

**ANALYSIS OF THE STAKEHOLDERS' RESPONSES AND VARIATIONS IN
FARMER-FULANI HERDSMEN CONFLICTS AND THEIR IMPLICATIONS IN
NEOLIBERAL AFRICA: THE CASE STUDY OF GHANA**

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ABSTRACT

Farmer-Fulani herdsmen conflicts have remained the most dangerous threats to the economic and human security of most states in Africa; nonetheless, few studies exist on this critical subject. Using the qualitative approach, which involved a semi-structured interview guide and documentary analysis, the paper submits that four principal factors such as the destruction of livelihoods and properties, incidence of social vices of the Fulani herdsmen, pollution of river bodies by livestock, and lapses in the legal system of the state are responsible for these violent conflicts in Ashanti Akyem North District of Ghana. Following the conclusion, the paper recommends that the government explore partnerships with the international community and private sector organisations to drill more boreholes (solar-powered) in strategic locations for the Fulani herdsmen in the area to keep the cattle from moving haphazardly to destroy food crops. In addition, the paper entreats the government to put in place mechanisms to help design human rights-based policies in a preventive and responsive manner, such as the systematic settlement of conflicts by the parties per national and international human rights principles.

Keywords: Communities, Conflicts, Resource, Savannah, Transhumance

1. INTRODUCTION

Farmer-Fulani herdsmen conflicts, while an old phenomenon, has re-entered the lexicon of African political and conflict studies over the past few decades (Benjaminsen & Boubacar, 2021) because this evolving phenomenon is endangering human lives, properties, peace, and security (Krätli & Toulmin, 2020; Akov & Asua, 2021; Alao, Ayinde, Ogunjimi & Adebiyi, 2021). Case studies across Africa established that these conflicts have contributed to the loss of several lives, scores of injuries, and the destruction of many properties. For example, empirical research conducted by Homer-Dixon (1999) documented that conflicts between Farmer-Fulani herdsmen in 1989 at the borders of Senegal and Mauritania resulted in several fatalities, numerous injuries, and the destruction of properties. In addition, a study carried out in Udeni-Gida, Nigeria, found that 32 people were reported dead in December 2009, whereas 300 people perished in Nigeria due to Farmer-Fulani herdsmen clashes in 2013 (Okoli & Atelhe, 2014). Additionally, in June 2018, an attack on certain communities in Plateau, a state in the central belt of Nigeria, was said to have left about 200 people dead (Hamman & Haruna, 2018). Similarly, in Mali, the cycles of Farmer-Fulani herdsmen conflicts and reprisals have become progressively fatal since 2015, leading to approximately 700 deaths (Benjaminsen & Boubacar, 2021).

Historically, the influx of Fulani herdsmen in Ghana began before the dawn of colonial rule. These herdsmen originally dwelled in the Northern territories in the early 1920s and 1930s, migrating from Niger, Burkina Faso, Mali and other areas (Bukari, Bukari, Sow & Scheffran, 2020). Nonetheless, in the early 1990s, the herdsmen began drifting to all agro-ecological communities in the southern territories of Ghana to access the lush vegetation for their cattle, whilst others also settled with indigenous cattle owners to manage their herds (Bukari, Bukari, Sow & Scheffran, 2020). In Ghana, while Farmer-Fulani herdsmen have coexisted for past decades in a harmonious relationship, they occasionally experience conflicts due to a struggle for grazing fields and water for the cattle (Armah, Luginaah, Yengoh, Taabazuing & Yawson, 2014). For example, in 2015, a violent conflict erupted between farmers in the Gushegu District of Ghana and the Fulani herdsmen, resulting in 30 people dying and others getting injured (Bukari & Schareika, 2015). Besides, from 2009 to 2012, Farmer-Fulani herdsmen conflicts in Agogo in the Asante Akim North District of the Ashanti Region resulted in the death of 12 people and the destruction of properties in the host communities (Baidoo, 2014). Additionally, three soldiers

from the joint Military and Police task force were injured during the Farmer-Fulani herdsmen conflicts at Agogo in January 2018 (Kyei-Poakwah, 2018). Given the repetitive manner and dynamic nature of the conflicts between the host farmers and the Fulani herdsmen in the area, the conflict has been labelled as possibly the most infamous in Ghana (Paalo, 2020).

