or around religious festivals.

The main challenge of this approach will be to weave local inclusion and contexts into higher level agreements around transhumance throughout one or more prefectures.

The CAR National Government and local authorities could

- Engage with their Chadian counterparts, both between national government ministries and at the prefectural level, to reach bilateral agreements – building on the 2012 agreement on cattle movements¹¹⁶ – on security, taxation and regularisation of movement of people, goods and livestock across shared international borders, as well sensibilisation campaigns on both sides of the borders. This might have regard to previous accords.
- Establish national guidelines with best practices for the formation of local consultative committees, empowering them with an official status and description of their tasks and responsibilities.
- Review and/or reinforce legislation on seasonal migration, pastoralism and farming, including on *communes d'élevage*, to facilitate synergies, allow for flexibility and strengthen intercommunity relations.
- Connect consultative committees to national actors including government ministries, technical services and the security forces, to discuss the content of transhumance agreements, ongoing security concerns and aligning them with their operational objectives.

International organisations can, with the long-term aim of building lasting solutions,

- Support the installation, training and coaching of Consultative Committees. It is vital to their success that the composition is well balanced and includes all communities as well as both sexes, all age groups, and representatives of all relevant stakeholders.
- Provide support and training in non-violent communication, with a particular focus on those whose voices are sometimes excluded, including youth, women and minority groups, as well as for those who use violence to have their voice heard.

115 Arrêté N° 0033/MAE/CAB/04 portant Réglementation de la Transhumance en République Centrafricaine, 24th October 2004.

116 Accord Bilatéral de Coopération Technique entre la République Centrafricaine et la République du Tchad en Matière de Mouvement du Bétail, 30th October 2012.

- Facilitate communication within and between Consultative Committees across prefectures so they can share know-how and learn from each other's experiences.
- Support the committee with technical assistance and external experience in building the mechanisms they aim to implement.
- Continue to perform community-based research on challenges and opportunities, supporting effective communication between Consultative Committee members and the communities they represent, to inform consultative committees' agenda, mechanisms and solutions.

10.1.2. Mechanisms for dispute settlement

Over two thirds of settled respondents and half of herders called for access to a fair and agreed mechanism for dispute resolution in the event of conflict or damage.

The key to success is to have a process that is quick, predictable, not too expensive and mutually acceptable.

There is no call for the arbiters to be impartial, only fair, with damages being paid to the party that suffered loss.

The two crucial elements of a workable dispute settlement mechanism, according to respondents, are that the process and the intermediaries are agreed upon:

- **Process:** Many respondents indicated the need of a multi-level system, starting from attempts at amicable solutions, and providing intermediaries or mediators if these negotiations are unsuccessful.
- **Intermediaries:** Although many prefer the village chiefs, this is far from a unanimous preference and there is significant variation across regions. In one town, a functionary might be highly effective and well-regarded, in another, someone with the same status might be perceived to be biased or incompetent.
- The key is that they are agreed upon by both parties and not imposed on one party by the other.
- In Tatale, for instance, the youth president is considered an effective intermediary by both transhumants and farmers, because he speaks both communities' languages and maintains a pacifying discourse towards the youth, who are considered potential instigators of conflict.

National CAR authorities could publish and share clear guidance on local dispute resolution, including:

- An agreed tariff of compensation awardable in case of damage to crops, livestock or other property, to avoid excessive awards that lower the incentive of using these mechanisms and increase the incentive to flee without paying or to turn to an armed group.
- A schedule of fees chargeable by the authorities for arbitrating disputes, to avoid excessive fees that deter people from using their services.
- Publicising the identity of the appropriate authority responsible for dealing with different criminal and civil grievances, including theft of cattle, damage to crops, injury or death following an altercation, sexual violence, arson, theft, etc.

International organisations can

- Train potential intermediaries in mediation and arbitration techniques, including on the importance of fairness and finding a mutually acceptable solution to conflicts. This will help them resolve disputes in a way that encourages protagonists to use their services, instead of taking the law into their own hands.
- Train women as mediators and arbiters to ensure a gender-sensitive approach to peacebuilding and justice.
- Build a network of trained mediators across prefectures, so they can share know-how and learn from each other's experiences.

