

The Cattle are “Ghanaians” but the Herders are Strangers: Farmer-Herder Conflicts, Expulsion Policy, and Pastoralist Question in Agogo, Ghana

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Abstract: The phenomenon of farmer-herders conflict across West Africa has prompted management strategies by several governments across the subcontinent. One of the conflict resolution mechanisms has been the policy of expulsion, which the Ghanaian state adopted as a response to incessant conflict between the settled agriculturalists and migrating Fulani herders. This paper focuses on migration and conflict as well as the intrigues and politics of expulsion of Fulani pastoralist from Agogo town in Ghana since 2009. There are multiple factors responsible for the migration of Fulani herders to Agogo area that are linked to climate change. We also examine the social and political factors triggering the expulsion as well as agitation to expel the Fulani. Counter to this we examine the Fulani reactions towards this development. Through this we also critique the policy of expulsion as a means of dealing with the pastoralist question. By means of a critical assessment of the conflict we offer strategies for policy and reconciliation.

Introduction

Conflict in Northern Ghana has increased in recent times between farmers and pastoralists over resources and access to resources. This is often referred to as the “pastoralist question” and it raises controversies around how to deal with such issues across Africa’s entire Sahel belt. The task of addressing the pastoralist question has been a recurring issue across West Africa, where there has been a high incidence of violent farmer-herder conflict in recent times. The changing climatic conditions in the traditional abode of the pastoralists in the Sahel region have caused a southward migration to where the grass is much lusher. The nature of this migration has often meant traveling long distances from one point to the other and thus intruding into spaces long ago claimed by settled farmers. This is a major implication of the southward migration due to the frequency of acrimonious and often violent encounters between migrating herders and the local sedentary population. Over time, the persistent clashes between these groups have been a

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<http://www.africa.ufl.edu/asq/v15/v15i2a3.pdf>

large concern of governments across the region and this has necessitated the adoption of a number of policies aimed at addressing the phenomenon.¹ The policies that attempt to deal with this appear to feed into discourses of “strangeness” and create oppositional forms of dealing with the problems. We offer here some ideas for policy and for reconciliation that may be more constructive and deal with the lived realities found in the complicated set of factors that lead to conflict.

One of the measures put in place is the policy of expulsion, which has been practiced in a number of countries in the West African region such as Nigeria, Mauritania, Libya, Côte d’Ivoire, Liberia, Guinea, and Sierra Leone.² This was done either as a response to economic hardships in the host country or as a result of conflict between the migrants and the host communities in the past.³ In northern Ghana, the policy of expulsion does not only mean evacuating Fulani herders from the country, it also means declaring them *persona non grata* and preventing them from entering and operating in the country at any time into the future. The aim of the policy is to put an end to incessant conflict between the indigenous population and the migrant herders, who are often classified as strangers. Here “stranger” connotes the usual meaning of someone who is unknown, but also carries a stronger sense of unease and fearfulness of those who do not belong and are deemed to be different.

One of the places where the policy of expulsion has been adopted in Ghana is Agogo town in the Ashanti-Akim North district of the country.⁴ This area has seen many recent violent clashes between Fulani pastoralists and farmers since 2001. The levels of violence appear to cycle up and down over time with conflicts starting in 2001, but decreasing in 2002. It rose again in 2004 and went down in 2005. Violence resurfaced again in 2009, and hostilities remained until 2011. The government has begun a process of expulsion with new policies.

The politics of eviction of Fulani herders from the Agogo area falls within the long tradition of alien eviction in Ghana, which dates back to 1969 via the enactment of the Bussia government’s Alien Compliance Order.⁵ The order mandated that all foreigners resident in Ghana regularize their stay in the country and those without residence permits were ordered to leave within fourteen days. This set the basis for a mass expulsion of thousands of West Africans who had come to Ghana in search of better opportunities in the then flourishing Ghanaian economy.⁶ Migration had been made conducive by the previous liberal immigration policy, which was an integral part of the Africa-centric foreign policy pursued by the Kwame Nkrumah administration immediately after independence.⁷ However those liberal immigration policies ended in 1969 with the Alien Act that impelled all foreigners to leave the country. It is important to note that until a few months before that Act was passed most of the “foreigners” that it targeted were actually full citizens. The Nationality Act (passed a few months before) revoked the citizenship of Ghanaians who had, in many cases, been living in the country for generations and who had been granted full citizenship by Nkrumah in 1957. In what was believed by many Fulani to be a reenactment of the 1969 Alien Act, on January 20, 2012 the Kumasi High Court ordered the Ashanti Regional Security Council (REGSEC) to flush out all Fulani and their cattle from the Agogo Afram plains with immediate effect.⁸ This differed from the 1969 Alien Act as it did not expel anyone from Ghana, but just from the immediate area. It did raise fears (and hopes) that it would lead to full expulsion from Ghana. Following the judgment, there were a series of protests by many of the settled agriculturalists calling for an