Following the threats and tensions that the Fulani herdsmen's activities pose to the host communities in Ghana, both governments and local authorities sanctioned a series of laws and decrees attempting to evict the Fulani herdsmen. Such laws and decrees include the Aliens Compliance Order in 1969, the expulsions of 1988/89 and 1999/2000, and the recent expulsions of Fulani herdsmen from the host communities by 'Operation Cowleg' forces under the supervision of REGSEC (Kyei-Poakwah, 2018). Though a step in the right direction, these policies and measures help find a permanent panacea to this problem. However, they did not result in the anticipated outcomes because these new destinations offer enabling conditions for their cattle to thrive (Soeters, Weesie & Zoomers, 2021).

Importantly, although the Farmer-Fulani herdsmen conflict is frequently presumed to be a fundamental issue due to longstanding hostility and struggle for scarce resources, there is less research on this subtle area in Ghana. Sadly, much of the seminal work on this subject matter overtly focused on farmer and herder conflicts, tenure insecurity and farmer's investment decisions (Kugbega & Aboagye, 2021), climate change, migration (Issifu, Darko & Paalo, 2022), stereotypes, prejudices and exclusion of Fulani pastoralists in Ghana (Bukari & Schareika, 2015), and cattle ranching and Farmer-Fulani herdsmen conflicts in sub-Saharan Africa (Ahmed & Kuusaana, 2021). Consequently, this paper attempts to unravel the drivers of Farmer-Fulani herdsmen conflicts in the Ashanti Akyem North District of Ghana and their economic and security implications to propose policy recommendations.

This study makes a two-fold contribution to the literature. First, the findings would enable the citizens to appreciate the dynamics of natural resource appropriation by government and local authorities and their impacts on the Farmer-Fulani herdsmen conflicts in host communities in Ghana. Second, the findings would inform the various stakeholders, such as the government and allied institutions, to design practical and realistic policies for resolving this phenomenon so that the interest of principal local actors, especially the farmers and herdsmen, are protected in the host communities.

The ensuing sections of this paper include a literature review, research methodology, results and discussions, and finally, the conclusion and policy implications.

2. REVIEW OF RELEVANT LITERATURE

2.1 Interrogating the drivers of Farmer-Fulani Herdsmen Conflicts in Neoliberal Africa

Interest in Farmer-Fulani herdsmen conflicts has gained currency in political science and conflict studies in neoliberal Africa (Mbah, Iwuamadi, Udeoji, Eze & Ezeibe, 2021). According to Tonah (2006), the Fulani herdsmen who settled in Africa before the onset of colonialism had good relations with the host communities. This is because, in the past, some farmers in host communities allowed these herdsmen to access harvested crop fields to feed these animals on a free-range basis while the animals' droppings fertilize their farmlands for the next planting season. Conversely, the rising numbers of herders' livestock and farm expansion based on mechanised cultivation techniques in Africa have largely generated increased competition over natural resources between Farmer-Fulani herdsmen. This practice, in part, results in frequent Farmer-Fulani herdsmen conflicts in African host communities.

Resource scarcity also accounts for the Farmer-Fulani herdsmen conflicts in Africa (Homer-Dixon, 1999). In his view, most developing countries rely on four basic environmental resources for survival, namely fresh-water, cropland, forests, and fish. However, these resources are rapidly depleting due to misuse, over-use, rising population growth, and climate change (Homer-Dixon, 1999). This emerging trend certainly puts some groups (farmers and Fulani herdsmen) in a state of stiff competition over marginal resources. The struggle over access to natural resources recurrently leads to conflicts between the farmers and the Fulani herdsmen in semi-arid sub-Saharan Africa (Tonah, 2006).