10.2. Feeling of safety

When asked to list **the main obstacles to peace**, most respondents refer to armed groups (51% of settled people and 41% of herders) – especially 3R (30% and 26%, respectively) or Seleka (24% and 9%, respectively) and Anti-Balaka groups (5% and 15%, respectively), depending on the location. Respondents and herders in particular also refer to armed bandits (28% and 47%, respectively) and circulation of arms (35% and 41%, respectively). Clearly there may be some overlap, as an aggressor might be described as an armed group by one respondent and as bandits by another.

Half of the settled population judge their security situation as negative, and they believe that the key actors responsible for the insecurity are the transboundary transhumants and a variety of armed groups (61% overall; 43% 3R; 33% Seleka). Most transhumants and semi-settled herders interviewed also admit to being afraid, mostly of armed groups.

Section 10.1 suggests several ways to address the causes of fear felt by settled and semi-settled communities towards transboundary transhumants through improved communication. The data also revealed additional recommendations to address these fears.

Feeling unsafe reduces interaction between communities and leads people to act defensively in the face of perceived threat. This can, in turn, lead to negative self-reinforcing cycles and eventually to violence. For instance, many in the settled populations want herders to disarm and to travel with their families. However, many herders cite security concerns as the reason they carry arms and leave their families in their *zones d'attache*.

Settled populations overwhelmingly see FACA and law enforcement and, to a lesser extent MINUSCA, as **the key actors to defend them** from these threats and keep the peace, although many feel only they themselves can ensure their security. Many herders tend to agree, although they have a more favourable view of MINUSCA. In all communities, a significant proportion of interviewees also mention the role of local authorities such as mayors and village chiefs in keeping the peace, with some even explaining the importance of FACA and MINUSCA in reinforcing their authority.

National CAR authorities could

- Build a strategy of safeguarding transhumance routes and align this with locally agreed corridors.¹¹⁷ This will increase the incentive on transhumants to use agreed routes instead of using clandestine border crossings and changing their trajectory, arriving in unforeseen places unannounced. Such initiatives could go hand in hand with FNEC and other technical agencies, restarting activities such as vaccinations and veterinary service delivery.
- Build on the endorsement of state security forces and local authorities, strengthening their legitimacy and restoring their authority by engaging with local communities through the aforementioned consultative committees, working collaboratively on shared challenges.
- Evaluate and rebalance DDR efforts, taking into account varying local contexts, so no communities feel like they are giving up their defence while their perceived adversaries or threats are not.
- Establish 'Weapon-free zones' on the model of MINUSCA's efforts in urban areas, which could be extended to 'hotspots' of herder-farmer interaction, such as (cattle) markets, transhumance routes and watering points or streams.

International organisations can

- Support the consultative committees' engagement with security forces to further improve confidence in these institutions, and to support them in working effectively for the benefit of all sectors.
- Support consultative committees in engaging with armed groups to identify gaps in state presence that need to be addressed.
- Implement innovative communication tools to circulate up to date triangulated information of security hazards sourced from local communities.

¹¹⁷ Participants of focus group with Houdabe transhumant pastoralists, 19th March 2019 said this worked well along the corridor Gore-Paoua-Gani-Lia-Bilakare-Ngoutere-Tolle et Tataly.

10.3. Livelihoods and economic activity

All communities' main concern is their livelihood. Many people have a very narrow margin; one compromised harvest or the loss of part of their herd often means a drastic change to their lives. Access to markets to monetise their produce, as well as household's diversification of livelihoods to spread risk, are vital in promoting resilience to shocks and resilience to the effects of climate change.

Intercommunity trade, as well as diversification of livelihoods that are mutually beneficial and offer exchange in goods and services between communities, also increases resilience to conflict, since this increases interdependence and hence the opportunity cost of violent conflict. This, in turn, leads to improved social relations and feelings of security.

There is significant scope and demand for diversification of livelihoods beyond the key activities of farming, herding and the trade derived from them. If these can be intensified, all communities could reduce their dependence on one occupation, becoming more resilient to shocks.

This diversification needs to be undertaken having regard to the particular economic dynamics of Ouham-Pendé and Ouham. To achieve this, barriers to trade must be examined as much as opportunities for economic development.