instant enforcement of the order. Security forces were even drafted to enforce the judgment. However, in spite of the Kumasi court ruling and the series of protests supporting it, there is still a presence of Fulani herders in the town. Many people are still angry over the unwillingness or inability of the state to enforce the court order of expulsion.⁹ This raises some pertinent questions: what are the motivating factors for herders' migration to Agogo, considering the antagonism they encounter? What are the triggers for the conflict? What is the political and operational relevance of the policy of expulsion in dealing with the Fulani issue in Agogo? What are some possible strategies or policies that may be adopted to deal with the violence?

The study begins with a theoretical framework on the tension between farmers and herders. It then traces the factors motivating the migration of herders to the Agogo Afram plains. This is followed by an analysis of the recourse to violence between the two groups. The demands by the residents of Agogo for eviction and reactions by the Fulani are placed into a discussion of the politics of eviction and the pastoralist question. The study finds that the issues are much more complicated than foreign pastoralists invading a farming community. The pastoralists are enmeshed in local social and economic relations, and they probably share common cause with the farmers over issues of poverty, marginalization, and abuse by local elites. We make some practical suggestions that may be used to address policy or to think of strategies to deal with the now endemic violence.

Farmer-Herder Conflicts: A Theoretical Framework

In trying to situate the phenomenon of farmer-herder conflict across Africa, a number of theories are immediately relevant. The first here is climate change as it addresses why such conflict arises (structural factors that strain resources and push people together). Relative deprivation theory can then be used to bridge the structural and the social/political. It suggests that conflict will not be resolved as both groups will remain deprived of resources from the others actions or even presence on the land. Both groups draw from a limited pool of resources and the assumed differences (cultural, linguistic, practices, and traditions) currently disallow them to form any common ground. Processual theories of conflict may be of more utility as they address how violence unfolds within local contexts. As Mark Moritz notes, "If patterns of herder-farmer conflict could be entirely explained by structural factors alone, we would expect all conflicts in the same stressful context to display not only similar causes, but also similar levels of engagement and violence and similar outcomes."¹⁰ Moreover, a focus on the local conditions in which violence erupt shows how large-scale environmental or structural causes are exacerbated (and can be mitigated) by local forces and local relationships.

In addressing new and expected structural issues, a number of studies have tried to situate the phenomenon of farmer-herder conflict within the climate change discourse. One important reality of the climate change discourse is its changing political economy of meaning, perception, and interpretation. Climate change initially emerged as an environmental issue.¹¹ However, it became an energy problem before becoming recast as a security threat; and it was then lifted to the level of the United Nations Security Council for discussion. One of the most defining moments for the streamlining of climate change as a security threat and concomitant discourses into the UN body was attained when it was tabled for discussion at the UN Security Council

meeting. British Foreign Secretary Margaret Beckett argued that fights over water, changing patterns of rainfall, and fights over food production and land use are the major causes of war and therefore the Security Council must be interested in what causes them, one of which is climate change.¹² Also, the British Ambassador to the UN used the occasion to argue that “border disputes, migration, energy supplies, resource shortages, societal stress and humanitarian crises” as examples of the threat to international peace and security that climate change poses.¹³ Since then, the security dimension to the phenomenon of climate change has become a recurring theme in international security discourse.

A number of studies have emerged linking climate change with conflict.¹⁴ Proponents of this perspective have argued that substantial variation in climatic condition is a major trigger of violent conflict. Using a multidisciplinary approach to study climate change across space and time, Hsiang, Burke, and Miguel argue that a strong nexus did exist between changes in climatic condition and propensity for violent conflict.¹⁵ Hendrix and Glaser, in their study on rainfall predictability in Africa concluded on the side of erratic rainfall triggering violent conflict.¹⁶ Using the migration of Fulani cattle herders to Ghana as a case study, Steve Tonah locates the violent conflicts between local farmers and Fulani cattle herders as a result of dwindling grasses in the Sahelian region.¹⁷ The old patterns of transhumance practiced by the Fulani have had to change; Fulani who may have passed through a region or stayed for a limited and defined period of time now stay permanently. In other cases they move into new areas they have not used before.

