



**KOMPLEXNOSŤ ENVIRONMENTÁLNEJ MIGRÁCIE: PRÍPAD
NAVRÁTENÝCH CHOVATEĽOV NÁRODNOSTI FULANI Z OBLASTI
BOUNA Z POBREŽIA SLONOVINY DO PROVINCIE NOUMBIEL
V BURKINA FASO**

**THE COMPLEXITY OF ENVIRONMENTAL MIGRATION: CASE OF
THE RETURNED BURKINABE FULANI BREEDERS FROM BOUNA
DEPARTMENT IN IVORY COAST TO NOUMBIEL PROVINCE
IN BURKINA FASO**

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Problémom environmentálnej migrácie sa začína zaoberať rastúci počet akademikov i tvorcov politik na celom svete. Degradácia životného prostredia nie je zvyčajne jediným dôvodom, pre ktorý ľudia migrujú, ale ide ruka v ruku s ďalšími politickými a socioekonomickými faktormi. V marci 2016 sa vyostřil konflikt medzi komunitami Lobi farmárov a Fulani pastierov z Burkina Faso, ktorí sa usídlili v regióne Bouna na severovýchode Pobrežia slonoviny po tom, čo opustili Burkina Faso počas veľkého sucha v 70. rokoch predošlého storočia. Tento konflikt, ktorý začal, ako sa zdá, banálne – pošliapaním Lobi farmárskych polí dobytkom Fulani pastierov, mal vážne dôsledky: obeť na životoch, viacero ranených, zničený majetok a ekonomické straty. Konflikt nakoniec viedol k presídleniu niekoľko tisíc ľudí do provincie Noubiel v Burkina Faso. Analýza príčin tohto masívneho presídlenia poukazuje na rastúci lokálny dopyt po prírodných zdrojoch a na manažment poľnohospodárskej pôdy, čo sa vyostřilo na pozadí pretrvávajúcich náčelníckych sporov medzi etnickými skupinami v regióne Bouna. Nárast rozsahu poľnohospodárskej pôdy viedol k obmedzeniu pastvín a degradácii lesných porastov, čím boli poškodené záujmy pastierov. I keď

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konflikty medzi pastiermi a poľnohospodármi existovali v okolí po dlhé roky, toto bol prvý prípad, ktorý vyeskaloval až k vysídleniu obyvateľstva. I keď možno presídlené obyvateľstvo považovať za navrátilcov do svojej pôvodnej krajiny, roky strávené v Pobreží slonoviny mali za následok stratu ekonomických i sociálnych väzieb v ich pôvodnej krajine. Ich situácia vyústila do stavu humanitárnej krízy s obmedzeným prístupom k podpore OSN, keďže status presídleného obyvateľstva nebolo možné kvalifikovať ako utečenecký. Podpora bola poskytnutá lokálnou vládou a mimovládnyimi organizáciami v Burkina Faso.⁵

Kľúčové slova: environmentálna migrácia, sucho, poľnohospodárska pôda, interkomunálny konflikt, navrátilci, reintegrácia

The issue of environmental migration starts to involve growing number of scholars and policymakers all around the world. Conventionally, environmental degradation is not a sole reason that drives people to move but rather it goes hand-in-hand with other political and socio-economic factors. In March 2016, an inter-communal conflict arose between Lobi farmers and Burkinabe Fulani herders who had settled in Bouna department in the north-east of Ivory Coast after leaving Burkina Faso following the great drought in 1970s. This conflict that appears to be born along a banal fact of pillaging the Lobi farmers' fields by the cattle of Burkinabe Fulani herders had serious consequences: numerous injuries, several casualties, capital destruction, and economic losses. Eventually, the conflict led to displacement of few thousand people to the province of Nounbiel in Burkina Faso. The analysis of the roots of this massive displacement points to the growing local demand for natural resources and to the management of agricultural lands what got aggravated along social issues of chieftaincy among different ethnic groups in the Bouna area. The increase in the area of agricultural land has led to shrinkages in the area of rangelands and the degradation of forest resources, thus reducing pasture acreage of cattle herds. Although clashes between stockbreeders and agriculturists had been taking place in the neighbourhood for many years, the situation appeared to escalate up to the point of prompting people to move for the first time. Even though the displaced people in this case are considered returnees to their home country, the years of staying in Ivory Coast destroyed almost all social and economic linkages in their home country. The situation led to humanitarian crisis marked by limited access to UN support since the status of returnees did not qualify for refugee. The support was provided by local Burkinabe government and NGOs.