10.3.3. Boosting economic activity

93% percent of settled populations and all transhumants are open to intercommunity trade. 90% of farmers and 97% of herders consider selling their surplus to the one another is an important part of their livelihood. Several members of settled communities believe that the lack of livelihood opportunities for youth as a reason for the latter taking part in cattle raiding.

Importantly, intercommunity trade in the past brought increased social interaction and formed the basis for strong community ties. It is essential for all to maximise intercommunity trade of goods and services.

The Central African government has realised the importance of targeting an economic upturn and has therefore inscribed it as one of the pillars of its National Plan for Recovery and the Consolidation of Peace 2017-2021.

National CAR authorities could, in line with the National Plan,

- Implement training and programmes to promote economic diversification, enabling communities and families to become more resilient to shocks.
- Encourage investment in infrastructure that improves access to markets, such as mobile phone coverage, road maintenance and improved public transportation.
- Create opportunities for new employment, encourage the provision of financial services and support entrepreneurial economic initiatives, especially from women's groups and the youth (small businesses, start-ups, local cooperatives, etc.).
- Implement pilot programmes and randomised control trials to test new ideas for economic diversification.
- Continue to combat corruption through the National Strategy for Good Governance.¹¹⁸

International organisations can

- Support the CAR authorities in implementing all of the above.
- Enable local organisations to access bigger markets, such as Bozoum and Paoua, working with herders to increase the circulation of goods and funds within and between the sub-prefectures.

118 Stratégie Nationale de Bonne Gouvernance.

- Support local entrepreneurship by leveraging cooperatives and organisations in increasing economic activity in the region, creating opportunities for youth, increasing scarce resources and fostering collaboration.
- Train women and youth in entrepreneurship to develop new activities that are a good fit with the local contexts and constraints.
- Train women and youth, to provide them with skills that are in demand in the region and contribute to a diversification of the economic landscape as well as a reduction of dependency of any household on one uncertain occupation.

10.3.4. Excessive (including illegal) taxation

Cattle in Ouham-Pendé represent a significant capital resource and, when sold or slaughtered, generate comparatively large cash flows. If this is properly tapped, this can make a useful contribution to the CAR economy. Given their mobility, this cash can be injected directly into local economies, even those some distance from the larger markets. Revenue can and historically has been collected from herders, in exchange for provision of services, particularly security and veterinary services.

Without the social contract of security and access to services, herders lament being charged taxation in Chad, at the border, by one or more armed groups, and then by host communities, as well as being subject to banditry.

From the perspective of the settled population, this leads to inflation of beef prices and also that herders are less likely to provide for, and have less funds to trade with, the host community at their ultimate destination, if they have been taxed heavily on route.

National CAR authorities could

- Negotiate bilateral and multilateral agreements as set out above in respect of the taxation of trans-border herders, considering that lower tax rates may mean increased tax income, especially if it leads to higher economic activity.
- Work towards a clear, affordable and transparent system for taxation of herders that will contribute to a strong basis for peaceful transhumance and yield shared benefits for herders and for settled communities along the migration route.
- Secure the corridors, as mentioned in the previous session, and incentivise armed groups to abandon illegal tax collection.

International organisations can

- Support consultative committees in advocating with armed groups for more reasonable taxation, following national standards.
- Advocate with Central African authorities and their international partners to create corridors where herders can avoid or reduce illegal taxes paid.

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10.5. Annex 1. detailed methodological note

This Annex provides detailed information on the methodology behind this report. As indicated, the mapping relied on a mix of individual interviews and focus groups. This conflict-sensitive methodology aimed to ensure participants were at ease.

It should be noted that this consultation in the Ouham-Pendé and Ouham prefectures was conducted during a relative lull in fighting, after the February 2019 Khartoum Peace Agreement and before resumption of fighting in May 2019.

10.5.5. Individual interviews

The research team conducted 362 individual interviews with 187 men and 175 women in 42 villages across the prefectures of Ouham and Western Ouham. This included 164 farmers, 96 agro-pastoralists, 68 villagers and 34 transhumants.

Questionnaires produced a quantitative dataset, seeking to understand and measure perceptions of different members of each livelihood group, following a number of different themes and proxies for social cohesion. The team collected detailed information through a mixture of multiple-choice questions and written answers. Although the answers to questions were recorded in a multiple-choice format for speed and consistency, respondents were not shown the possible answers, to avoid leading them in any way. When they gave an answer that was not available, this was typed in separately.