The mere presence of pastoralists does not have to be a negative one as other communities of farmers and herders have built interdependent relationships through processes of exchange (labor, products, livestock, etc.). Local elites clearly have relationships with the Fulani who keep cattle for them. Such interdependence may be described as symbiotic, in which the two communities form host-client or host-stranger relationships with one another.¹⁸ The dwindling resources and resources base caused by population growth or drying of grasslands perhaps mitigate the possibility of further exchanges. Climate change affects the socio-structural conditions of a people in terms of the quality of resources available to them; and in the event of this, it could result in violent conflict as well as authoritarian attitudes.¹⁹ Even though the perspective of climate change inducing conflict has been criticized as speculative, unsubstantiated, exaggerated, and problematic, there seems to be a consensus on climate change inducing migration.²⁰

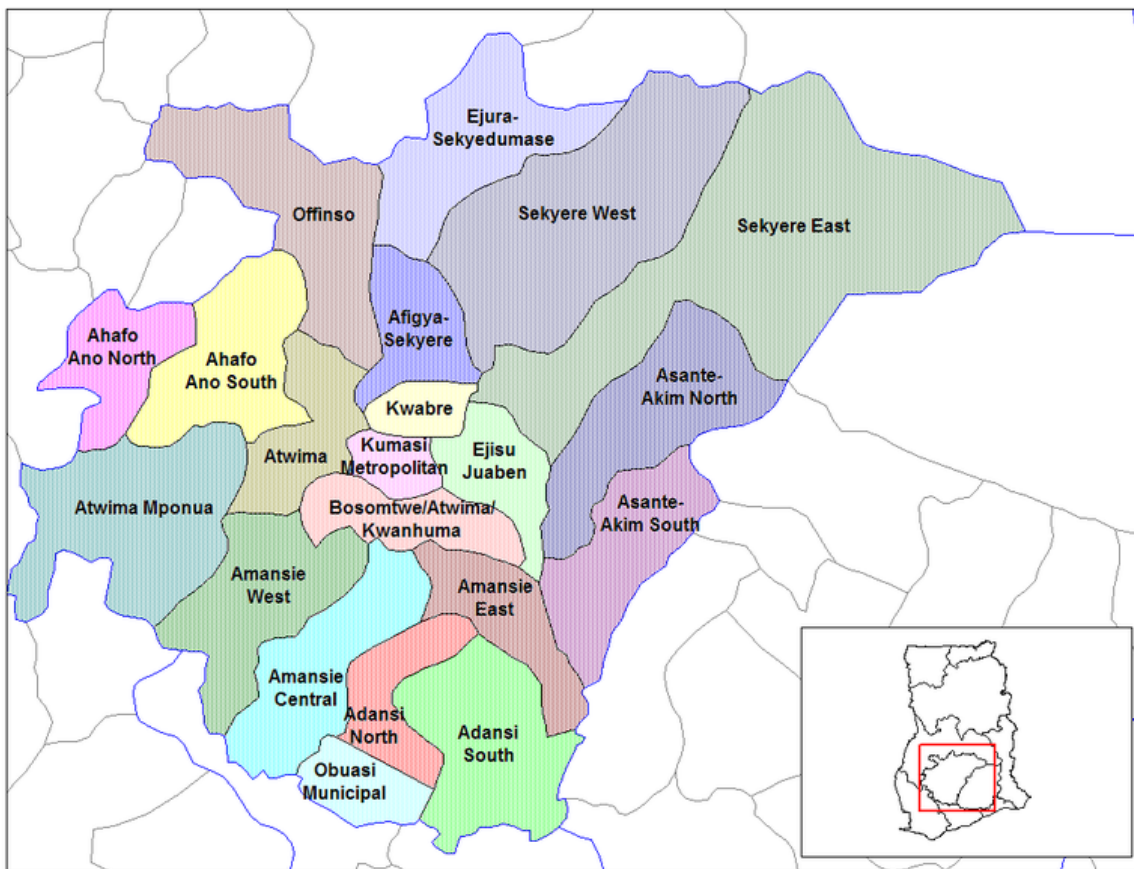
Climate change clearly puts pressure on the herders to move into other regions leading to localized conflicts and tensions. The aggressive behavior of contemporary herders and farmers in the wetland areas are due to high level of frustration.²¹ Here, the frustration is two-way: the herders are fleeing their traditional arid zones towards wetter places and are frustrated by dwindling pastures that sustain their means of livelihood. Upon reaching the wetter regions, their cattle consume the crops of farmers, who in frustration, respond by attempting to kill off the destructive animals or drive out the newcomers.²² Revenge missions of grazers result in circles of violence. In other words, the basic source of frustration experienced by both parties is traceable to climate change, which is caused both by human and natural factors. Other factors aiding the frustration are issues related to ethnicity, ignorance, weak state policies, weak state security systems, intolerance, and growth in human populations. Here again processual