Key words: environmental migration, drought, agricultural land, intercommunal conflict, returnees, reintegration

JEL: Q54, F22

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1 CONTEXT NAD JUSTIFICATION

One in seven people in the world is mobile (IOM, 2016) but this mobility takes several forms depending on the causes related to these mobilities or the destination of migrants. People may decide to change location either voluntarily for reasons such as studies, tourism, research, work assignment or retirement. They can be however forced to flee the area following wars, social conflicts, natural and/or technological disasters, large-scale development projects, or gradually deteriorating environment. In the Sahel area, people have been facing the unfavourable effects of desertification, continuous rainfall shortages and increasing anthropogenic demand for natural resources for over decades now. The drought of the 1970s and 1980s in West Africa (De Longueville et al., 2016; Ozer & Perrin, 2014; Ozer et al., 2017; Spinoni et al., 2013) forced large number of residents to relocate to the areas least affected by the drought (Gemenne et al., 2017). In Burkina Faso, massive displacement of people occurred not only within the country – searching more fertile agricultural areas, but also outside the country towards neighbouring coastal countries such as Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana, Togo, and Benin.

Although most coastal countries in West Africa do have a pre-record of hosting environmental migrants, the case of Burkinabè relocated to Ivory Coast in 2016 was accentuated by the economic growth of Ivory Coast as well as the productivity of agricultural land with respect to cash crops (Blion & Bredeloup, 1997). Large role apparently was played also by local policies towards migrants dated way back to the 1970s. Sub-regional agreements on the free movement of people, the right of residence and settlement amongst the countries of the Economic Community of West African States (1979) and the West African Economic and Monetary Union (1994) as well as the bilateral agreement between the Republic of Upper Volta (former name of Burkina Faso) and the Convention on the Conditions of Employment and Employment of Voltaic Workers in Ivory Coast enforced in the 1960s laid the foundations for Burkinabe to facilitate the relocation to Côte d'Ivoire. The years of relocations materialised in growing presence of Burkinabè in the economic life of Côte d'Ivoire, particularly in the activities of coffee and cocoa plantations, but also in livestock farming across the Peule community.

A number of Burkinabè Fulani settled in 1973 in the town of Bouna, in the Bounkani region in north-eastern Côte d'Ivoire. The Fulani community was made up of herders whose way of life requires to have access to natural resources, namely land and water. Clearly, indigenous communities of Ivory Coast were less in favour to share their riches. Grazing and agricultural land has soon become subject to ethnic disputes which cumulated significantly over the almost three decades (Yoman et al., 2016). In March 2016, an inter-communal conflict between the Fulani and indigenous population escalated leading to a massive displacement of 2194 people of Fulani community in Ivory Coast to the province of Nounbiel in Burkina Faso (SP / CONASUR, 2016).

This article attempts to explore the direct and indirect causes of these massive displacements of Burkinabe Fulani, to record the dynamics of reception, assistance, integration and community restoration back in the territory of Burkina Faso. The structure of the paper is as follows: The following section describes data and methods employed in the paper. The third section explores causes standing behind the case study, the fourth section follows the reception of relocated Burkinabe. Sections five through seven point to the issues related to integration and community restoration in the Nounbiel province. The concluding section eight summarizes key findings of the paper.

