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# Pastoralist Youth in towns and cities: mobility patterns in times of Crisis of Governance in Burkina Faso

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**PANEL 10 – LOST IN REPRESENTATION: CHANGES AND PARADOXES IN THE NOMADS' LIFE**



## Outline

Section 1 – Context, research questions & methodology

Section 2 – Youth’s migration to cities and towns: new ways to become adults & forge a political identity

Section 3 – Perceptions and narratives of brokers on pastoral youth

Section 4 – Discussion: development policies and perspectives for a political representation of the pastoralists





## Section 1 – Context, research questions & methodology

Context - Pastoralist Youth  
between normative narratives  
& political Crisis

International drivers of tension:  
the « refugees crisis » in the UE,  
the spread of insurgencies in the  
Sahel

Normative narratives at work:  
resource depletion & climate  
change, idle pastoralist youth at  
the core of insurgent groups

A Framework that undermines  
the political and economic  
changes at play in rural areas  
and within pastoral societies

Research questions – Pastoralist’s  
emerging citizenship beyond Youth’s  
« employability »

What do the migratory trajectories of  
young people say of structural changes  
in pastoral societies and their impacts on  
them?

How brokers “under Aid regime” look at  
the young people from pastoral  
background through their lenses on  
mobility ?

Looking for representation: who could  
voice youth’s claims for productive and  
civic rights?

Methodology - A qualitative field  
research on migratory trajectories,  
public perceptions and development  
schemes for the integration of rural  
youth

45 days of fieldwork in Ouagadougou  
December 2018 – March 2019:  
21 days documenting the migration of  
young people (22 portraits of  
migrants+16 interviews with key  
informants in migratory networks).  
15 days on public perception and  
action (35 interviews with public  
servants, professional and association  
representatives and aid actors).



## Section 1 – Context, outline of the historical pastoral mobilities in Burkina Faso

Diversity of pastoral mobilities within and across the country

Historic seasonal and permanent labour migrations

Transboundary pastoral mobility is at stake for Burkina Faso: advocacy of professional organizations



Source: Cirad 2012

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## Section 2 – Youth’s migration to cities and towns: new ways to become adults & forge a political identity

### Heterogeneity in:

- Pastoral resources in extended families;
- Patterns of territorial inclusion of pastoralism;
- Social networks linking rural and urban areas;
- Relationships between pastoralist groups and the State



### Different Migratory trajectories:

- Temporary and seasonal rural & urban migrations (farm and ranch works, gold mining /petty trade, handcraft, guarding, etc.);
- More stable urban settlement patterns (livestock trade, coranic school – teaching and trade, formal education)



### Youth migration as a family & an individual strategy:

- Perception of a deep crisis, pastoralism is in a dead end (loss of access to land and pastures, decline in numbers of herds, commodification of pastoral products and inputs).
- Pastoralism less and less able to insure access to adult status (decisional power and relative autonomy within the kinship group).
- The narrowing of social circulation of livestock & a challenge to the control exercised by elders.





## Section 2 – Youth’s migration to cities and towns: new ways to become adults & forge a political identity

### Youth’s migration as a process

- Aspirations and possibilities change along the migration routes following a bundle of unequal constraints and resources
- Rather than focusing attention on the decision to leave, focus on the trajectories over time and in different places

### Urban anchorage and pastoral mobility are not opposed at the family level

- Connections between urban and rural environments & between the migrants and their families
- Remittances, information sharing, tutoring of kin in town, access to public and aid institutions

### Discovering citizenship in towns

- The uprising of 2014 as shared experience for students and young people from disadvantaged backgrounds
- Involvement in associative movements (from neighbourhood to associations of rural people, from Fulani to labour, human & civil rights associations)
- A sense of belonging to the national community & a new awareness of democracy and citizens' rights



## Section 3 – Perceptions and narratives of brokers on pastoral youth

### Professional breeders' organisations

- Representatives of professional organisations have a negative perception of youth urban migration as compromising the social reproduction of pastoral systems & driving social problems.
- Focus on the crisis of governance of rural spaces:
  - a weak and unequal State management of land issues;
  - an inadequate political-administrative system, unable to provide basic public services in rural areas & exercising a despotic power on pastoral population.
- Dependancy on development aid: micro-projects (livestock products processing), protection of pastoral areas, livestock infrastructures.

### Fulani urban elite's associations

- A double discourse : (i) on one side, relaying pastoralist frustrations, (ii) on the other, moralizing and patronizing the rural people (fight against youth idleness, send the children to school, etc.).
- They frame the problem of the political marginalisation of Fulani pastoralists as a problem of ignorance & lack of organization.
- Promote the civil and political inclusion of pastoral populations (birth and electoral certificates, access to school, etc.).



## Section 4 – Discussion: development policies and perspectives for a political representation of pastoralists

### Security policies jeopardizes Youth's mobility

- Embargo on areas under control of insurgent groups;
- Violent arrests and abuses on young Fulani in rural and urban areas;
- The closure of livestock markets;
- Barriers to the transhumance in Burkina and cross border areas (currently high concentration of livestock in transboundary parks)

### Fragmented policies & projects

- Exclusion of political dimensions (governance & State-citizen relationships)
- Micro-projects, value chains;
- Tension between universal ambition of social protection and targeted tools;
- Acknowledged weakness of decentralized services and infrastructures;

### Perspective on political representation

- Professional Organizations, « ambiguous brokers » under Aid regime
- Fulani elites, form a political clientele on a ethnic basis (access to the development aid market, individual brokers)
- Civic movements, non ethnic based, promoting civic and social rights of marginalised citizens





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**Thank you for your attention!**

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