theories of conflict may be brought to bear on the analysis, especially of the escalation of such violence. The structural causes can be broadly speculative and predictive; climate change will increase conflict along the edges of the Sahel. Conflict theory then can be brought to bear on the specific situations that erupt by examining the sequence of interactions to explain why certain conflicts escalate.²³ As Moritz states “the point of the processual analysis is that it starts with the event (the conflict) and then examines how it articulates with the sociocultural, political, historical, ecological, demographic, economic, and institutional context.”²⁴ Thus we can frame it within the climate change discourse, but also the responses to it by local farmers as well as policy and law. It is within that complicated mix of policies, laws, environmental change, social norms, and past experiences that conflict erupted, but more importantly it is within that mix solutions must arise.

Study Area and Methodology

Research work for this study was carried out between June and July 2013 in Agogo town, which is in Ashanti-Akim North District of Ghana with headquarters at Konogo.

FIGURE 1: ASHANTI DISTRICTS



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The town is approximately eighty kilometers east of Kumasi, capital of the Ashanti Region. The study also covered four adjoining Fulani camps at Brahabome, Abrawapun, Nyamebekyere and Kuwereso. The main methods of data collection were unstructured interviews, participant observation, key informant interviews, and focus group discussions. Focus group discussions were used specifically in the course of interviews with the Fulani, who preferred to cluster in groups. The unstructured interviews were conducted with ninety-five respondents in Agogo town and adjoining Fulani villages of Brahabome, Abrawapun, Nyamebekyere, and Kuwereso. The interviews focused on the history of migration, causes of conflict and the lived experiences of the people. Additional information was also gathered from several key informants and stakeholders in the area as well as in the national capital of Accra. This included the local government officials, experts at the Kofi Annan Institute for Peace Training Institute, journalists, traditional chiefs and opinion leaders in the area.

Fulani Migration to Agogo Afram Plains

The history of Fulani migration to the Agogo Afram plains is a relatively recent occurrence. Such migration benefitted from two waves of Fulani movement in Ghana. The first migration was from various West African states into northern Ghana. The second wave was a dispersal of the Fulani from northern Ghana into the Agogo Afram plains of central Ghana; some were originally from other West African states as well as some longer term Fulani inhabitants of northern Ghana. The two waves were not unconnected to climate change. There is an earlier Fulani presence and small-scale migration into northern Ghana from countries like Nigeria, Burkina Faso, Mali, and Niger from the beginning of the twentieth century.²⁵ However, the migration of Fulani is attributed to more recent factors, namely the “veterinary revolution” of the late 1950s and the “precipitation plunge” of the 1960s.²⁶ The veterinary revolution led to the development of vaccines to overcome tsetse fly threats to cattle survival in the West African rain forest belts. This enabled cattle to be kept much further south than before, which also has the impact of making cattle keeping a prestige activity for sedentary farmers, especially for the elite. The precipitation plunge refers to rainfall shortage which resulted in the Sahelian drought that brought the whole of the Sahel region under intense and long term environmental distress. Thus, the veterinary revolution potentially opened up the south for cattle keepers.

By the late 1980s, a combination of population increase and dwindling grass had pushed the Fulani herdsmen, initially settled in the northern region of the district, to the center and south where there is an abundance of grass. One such area is the Agogo Afram plains. As narrated by Joseph Nti, the Assistant Regional Registrar of Ashanti Traditional Council in Agogo, during the migration in the late 1980s, three Fulani herders approached the Agogo traditional council requesting land for grazing purposes.²⁷ They had come with the support of one of the chiefs of the villages. The traditional council (called Nana-in-Council locally) met and decided to grant their request, thereby allowing the Fulani to erect their homesteads. The granting of the request had been based on the presence of a huge swathe of grassland in the Afram area as well as the absence of farming activities on that land. By the mid-1990s, however, the herder population had witnessed tremendous growth due to the migration of other herders coming to join the initial settlers, and over time they made a huge presence in such settlements as Nyamebekyere, Bebuso, Brahabome, Mankalia, Abrawapun, Onyemeso, and Pataban.²⁸