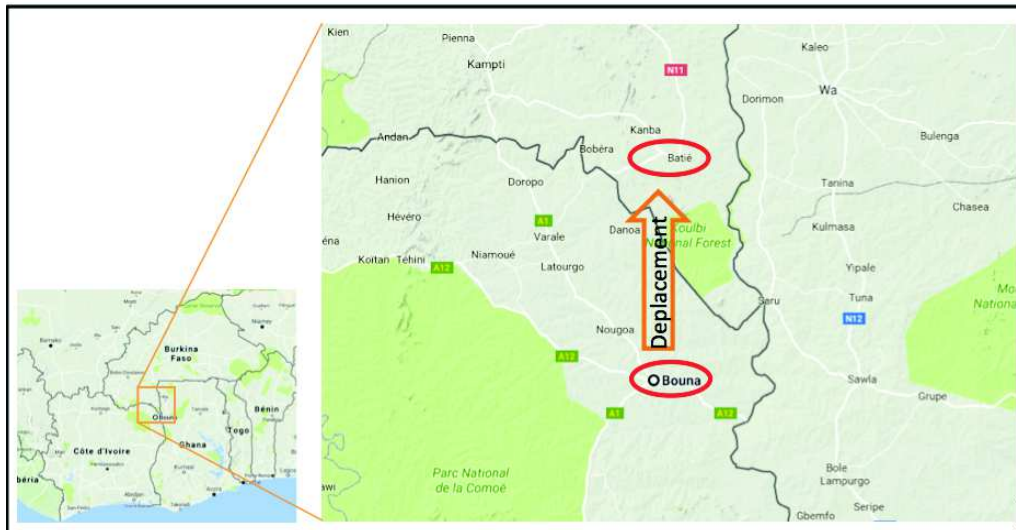
2 DATA AND METHODS

Data on the identity of relocated individuals used in this paper comes from various databanks in Burkina Faso and Côte d'Ivoire, reports released by the Government of Burkina Faso or by relevant humanitarian non-governmental organizations (NGOs), as well as from primary data collections as part of the fieldwork.

The paper relates to the information collected through individual and semi-structured interviews with 12 Fulani households that returned to Burkina Faso and settled in Nounbiel province in 2016. The interviews were set up to understand the causes of their displacements as well as their post-relocation situation, foremost the support they received by local Burkinabe authorities. The responses were matched against print and online articles which were scouted through in order to check the external validity of the data collected. In addition, interviews with humanitarian organizations that had been involved in the management of these relocated people allowed the data to be cross-referenced with the information collected in the press and through the fieldwork. Many interviews were conducted via phone or skype what served the cost efficiency claims.

Ivory Coast and Burkina Faso are two neighbouring countries in West Africa. Our migration study tracks the flow of people from Bouna, a town located on the Ivorian territory where the intercommunal conflict between Peuls and Lobi up to the communes of Batié, Kpuéré and Boussoukoula located approximately 155 km up north. The communes are part of the Burkina Faso territory however geographically are half-way between Ivory Coast and Ghana territory (Figure 1). The people in question are entirely former Burkinabe Fulani herders who once settled in Ivory Coast and engaged in the inter-community conflict.

Figure 1: Origins and destination of the displaced Fulani breeders.



Source: author's, Google Maps

Both the origins and destination locations of the commuting Fulani breeders in this case share many characteristics. The Bouna neighbourhood in Ivory Coast holds great potential for extensive breeding. The climate there is close to that of Sudan and more importantly, to that of Nounbiel province which Fulani breeders originally came from in the 1970s and thus were well-accustomed to. Both locations – Batié as well as Bouna – share the same market structure: the most traded commodities come from agricultural sector with livestock having the second largest market share. Both locations are privileged to have large natural forest reserves at proximity. The Comoé National Park in Ivory Coast is close to the starting point (Bouna) and the Koulbi National Forest in Burkina Faso is close to the host community (Nounbiel) of the displaced herders. These parks are classified as natural reserves however respective authorities fall short to protect them and stop communities living nearby from exploiting them to their personal needs. The climate and the biomass potential of the Bouna area appear to be what attracted Sahelian breeders in the first place.