Questionnaires were uploaded onto rugged smartphones in French and Sango, using the Open Data Kit application. This enabled pre-prepared but bespoke questions to be asked one-to-one to each respondent, only asking relevant questions that correspond to answers already given. It also enabled people who identify with several different livelihoods to be asked questions about each one.

For example, those identifying as farmers were asked about their crops and livestock, as well as questions about their interaction with herders and other groups. Herders were asked about their “zone d’attache”, past and present migration routes and relationships between transhumants and semi-settled herders as well as with settled populations.

The Programme Officers are trained and experienced in selecting representative samples of respondents from each of the livelihood groups, as well as in explaining why the consultation is important and the different ways in which confidentiality will be respected. The team always sought permission from the local and traditional authorities before approaching anyone, and explained to both the authorities and the consultees why the consultation was important and how the data would be used.

The datasets were uploaded into a spreadsheet for analysis and disaggregation by IPIS back in Belgium, and the results of that analysis are detailed in the report below.

10.5.6. Focus groups

The research team conducted 101 focus groups in 42 villages across the prefectures of Ouham and Western Ouham, consulting 957 different people with an average of 9-10 people per focus group. This included 600 men and 357 women; 666 settled people, 144 transhumants and 147 semi-nomadic pastoralists.

Focus groups and unstructured interviews produced a qualitative dataset for each livelihood group, exploring lines of causation and providing greater depth and detail to the analysis by asking who, when, what, why and how. The team of enumerators is trained and experienced in promoting discussion between participants, following a guideline of pre-prepared questions and discussion-starters, which encourage participants to challenge assumptions and move beyond simplistic rhetoric to explore more deeply the underlying issues, their perceptions and their hopes for the future and their recommendations about how to achieve those aspirations.

Each focus group comprised between two and twenty participants with an ideal target of ten to twelve. Focus groups were facilitated by at least two Programme Officers, one to ask questions and facilitate

discussion, the other to take detailed notes. The team used their best endeavours to make focus groups homogenous by age, gender and profession, although in a public setting, this was not always possible, since people are usually interested to join in and keen to let the team know their opinions. There are therefore a number of focus-groups registered as “mixed focus groups”.

The team used various tools to improve the depth and inclusivity of consultations and to give voice to those who might otherwise have been excluded. This included mapping and modelling, narrative story-telling and guided debate between participants. This meant sometimes having quiet, side-bar focus groups with women or young people whilst the ‘main’ consultation was underway on the other side of the village, as well as consulting directly with women’s cooperatives and youth groups.

Participatory mapping¹¹⁹ was used to triangulate answers given by other respondents about the personalities and issues involved, including migration routes and flash points for conflict.

10.5.7. Demographics of respondents

In Ouham-Pendé and Western Ouham, the research team consulted:

Tables 3 and 4. Breakdown of participants in consultations by occupation & gender.

Interviews			
	Men	Women	Total
Settled population	158	170	328
Farmers	61	103	164
Agro-pastoralists	62	34	96
Villagers	35	33	68
Transboundary herders	16	0	16
Semi-settled herders	13	5	18
Total	187	175	362

Focus Groups			
	Men	Women	Total
Settled population	385	281	666
Transboundary herders	128	16	144
Semi-settled herders	87	60	147
Total	600	357	957

The research team conducted 362 individual interviews with 187 men and 175 women in 42 villages across the prefectures of Ouham and Western Ouham. This included 164 farmers, 96 agro-pastoralists, 68 villagers, 16 transborder herders and 18 semi-settled herders.¹²⁰

The research team conducted 101 focus groups in 42 villages across the prefectures of Ouham and West-

119 Cartography using participatory methods to record and represent the spatial knowledge of local communities.

120 **Farmers** are settled people who live from the products they grow. This group represented 50% (out of 328) of the interviewed settled population.

Agro-pastoralists live from their land, but they also breed livestock. They own goats (63%, out of 96 agro-pastoralists) or chickens (55%), some of them have a few cows (27%), pigs (23%) or sheep (9%). Those who own cows own just two to four animals with no need to migrate to find pasturage. The agro-pastoralists represented 29% (out of 328) of the interviewed local population.