However, this was not considered much of a problem by the traditional councils and the Agogo residents until the late 1990s when tensions started brewing. Research findings show four factors behind the initial peaceful atmosphere in the area. In the first place, the coming of the herders had the blessings of the local traditional leader (locally the Nana Sarpong) and his chiefs-in-council who have a role in allocating land. Some of the chiefs had symbiotic relationships with the Fulani who tended their cattle for them. The second is that the area was large enough to accommodate the then small Fulani population with ease. The third is that there was minimal contact between the herders and the farmers as they live far apart. One of the Agogo farmers in a response said: "We hardly meet. The Fulani lived very far away in the bush with his animals and only come to town during market days to sell cattle or milk. We have our own farms at the other end and they are far away from them."²⁹

Lastly, due to minimal interactions, the conduct of the herders in the area was not considered a problem by the local population. However, by the late 1990s, tension had started brewing. One major reason for this was an increase in the farming population and the need for more land for cultivation.³⁰ The population explosion now forced a gradual movement of farmers towards the Fulani dominated areas. This was to result in two things. The first is that the crops cultivated close to Fulani homesteads were eaten by their cattle, thereby leading to low yield and low income for the farmers and thus causing anger and frustration. At times, the farmers killed animals found on their farms. The Fulani then retaliated by either driving away the farmers or attacking them in return. The second is that it brought the farmers' wives and female farmers close to the Fulani, which led to cases of harassment. This even contributed to accusations of rape against Fulani herders as well as further claims of armed robbery.

By the year 2000, protests started emerging among the Agogo residents over incessant accusations of farm destruction, robberies, and raping by the herders. The people demanded eviction of all Fulani from the area.³¹ The central theme of the protests has been a demand that the traditional ruler, Nana Akuoko Sarpong, must expel all Fulani from the area. Agogo respondents were of the opinion that the traditional ruler was responsible for the atrocities because he was the one who harbored the Fulani and therefore should be the one to drive them away. However, the traditional authorities in the town did not immediately respond to the calls for expulsion. Following growing feelings of frustration over alleged atrocities of the herders, the people attacked the Fulani.³² Retaliation by the Fulani resulted in a counter attack by the people, leaving one Fulani dead and his body dragged into the bush.³³ At this point, the traditional ruler, Nana Akuoko Sarpong, who was a member of the Council of State, requested the deployment of military personnel to the area to quell the riot and maintain law and order.³⁴ The army was able to restore peace, but it was not to last long. In 2004, the Agogo people regrouped and launched another attack on the herdsmen and reiterated their initial demand for their expulsion from the area. Again, the army was called upon to restore order. This again brought about a short-lived peace. In 2006 violence resurfaced, and by 2009 the violence had become endemic.³⁵

Protests, Expulsion Threats, and Reactions

The struggle for the expulsion of Fulani herders assumes multiple forms: press conferences, demonstrations/street protests, and use of the court of law. The initial approach of the Agogo residents to the Fulani consisted of confrontations and attacks. Following the inability to prevail over the Fulani who were effectively defending themselves, however, the people adopted the method of press conferences and demonstrations. The first major expulsion-demanding protests were staged on 29 April 2010 when hundreds of people under the auspices of *Agogomanmmakuo* (Agogo township association) and the Agogo Youth Association staged a violent protest in Agogo town.³⁶ In January 2011 the protest was repeated, this time around, against the traditional ruler, Nana Akuako Sarpong. They again ordered him to vacate the throne on the ground that he was responsible for the atrocities by allowing the Fulani herdsmen to occupy their land for so many years.³⁷ In August of the same year, the traditional chief was prevented from observing the traditional rites of his late uncle, arguing that such thing would only be allowed if he ordered all Fulani out of the area.³⁸ Similar spates of protests calling for expulsion were witnessed in September 16, 2011 and on November 8, 2011.³⁹

When it was becoming the reality that street protest could not work properly the recourse was to go to court. On January 20, 2012, the Kumasi High Court ordered the Ashanti Regional Security Council (REGSEC) to flush out all Fulani and their cattle from the Agogo Afram plains with immediate effect.⁴⁰ The court ruling was a sequel to an application filed by Agogo residents against the Fulani. On 7 February, the Council inaugurated an eleven-member committee to come up with evacuation plans. After several meetings, the committee recommended that the council employ the use of force to throw out the herders from the area within two weeks.⁴¹ To carry out the order, the National Security Coordinator, Lt. Col. Gbevlo-Lartey (ret.) deployed a team of soldiers to carry out the court order.⁴² Despite the eviction there are still some Fulani herdsmen in the area, raising expectations of continued violence.