3 ANALYSIS OF THE CAUSES OF DISPLACEMENT OF BURINABE FULANI LIVING IN IVORY COAST TO BURKINA FASO

After severe droughts in 1973, Fulani communities, mostly transhumant pastoralists, settled in the town of Bouna in Côte d'Ivoire. The location is long considered to provide great conditions for breeding livestock. According to several press sources (Lefaso.net, 2016; Koaci.com, 2016), the moving Fulani breeders own some of the livestock they raise but also take care of the livestock of the Koulango and

Malinké populations who have taken up the fight for the Fulani in this intercommunal conflict. On the other hand, the Lobi "dozo" - who are for the most part hunters - lent their support to their Lobi community of farmers living in the Bouna area. The clashes on March 24, 2016 left 33 dead and 52 wounded (connectionivoirienne.net, 2016). Press reported also cases of kidnapping, stores pillaged and burnt down, business crippled, fields ransacked, homes vandalized, destroyed and looted (Lefaso.net, 2016). Figure 2 shows the pitiful state of a village burnt down in the conflict. Various sources reported an estimate on the displaced of at least 2000 up to 3000 people. Officially, the Government of Burkina Faso reported to host 2194 displaced Fulani breeders.

Figure 2: Village of Bouna Department set on fire during inter-communal conflict



Source: Lefaso.net, 2016

Since their establishment within the Ivorian territory, the increase in cultivable areas, deforestation, and bush fires led to a decrease in pasture areas for animals of Fulani herders who became sedentary and settled in a very dispersed way in the area of Bouna. Lobi farmers have loosely established fields for cash and food crops, even on cattle tracks and grazing areas. The increase in livestock inventory in Ivory Coast reported at that time of 3% on average for cattle and 7% for small ruminants (Kouablé Bie & Tré Bi, 2014) together with faltering vigilance in surveillance over Fulani herders and their pasturing flocks frequently led to looting the fields of Lobi growers. The disputes were often required to be settled by local authorities. The scarcity of resources however continued to fuel the disputes making their settlements more troublesome. The originally individual disputes over insufficient arable and pasture land and land security reached eventually a stage of an intercommunal conflict. According to a study published by the online press (Africa1.com, 2016), only 4% of agricultural land is properly entered and registered with a land title in Ivory Coast and

yet agriculture is the backbone of the country's economy. According to World Bank data, currently 64.8% of the Ivorian land is agricultural providing employment for two thirds of the population which get 55% of their national income from exports of cocoa and coffee. The deep deficit of securing agricultural land, accentuated by the land scarcity led to most severe clashes ending in killings and consecutive land grabbing.

The search for new arable land led farmers to destroy the forests for their extensive agriculture. In addition, accelerated urbanization led to continued deforestation of classified forests. In Côte d'Ivoire, this continuous deforestation has reduced the forest by 80% (Chatelain et al., 2004). These human actions on forests have apparently massive impact on the environmental targets of the country as well as local quality of life. With such significant shrinkage in forest area the capacity to regulate air polluting carbon dioxide is deteriorated and local communities face changes in their local climate in the long run. The environmental vulnerability faced by the communities of Bouna is one of the root causes of this intercommunity conflict between the Lobi and Fulani communities.

It is noteworthy that this environmental vulnerability comes however coupled with social tensions that had been present between communities already for a long time. According to the monograph of Bouna (AIP, 2012), the structure of the settlement covers three major indigenous ethnic groups: the Koulango, the Malinké and the Lobi. The Koulango's ancestors are the Lochons who had first occupied the region for 2000 years. The Koulango are therefore the first indigenous people in the area and remain the customary landowners of the Bouna Department. They are royalty holders and exclusive landowners. The Koulango were animists but gradually converted to Islam under the influence of the Malinke culture (Dioula). Malinké, meanwhile, arrived to the Bouna area in several successive waves from various directions. Most of them are shopkeepers and live mainly in urban areas in the most populated districts of Bouna. They live in perfect agreement with the Koulango.