Villagers represent the category of people who do not breed animals or farmland. They include public servants (nurses, doctors, teachers & police), butchers, religious teachers, students, carpenters, etc. The villagers represented 21% (out of 328) of the local population interviewed.

ern Ouham, consulting 957 different people with an average of 9-10 people per focus group. This included 600 men and 357 women; 666 settled people, 144 transboundary herders and 147 semi-settled herders.

The Research Team intended to equally speak with men and women in the focus groups discussions, but **men were overrepresented: 600 men (63%) to 357 women (37%); N = 957**. This mainly due to the absence of women amongst focus groups for local authorities and butchers.

Consultation with the settled population included:

- 10 focus groups with 41 butchers (all male). Butchers represent an interesting sub-category because they frequently interact with transhumants and at the same time are full members of village communities. As such, they can offer a nuanced opinion on the difficult relations between the settled population and transhumants.
- 10 focus groups with 66 local authority representatives (again, all male as no female local authorities were found). Local authorities have the responsibility to ensure a harmonious cohabitation between local populations and nomadic pastoralists; traditionally they assume a mediator role in cases of conflict.
- 4 focus groups with who identified as youth (30 men; 4 women).
- 76% interviewed identified as Christian, 18% Protestant and 6% Muslim (N = 328).
- 18% interviewed were between 18 and 25 years old, 60% between 26 and 49 years old and 22% over 50 years old (N = 328).
- 49 people (15 %, N = 328) interviewed were returnees or had experienced displacement within the last two years. Displaced people or returnees were not considered as a burden, a danger or a perpetrator of violent incidents by either local residents or transhumants.

Concordis visited 34 different nomadic herder communities, both semi-nomads and transhumant. For the information in this report coming from the individual questionnaires, the generic term “transhumants” will be used because the sample was too small to divide it in two distinctive categories. However, the focus groups analysed below allowed Concordis and IPIS to distinguish each group’s standpoints and to contextualise their answers.

Transhumant herders gave fewer interviews than people in the settled population for two main reasons, they constitute a minority and they’re harder to find in western CAR as they move around. On several occasions, the Research team found that transhumant herders had vacated their camp the moment they heard an international NGO was trying to meet up with them. That said, those who did consent to interviews thanked Concordis’ staff for seeking them out, with **many herders insisting that it was the first time an international NGO had come to visit them** to listen to their perspectives.

Female herders are largely underrepresented amongst interviewees and focus group respondents. Many transhumants are young men travelling without their families or women. If accompanied by their spouse, transhumants are traditionally conservative and hierarchical and it was difficult to speak with women alone and then, not without the permission of the *Ardo*, the chief of the clan.

18 groups consulted had their *zone d’attache* (where they spend the rainy season) in Central African Republic, 12 in Chad, and 4 in Cameroon.

Ethnically, 4 identified as Arab, the rest as Peulh, with 10 as Danedji, 5 as Djaafoun, 5 as Hanagamba, 2 as Hontorbé, 2 as Bokolodji, 1 as Dendi, 3 as Mbororo¹²¹ and 2 as Oudah.

Ethnicities semi-settled: Djaafoun, Wolarbe, Foulata, the semi-settled Aku (self-identify as Danedji, by their cattle), Oudah, Mbokolo. Ethnicities from Chad: Hanagamba, Hontorbé, Bodi, and Bokolodji. Ethnicities from Sudan: Sankara and Messeriya Baggara. Ethnicities from Cameroon: Hausa, Wolarbe (from Garoua and Ngaoundéré), and Danedji.¹²²

121 Arabs and Mbororo are overall defining groups that encompass many others, but this is how the group identified itself.

122 Herders are so attached to their cattle that they often identify themselves in relation to the cattle breed they live with. Djaafoun means ‘mahogany’; Danedji ‘white’, Bokolo is a breed of cattle with small horns; Bolokodji is a name for a Chadian mixed cattle breed. Ouda herders culturally keep their herds moving, whereas other groups may settle in rich pastures. For discussion, see IPIS/DIIS (2018) *CAR: a conflict mapping*, p. 60; FAO, DRC, & CRS, (2015). *Situation de la transhumance et étude socioanthropologique des populations pastorales après la crise de 2013-2014 en République centrafricaine*. Bangui: Rapport Conjoint de Mission FAO-DRC-CRS, pp. 9-10.

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