Research findings identify some pertinent issues from the foregoing discussion. One is that the accusation of farm destruction is a major motivating factor for the demands for expulsion on the part of the Agogo residents. All Agogo respondents are unanimous in their responses in this regard. In the words of one of them:

Fulani herders use their cattle to vandalize our farms. You could be on your farms and the cattle will come and invade. When you try to send them away, the herders will not allow and will even attempt to attack you instead. At times, they use the cattle to feed over our crops overnight, so by the time you arrive your farms in the morning, they are vandalized. It is very bad and frustrating.⁴³

Secondly, accusations of rape and robbery are as common as that of intentional farm destruction. A woman respondent said that:

I can tell you that cases of raping are real. I have learnt not to go to my farm alone because of fear of Fulani. I have seen several people who have been raped by the herders when they meet them alone in the farms. So each time I must go to my farm, I make sure I have male companions to protect me. Even at that, I am always afraid until I return home. Now, I have stopped going to the farm after they overpowered some males to rape their wives in the farm. I am afraid.⁴⁴

From the foregoing, some issues came to the fore. The first is that the antagonism between the Agogo residents and Fulani herders seem to have some basis in economic interests. There are two angles to the economic issue. The first angle from the Agogo people states that the continued antagonism to the presence of Fulani herders in the area has to do with the economic loss occasioned by Fulani cattle. The destruction of farms by cattle represents a major economic disaster in the area. Large farms are often victims of cattle invasion and destruction. This has resulted in lower crop yields in the area and, by extension, less income for the farmers. The second angle to the economic discourse is contained in the response of the Fulani herders as stated by the spokesman of the Fulani in Agogo:

The farmers used to hunt grasscutters; but now there are no grass cutters anymore.⁴⁵ Now, if you hunt grass cutters that only sell for twenty Ghana Cedi and there are cattle in the bush that you can kill and sell for two thousand Ghana Cedi, which one do you think they will prefer? This is what is happening. What they do is that when they want to kill the cattle and you resist, they will attack you and turn around to say it is the Fulani that attack.⁴⁶

Two issues are contained in the account of the Fulani. The first is that their persecution at the hands of the Agogo people has to do with their relative economic advantage, which the sale of cattle has given them. The second is that they also suffer economic loss as a result of cattle rustling, blamed on the Agogo residents. In the same vein, the attacks on the Fulani are similar to the feelings of frustration of Agogo residents over cases of robbery and rape blamed on the Fulani herders. Respondents voice their anger on their helplessness in the face of these atrocities allegedly perpetrated by the herders. However, research findings show some level of exaggeration in these claims. Crime in the area is not restricted to the Fulani herders alone. There are instances where indigenes are also involved in robbery and rape. Attacks on the Fulani have resulted in several deaths as discovered by the lead researcher. However, the Fulani are also involved in violent attacks on the farmers and the populace. This they attributed to defense. In the response of one of the herders: "When they attack us, we have no choice than to defend ourselves. If we do not do that, they will kill us off. So, it is natural that we have to defend ourselves with whatever we have. And when we do that, they brand us attackers. We are only defending ourselves."⁴⁷

But underneath these accusations and counteraccusations is a fundamental factor of nationality and identity. The politics of ethnicity and nationality hinges on supremacy of indigenous population over those considered migrants. In this way of thinking, Fulani are regarded as strangers who came after the consolidation of the Ghana state. Several statements attest to this. In one of the responses: "We do not have Fulani as an ethnic group in Ghana. They all migrated from Nigeria, Mali, Burkina Faso and everywhere. They cannot come and destroy our land here. They must go back. They are not part of us."⁴⁸

All respondents in Agogo voiced the opinion that Fulani are strangers in the area and should move to where they came from. A Fulani respondent equally shared the same feeling: "It is a matter of hatred against us. My father was born in this country. I was born here in Ghana. I have the Ghana national identity card. I am a Ghanaian but they will never accept that. They just hate us. Now they say I must leave. But to where?"⁴⁹

All Fulani respondents subscribe to the hatred thesis. However, research findings show clearly that the migration of Fulani to the area is a fairly recent event. In that way they cannot be regarded as indigenous to the place. In a society that is strongly attached to primordial claims, agitations for expulsion based on feelings of frustration over Fulani activities will continue to feature prominently in the town.