The Lobi are the last community having arrived to Bouna area also in several successive waves. Demographically, the Lobi represent the largest and the most important ethnic group in terms of headcount within the Bouna department. They are characterized by their high residential mobility and have settled in Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana and Burkina Faso. The Lobi are farmers but also stockbreeders. Cohabitation with the first two ethnic groups is in general peaceful even though disputes over the land and its employment come usually as no surprise. The Lobi have a very strong workforce to quickly expand their cultivable area for yam and cash crops. This displeases the Koulango community, which in return plants cashew nuts on agricultural land in order to limit the expansion of the Lobi. The accumulation of the disputes aggravated the social tensions over the years and made people even more protective of the land (Chaleard, 1998).

In addition to these three indigenous ethnic groups, the area became more culturally diverse with incoming foreign communities such as that of Fulani breeders coming from Burkina Faso in the 1970s. Being chiefs of the land, the Koulango community authorized the installation of the Peuls in the Bouna area. The Koulango were thus considered guardians of the Peuls.

Moreover, in order to better control the lands, the Koulango installed their power over the land in the area by securing their chieftaincy in the villages that were resided mostly by Lobi farmers. This foundation of power clearly did not make the Lobi happy. Being known for their individualistic nature the Lobi decided to organize themselves and to get representation of their community in chieftaincy. According to the Office of the High Commissioner for Refugees in Ivory Coast (Le Monde, 2016), the chieftaincy conflict between the Koulango and the Lobi is very old. The Lobi, attacking the Fulani, thus might do so only to take their revenge on the Koulango. This old leadership conflict fuelled the atrocity and aggravated this inter-communal conflict between Lobi and Fulani. Traditional chieftaincy is also a factor that explains the support links that occurred during the conflict. This inter-communal conflict, born of a commonplace act of looting Lobi farmers' fields by Burkinabe Fulani animals, is a combination of immediate causes (farmer-rancher confrontation, inter-community conflict) and older ongoing and deeper causes (deforestation, lack of grazing space, anarchic soil occupation for crops, conflict of chieftaincies, interweaving of economic interests between the Peuls who raise some of the herds of Malinke and Koulango cattle). In addition, it seems appropriate to highlight that the conflict zone was for several months confronted with extremely high water stress as the water scarcity in the Bouna region reached a critical level in December 2015 (infoduzanzan.com, 2016). It is likely that this missing access to water put additional stress and aggravation of the conflict.

Displaced Burkinabè Fulani from Bouna are the product of a slow environmental catastrophe combined with social, cultural, climatic and economic factors.

4 MEASURES TAKEN BY THE BURKINA AUTHORITIES TO TAKE CARE OF THE DISPLACED IN BOUNA

Already with the outbreak of violence during the intercommunal conflict, more than 2,000 people living in villages around the city of Bouna moved to seek refuge at the prefect of Bouna and in the United Nations mission camps based in Bouna (france24.com, 2016). The Ivorian government dispatched 500 troops of Republican forces in Côte d'Ivoire, 250 gendarmes and 140 policemen to maintain order and contain the conflict (abidjan.net, 2016). These security measures helped to calm the situation down a bit allowing thus some Fulani to flee the conflict area towards

Burkina Faso. According to the testimonies received on the ground, some Peuls decided to stay and claimed lack of financial means and/or physical capacity to move. They became hostages of the conflict in Bouna and known to literature as a case of trapped population.