Similarly, Yembilah and Grant (2014) posit that the demand by the Fulani herdsmen for equal rights and access to resources is a cause of rising conflicts because the herdsmen are deemed strangers. Thus, the host communities generally launch unwarranted human rights violations on them, especially whenever the herders begin to demand equal rights in terms of access to social facilities, resources, and legal rights bestowed on the native citizens in the host communities. Additionally, Tonah (2006) espouses the growing incidence of the proliferation of the use of

small arms and light weapons in many parts of Africa, such as Burkina Faso, Central and Northern Mali, Central and Northern Nigeria, and Northern Niger and Chad, contributing factor to the rising levels of conflicts. In his opinion, this kind of business is done illegally by criminal gangs and professional smugglers, creating the opportunity for local farmers and Fulani herdsmen to easily access these small arms and weapons and misuse them to fuel conflicts.

Furthermore, some scholars (Moritz, 2012; Mwamfupe, 2015) argue that government policies geared towards improving agricultural activities favour farmers and restrict grazing movement and access to land and water resources for herders. Consequently, there is always competition between farmers and Fulani herdsmen over access to the grazing field and water resources, resulting in conflicts as a way of resolving disagreements.

Supporting the preceding standpoints, Tonah (2006) also claimed that the Fulani herdsmen caused several atrocities such as murder, assault, robbery and rape in the local communities, posing threats and dangers to the native people. Meanwhile, there are no efficient policies to fight these social vices in the host communities. The failure of the government and allied institutions to design and implement stiff policies to ameliorate these vices often leads to reprisal responses from both parties, leading to conflicts.

2.2 Anatomy of the Implications of Farmer-Fulani Herdsmen Conflicts in Neoliberal Africa

Farmer-Fulani herdsmen conflicts affect the lives and livelihood of the players and pose a threat to national food security since they distort the sustainability of agriculture and pastoral production (Moritz, 2012). During conflicts, farmers lose a part or the whole of their farms and crops through cattle grazing and indiscriminate bush burning, leaving the land bare and susceptible to erosion and degradation, rendering it unsuitable for agricultural purposes. Conversely, the herdsmen also lose their cows to indiscriminate killing by the farmers. This regular practice affects the yield of the farmers and the Fulani herdsmen, resulting in low-income levels (Moritz, 2012). For example, in 2015, Nigeria lost US\$13.7 billion in revenue due to Farmer-Fulani herdsmen conflicts in Benue, Kaduna, Nasarawa, and the Plateau States. Moreover, in March 2017, attacks by herders from northern states and other neighbouring countries such as Cameroon, Chad, and Niger cost the state approximately US\$634 million (Nwangwu & Enyiazu, 2019).

Okoli and Atelhe's (2014) studies on conflicts between Farmer-Fulani herdsmen claim that apart from the killings by nomads and reprisal attacks by the indigenes, some people become widows, widowers and orphans, while others are maimed, injured and internally displaced, resulting in poor human security in Nigeria. Furthermore, an empirical study that attempted to analyse the Farmer-Fulani herdsmen conflicts in Africa posited that these conflicts had caused civil wars. For example, civil wars in Chad and Niger started due to competition between the Tubu, Arab and Fulani herdsmen, while the tension between the Tuaregs and the state of Mali, Chad and Niger has been linked to resource conflicts (Shettima & Tar, 2008). In addition, in Rwanda, the struggle for land between groups played a key role in the Rwandan genocide (Homer-Dixon, 1999).