The Politics of Expulsion and the Pastoralist Question in Ghana

Post-colonial governments have continually employed expulsion as a policy across West African states. As argued above, the Ghanaian government expelled foreigners in 1969 in the face of a dwindling national economy. In 1983, the Nigerian government under President Shehu Shagari expelled Ghanaians who had come to seek economic refuge in Nigeria following the collapse of the Ghanaian economy in the 70s.⁵⁰ In 1989, the Senegalese government sent pastoralists packing following clashes between them and the farmers.⁵¹ In 2012, there was an expulsion of Fulani inhabitants from some crisis-prone villages in the Plateau State by the Special Task Force (STF), which was charged with maintaining peace in that crisis-torn state, even without a policy of expulsion in place.⁵² A similar policy of expulsion was used in Atebulu District in the Bong Ahafo Region of Ghana in 1999 and 2000 to drive away Fulani herders, but according to Steve Tonah, it was fraught with inadequacies.⁵³ In the case of Agogo, the policy has not been a total success. This is due to cattle ownership and the involvement of traditional institutions. In an interview, Kewsi Aning argues that, there is no single Fulani herder in southern part of Ghana that can erect a homestead without the express permission of the local chiefs.⁵⁴ It is the local traditional chiefs that often invite the Fulani herders to come and occupy their lands in return for monetary returns. Secondly, every Fulani spoken to holds cattle for indigenous Ghanaians. According to Aning, if a Fulani herder has fifty head of cattle, you can be rest assured that twenty of them belonged to indigenous Ghanaians, particularly “big men” and those that are in government. Therefore, agitation for the expulsion of Fulani herders threatens the economic interests of the traditional and political elites.

But a fundamental issue poses a dilemma for the Ghanaian state in addressing the Fulani pastoralist question. This is the definition of Ghanaian citizenship. The Ghanaian constitution recognizes people born in Ghana and also allows people to acquire citizenship after residing for many years in Ghana. Several of the Fulani herders were born in Ghana and several of them possess the Ghanaian national identity and voters cards. In the face of the law, they are Ghanaians, but according to many people they are strangers. The difference between the people’s perception and the constitutional recognition constitutes a major dilemma for the Ghana state.

Conclusion

Pastoralists and nomads have a long pedigree of conflict and attempts at control by the state. They do not easily fit into categories and challenge the assumed salience and prominence of national borders as well as defying state attempts to regulate and control them.⁵⁵ As climate change is expected to increase, the issues and problems faced here will only be exacerbated as more pastoralists challenge international and internal borders for access to grazing land. Finding a solution to the conflict in light of an expected increase in pressures due to climate

change means it will be all the more urgent, for the issues and problems faced here will only be exacerbated.

In the Agogo area of Ghana, the state is seeking a solution that excludes the nomads in contrasts to efforts to sedentarize them. Excluding these people is probably an easier act of policy than trying to regulate and settle them. By defining them as intruders they support local farmers—i.e., those that are already under the aegis of the state. However, the elites themselves are part of the problem by keeping their own cattle, which constitute symbols of their wealth and status. They therefore exacerbate the problem by creating more pressure on land and fuelling the very type of conflict that they need to play a role in curtailing. Expulsion of pastoralists is obviously not a solution and highly charged, and not only because it violates constitutional rights of citizenship and birth. The case here shows a problem of legitimacy of the state as seen by the people not just the state. In this case the people are seeing the role of the state as one of protecting them from the illegitimate, i.e., the nomads. Yet the state is deeply involved through the political elite's own cattle-keeping practices.

Any agreement may not be satisfying to either of the hostile groups as it is ultimately about limited resources. The violence will remain endemic as both groups have land use practices that are in competition with one another. Relative deprivation theory suggests that this conflict will not be resolved as both groups will remain deprived of resources from the others actions or even existence. The extent to which this could become political violence directed at the state is low since the discontent is not shared, at least not between the groups even as it is from within them. Perhaps herein lies the crux of the problem and the start of a solution. If these people could see each other as victims of the world system and global warming then the state perhaps would be seen as the one contributing to their deprivation and discontent. Joint political action may be more meaningful and compelling. A useful concept here may be one of reconciliation. According to Ervin Staub, "Reconciliation means that victims and perpetrators, or members of hostile groups, do not see the past as defining the future, as simply a continuation of the past. It means that they come to see the humanity of one another, accept each other, and see the possibility of a constructive relationship."⁵⁶