The communes of Kpuéré, Batié and Bousoukoula of Nounbiel province served as host communities for the displaced with their animals. The displaced got settled in the reception camps (Figure 3) or in the host families. According to the Joint Evaluation Report of the Government and Humanitarian NGOs (SP / CONASUR, 2016), among 2194 displaced authorities registered 1,074 children and 511 women with 14,432 cattle and 634 small ruminants. The report described the "displaced" as "returned". Breeders did not move with all their livestock. The report noted that 13,737 cattle and 378 small ruminants of Peul herders stayed in Ivory Coast. On average, one person settled in a camp with 7 animals. The animals, in addition to already existing animals in the host community, increase the demand for water and pasture at least. Both these resources around the host centres in Ivory Coast were under heavy pressure already – from indigenous peoples. That propels our fears that the resource-driven conflict between farmers and ranchers will breed again. The conflict in Burkina Faso might have got relieved through Peuls moving out but in fact, the risk of conflict might have only shifted cross-border. The solution lies within institutions that would mitigate the risk of conflict.

The Burkinabè Fulani who fled inter-communal conflict in Ivory Coast are welcome by the Burkinabe government. The Permanent Secretariat of the National Emergency Relief and Rehabilitation Council (SP / CONASUR, 2016) is the national body in charge of coordinating social and humanitarian interventions in the event of disasters, including rehabilitation, training of actors, prevention and management of disasters and humanitarian crises, reception, assistance and socio-economic reintegration of displaced populations. This body has provided assistance to the displaced by offering shelter, living and sleeping arrangements (netafrique.net, 2016). The body set up a local crisis unit to better coordinate emergency and humanitarian actions in the assistance and care of Bouna returnees.

Figure 2: Reception camp for the returnees from Bouna to the Nounbiel province



Source: author's

Joint missions between the SP / CONASUR, the National Commission for Refugees (CONAREF) and external bodies such as International Organization for Migration (IOM), the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UNOCHA), the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) and the United Nations NGO Oxfam made it possible to assess and address the needs of the displaced, foremost in terms of safety, health and nutrition, water and sanitation, food assistance, psychological assistance, identification and registration of displaced persons. Each organization is in charge of a component according to their area of expertise. The government and the Red Cross have regularly provided food assistance to those returned to their home site including those who are in host families. In addition, the NGO Oxfam has invested heavily in the field of water and sanitation through the construction of latrines, the supply of aquatabs tablets to make drinking water suitable for human consumption, the rehabilitation of boreholes and the fountains for the welfare of those returned.

There was also a project of emergency assistance in pastoralism that helped to advocate with the authorities of Burkina Faso and Ivory Coast for the return of agro pastoralists into the region of their departure in order to collect their possessions left behind in a hurry, especially the animals left in Ivory Coast and to facilitate their reintegration in Burkina Faso. Breeding is the primary source of income of the returnees and thus particular attention was given to health of their livestock, they received proper vaccination and examination in order to prevent diseases or isolate contagious animals.

The authorities took actions to integrate also the incoming children. They worked together to make parents aware of enrolling their children into the schools near host sites. All returned children were registered and started to attend classes in Burkina Faso. An issue emerged with pre-school children. Since there are no kindergartens or pre-school facilities close to reception sites for children between 3 and 5 years, Red Cross volunteers initiated an open-air class commonly known as "bissongon" for preschool kids. According to Oxfam (2016), more than 65 children in April 2016 attended these arranged classes before they got offered new teaching conditions.

Figure 4: Outdoor preschool class (bissongon) at the Batié site in April 2016



Source: Oxfam, 2016

In addition, the governments of Ivory Coast and Burkina Faso cooperated in terms of information-sharing as well as diplomacy to better manage these problems and to contain the distortions of the stakes of the inter-communal conflict or any shift of the problem on the political map. It should be recalled that the two countries experienced political crises and violence – Ivory Coast between 2002 and 2012, and Burkina Faso in 2014. These crises cooled the relations between the countries.

On the other hand, the management of this humanitarian crisis, the assistance and the care for the returnees was provided smoothly in the light of the constraints related to the mandates of some international organizations on the status granted to these returned Fulani from Burkina Faso and the state of mentality of Noumbiel populations similar to that of Bouna.