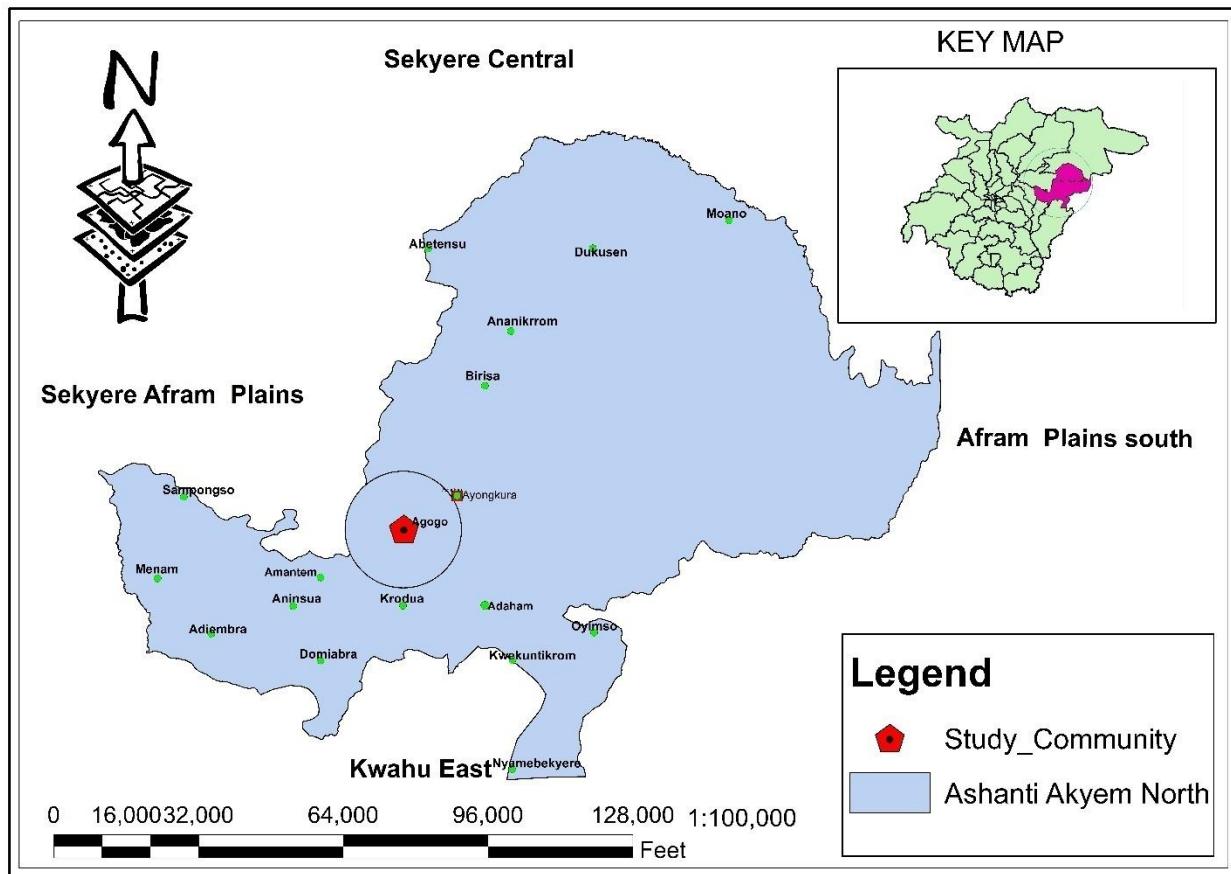
3. METHODOLOGICAL IMPERATIVES

3.1 Research Approach, Study Context, Sampling Technique, Data and Analysis

This study was anchored in the interpretative paradigm and a qualitative approach. This approach was selected because the researcher attempted to gain in-depth data on the responses and variations of the stakeholders on the drivers and implications of the Farmer-Fulani herdsmen conflicts in the Ashanti Akyem North District of Ghana. Typically, the district is one of the 43 districts in the Ashanti Region of Ghana. Initially, it was part of the former Asante Akim North District, with Konongo as the capital town. In 2007, the district attained municipal status to become Asante Akim North Municipal. In July 2012, the northern part of the district was carved off to create a new Asante Akim North District, with its capital town being Agogo (Office of the Ashanti Region, 2020).