There is no easy answer to the conflict and the violence. This article seeks to place these events in context and explain the policy within that context. The state in this instance cannot simply expel people, as the conditions causing the migration will continue to get worse as climate change continues. The pressures to move south will increase and national borders are never solid. Policy and laws must accept that these two communities are here to stay. Dealing with that may be a challenge, but is not one that denies people their citizenship rights, birthrights, or dignity. It is also a more honest appreciation of the interconnectedness of these peoples and their economies.

While climate change here is leading to or contributing to conflict, the relationship is not meant to be seen as a direct association. Climate change linked conflict is building on already existing relationships. So whether or not climate change will cause violence is premised off of this context—so the when and why will need further exploration. This also offers hope in that climate change need not lead to violence, but that violence can be mitigated through policy, social action, and better mutual understanding.

Notes

- 1 Basset 1988.
- 2 Hagberg 2000, Oppong 2002.
- 3 Tonah 2002.
- 4 This is geographically located in southern Ghana but echoes the policies and practices found in the north.
- 5 Gould 1974.
- 6 Tonah 2002, Bosiakoh 2008.
- 7 Dzorgbo 1998.
- 8 Ghana News Agency 2012.
- 9 Based on fieldwork conducted in Agogo town on 12 June 2013.
- 10 Moritz 2010, p. 139.
- 11 Brown, Hanmmill, and McLeman 2007, p. 1141.
- 12 Spencer 2007.
- 13 Holmberg 2008, p. 14.
- 14 Barnet and Adger 2012.
- 15 Hsiang, Burke, and Miguel 2013.
- 16 Hendrix and Glaser 2007.
- 17 Tonah 2002.
- 18 Tonah 2006.
- 19 Fritsche et al. 2012.
- 20 See Gleditsch 2012, Glieditsch, Nordas, and Salehyan 2007, Gartzke 2012, and Busby 2013 for such critiques.
- 21 Here we echo other psychological theories of violence such as frustration-aggression theory of conflict. See McDougall 1951, Dollard 1939, Dougherty and Pfaltzgraff 1951, and Bandura 1973.
- 22 See again Dollard 1939 or McDougall 1951 for a psychological theory of frustration-aggression to explain the shift to violence.
- 23 Kriesberg 2007.
- 24 Moritz 2010, p. 142.
- 25 Tonah 2006.
- 26 See Blench 2004 and Balling 2005.
- 27 Interview with Joseph Nti; conducted on 12 June 2013 at the Nana Akuoku Palace in Agogo.
- 28 Morgan 2011.
- 29 Agogo respondent in Agogo over the course of fieldwork in June and July 2013.
- 30 Joseph Nti confirmed this in an interview conducted on 12 June 2013.
- 31 Agogo respondent, in Agogo on 12 June 2013.
- 32 Bob Sarpong, the younger brother to the traditional chief who also speaks on his behalf, argues that it was beyond the power of the traditional rulers to expel herders from the area. According to him, that power belongs to the state and that people are mistaken in thinking

- it was Nana Sarpong, the traditional ruler, who harbors them. Interview with Chiefs at the Palace, June 2013.
- 33 Morgan 2011.
- 34 Ibid. Interview with chiefs at the palace also confirmed this.
- 35 This was confirmed by numerous interviews of both herders and farmers.
- 36 Morgan 2011.
- 37 Morgan 2011.
- 38 Ibid.
- 39 Ibid.
- 40 Ibid.
- 41 Joy Online 2011.
- 42 Ghana News Agency 2012.
- 43 Interview with Agogo farmer.
- 44 Agogo respondent.
- 45 Grass cutters are cane rats, *Thryonomys swinderianus* that are consumed locally. Agogo respondent comment.
- 46 Agogo farmer respondent.
- 47 Fulani respondents.
- 48 Agogo respondent.
- 49 Fulani respondent.
- 50 Akrasil 2012.
- 51 Tonah 2002, Schmitz 1999.
- 52 Ibrahim 2012.
- 53 Tonah 2002.
- 54 Kwesi Aning is the Director, Faculty of Academic Affairs and Research at the Kofi Annan International Peacekeeping Training Centre. Interviewed June, 2013.
- 55 Scott 2009.
- 56 Staub 2006, p. 868.

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