5 SOME PROBLEMS RELATED TO THE REINTEGRATION AND RECOVERY OF RETURNEES IN THE PROVINCE OF NOUMBIEL IN BURKINA FASO

The mobilization of the Burkina Faso government for the reception of Bouna returnees and the actions of some humanitarian NGOs on the emergency interventions went without any delays in the first hours of the arrival of these returnees but over time the management encountered difficulties, especially in relation to their reintegration in the province of Noumbiel.

The need to treat the reintegration of displaced populations received in accordance with the principles of the art of living together, equity and equality vis-à-vis local people is very important. Such treatment is solely potent to mitigate any social tensions. Local people living in conditions almost similar to those of the displaced will never accept that a foreign community is better treated than they are. Indeed, returnees wishing to settle in the province of Noumbiel have complained to the government about the need to grant them land to park their animals in a context when it was not appropriate to grant them land. In fact, in 2011, the government took a measure to suspend any land allocation process by a decree⁶ in order to better reorganize this sector of activity through an integrated planning process. On the other hand, the local populations have a strong need for land and are waiting for the lifting of the 2011 decree. Thus, the early allocation of land to returnees would lead directly to social tensions in the province of Noumbiel.

Pressure on existing farmland and natural resources in the province will be accentuated by the inclusion of these returnees. Field surveys show that Aboriginal people in this province are reluctant to live too long with these returnees in Noumbiel province. This province, already 70% occupied by forests classified according to the regional direction on animal resources of the South-West, risks overexploitation of grazing and increase of land disputes. Clashes between pastoralists and farmers may again emerge in the future and put Fulani people, who had previously settled in Bouna, in perpetual displacement in search of pasture for their animals. These returnees may be forced to migrate again in the future. Through the lens of the environmental problems that West Africa is experiencing, it appears likely that these migrations will become a strategy of continuous adaptation.

The protection of these returnees is under sole responsibility of the Burkinabe government. The returnees, although they were forced out of the area of their departure by multiple reasons fall under no legal refugee status and so are not entitled for any international protection. They are considered citizens of Burkina Faso who are back in their country but still benefit from state support to facilitate their reintegration. This

⁶ Decree No. 2011-0303/PRES/PM/MHU/MATDS/MEF of 28th May 2011 marked suspension of operations of allotment or land restructurations in Burkina Faso.

limits the work of some international organizations such as UNHCR and IOM to take emergency action in the situation.

Returned Fulani who settled in Ivory Coast no longer have social ties with their country of origin, Burkina Faso. They find themselves strangers in their own country. Their forced and unpredictable return places them in a vulnerable and difficult situation with respect to their country of origin. They have invested heavily in their life in Ivory Coast and have hardly invested in their home country. Having no strong family ties and goods in their country of origin, the reintegration of these displaced Fulani has become complex for the government of Burkina Faso.

6 PROTECTION OF PEOPLE FORCIBLY RETURNED TO THEIR OWN COUNTRY

The Burkinabe Fulani fleeing the inter-communal conflict in Ivory Coast find themselves in a situation leading them to their own country. Their return creates a humanitarian crisis because they no longer have a social attachment and are completely uprooted in their own country after a long period spent outside their country. The migration issue has brought out different types of people finding themselves in a situation of migration. The 1951 Geneva Convention relating to the Status of Refugees stipulates that a refugee must be outside his country of origin and must have a well-founded fear of persecution on account of his race, nationality, religion, belonging to a particular social group or holding certain political opinion. However, the return of a refugee to his country of origin must be organized peacefully and not forced. In view of this definition of refugees, Burkinabe Fulani returnees cannot be considered as refugees in their own country and thus cannot be protected by UNHCR. Only cases of persons without identification papers who are at risk of becoming stateless can benefit from the protection and assistance of UNHCR.

Moreover, these returnees cannot be considered internally displaced persons either because they crossed the border to find themselves in their own country. The Burkinabe Fulani returnees were at destination properly screened and cleared as Burkinabe nationals and thus can benefit solely from the protection of their country which must guarantee them the right to a dignified life and protection against violence and abuse. Burkina Faso, having ratified most of the regional and international rights instruments, has invested heavily in protecting these returnees. Non-governmental organizations, on the other hand, provide support to manage the humanitarian crisis that this displacement has caused.

7 THE PROSPECTS OF REINTEGRATION AND RECOVERY OF RETURNEES IN THEIR COUNTRY OF ORIGIN – BURKINA FASO

The returnees wish to be settled in the province of Nounbiel. The problem is that Nounbiel is not the province they left back in the 1970s heading for Ivory Coast. The desire for the settlement of this Fulani community with their animals leads the

government of Burkina Faso to find a solution for the integration of these returnees in the province of Nounbiel. Are indigenous people in this province willing to accept their integration knowing that the acceptance will put their own demand for natural resources at risk? "It is obvious that cohabitation will not be smooth in the future" (confirms a resident of the province). The government has a duty to deal with this issue of environmental migration in a definitive way by the installation and reintegration of nationals who have returned to their own country to leave no room for any random solution, as it is evident in the management of environmentally displaced people worldwide.

It is essential that local authorities, local chieftaincies, as well as local populations are all involved in reaching the definitive resolution of the integration of displaced populations hosted in their own country. While analysing this migratory phenomenon, it appears that after a long time spent outside its initial environment, migrants have lost their roots and other dynamics have been created that do not facilitate their integration. They feel like they're new to their own country.

In addition, some returnees and most of the children of these returnees who do not have identification papers need to undergo a screening survey to clearly identify their nationality. A special procedure for the preparation of civil status records needs to be managed by the government of Burkina Faso to reduce the risks of statelessness. Provision of documents is essential to avoid statelessness and ensure both the future of these returnees and their successful reintegration.

In August 2016, the communication of SP / CONASUR, through the Departmental Emergency Relief and Rehabilitation Council (CODESUR), shows the situation of the returnees who remained on the reception sites waiting for their planned or voluntary outings: 702 people including 117 men, 155 women and 430 children still living on the sites. At the time of our field surveys in May 2017, only a few dozen households remained on the host sites. Most came out of these sites to join the host community. The government is continuing its efforts to facilitate the reintegration of these returnees in the province of Nounbiel and will invest in a close monitoring of these populations in the host community to prevent any possible inconvenience of cohabitation and ensure the effective application and coherent regulatory texts relating to pastoralism, forest preservation, rural land tenure and conflict prevention between farmers and pastoralists.

8 CONCLUSIONS

Environmental migration is nowadays complicated by various social, cultural and economic phenomena. The Burkinabe Fulani have never expressed the need, nor the wish to migrate, but have been forced to migrate following a combination of essentially environmental and climate-related factors. The scarcity of cultivable land led

to land grabbing. As demographics increase, natural resources appear under increasing pressure. Opting for migration as an adaptation strategy to land scarcity for both agriculture and grazing is one option that may fade in the future if all farmlands experience the same human pressures; which is a likely scenario to come. It is remarkable today that the main factor of forest degradation and deforestation is human action. In developing countries, especially in tropical climate areas, large-scale commercial agriculture and local subsistence agriculture contribute nearly 73% to deforestation. According to the FAO (2016) report on the state of the world's forests in 2016, between the years 2000 and 2010, the net loss of tropical forests is 7 million hectares a year against a net gain of arable land 6 million hectares a year. All forests in West Africa are under stress. In the absence of strong enforcement of forest protection regulations and the commitment of every people to preserve and protect forests, West African forests will disappear and the migration strategy as an adaptation measure to deforestation and forest degradation could result in forced sedentarism of pastoralists practicing extensive livestock farming. As long as the land is available ...

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