The district is situated in the eastern segment of the Ashanti Region and lies between latitudes 6° 30' and 7° 30' worth and longitudes 0° 00' 15' and 10° 20' west (Ghana Statistical Service, 2012). The vegetation of the district is primarily tropical rainforest, and the people in the district are predominantly farmers. Crops cultivated in the area include maize, watermelon, cocoyam, groundnut, yam, plantain, cassava and tomatoes. Lumbering and charcoal production is also rife in the area. In terms of occupation, approximately 72.7% of households in the district engage in agriculture (Office of the Ashanti Region, 2020). According to Tonah (2006), the Fulani herdsmen were first spotted in the district around 1996. However, these pastoralists had already

been dwelling in the Afram Plains (see Figure 1: Map of Ashanti Akyem North District of Ghana).



Source: Geography and Rural Development, KNUST-Ghana

Figure 1: Map of Ashanti Akyem North District

The choice of the Ashanti Akyem North District as a test case is appropriate because the district had experienced scores of recurring violent conflicts between farmers and Fulani herdsmen in Ghana.

The purposive sampling technique was used to choose the participants because the data sought could only be obtained by the identified categories of participants. In total, 25 participants were chosen from the study setting (see Table 1: Sampled participants selected for the study).

Table 1: Sampled participants selected for the study

Participants	Number
Member of Parliament	1
District Chief Executive	1
Traditional Rulers	3
Police Officers	4
Security Official	2
Local Farmers	4
Assembly Members	3
Unit committee Members	3
Fulani Herdsmen	4
Total	25

Source: Researcher's own conceptualisation

Data were obtained from the participants through the use of semi-structured interviews. All interviews were informal and conversational; thus, it made it feasible for the researcher to explore further when participants' responses to a question demanded follow-up questioning. The interview focused on the relationship, drivers, and economic and security implications of the violent conflicts between farmers and herders on the inhabitants of host communities. Interviews were conducted in the quiet outdoors on the compounds of participants during the evening. Each interview lasted between 15 to 20 minutes. The choice of evenings for the interview was suitable because it was challenging to meet participants in the morning because they leave as early as 5:30 am for their farms and cattle grazing fields. The interviews were audio recorded for evidence, descriptions and direct quotes of the participants' responses and variations of the recurring violent conflicts. Further, the internal validity of the approach was established through the checking method, in which the content prepared during the interview was given back to the respondents to authenticate the accuracy. In parallel to the interviews, secondary documents such as government reports, books, manuscripts, a collection of media reports, and news that focused

on the Farmer-Fulani herdsmen conflicts were also generated from the websites, archives, and the office of the Ashanti Akyem North District to augment the primary data for the analysis.

Data were processed and analysed manually using several steps. The first step centred on systematically evaluating the raw information to ascertain the initial themes and concepts that emerged. The second step focused on building a thematic framework encompassing themes and sub-themes after classifying general outlines at the first stage. In the third step, the themes were defined and indexed by allocating some numbers to themes that had related interpretations. This fostered a categorisation of thematic charts to blend the information for the analysis. The final step focused on discussing the findings in the context of the existing literature. Although the findings cannot be generalised, they give us an explorative in-depth insight into the Farmer-Fulani herdsmen conflicts.

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

4.1 Rivers of Farmer-Fulani Herdsmen Conflicts

4.1.1 Destruction of livelihoods and properties

Data gathered from participants revealed that farming activities in the district are generally done on a large scale; thus, the farmers use large tracts of land for farms which, sometimes, stretch into the areas that herdsmen use as grazing routes for their cattle. However, farmers also resort to reprisal attacks such as cattle killing to protect their farm crops. This practice generally destroys the livelihoods and properties of native farmers and Fulani herdsmen. Confirming these findings, one of the traditional rulers remarked:

The activities of the Fulani herdsmen are always damaging farms. For instance, last year, these Fulani herdsmen deliberately allowed their herds to graze on farmlands as feed and destroyed my 10 acres of farmlands. This practice has made farming precarious, imperilling food production (Fieldwork, 2022).

The issue was probed further during an interview with a Fulani cattle owner in Agogo. He aptly stated:

Generally, we are aware that sometimes the activities of the herdsmen, such as cattle grazing, cause damage to the plantations. However, the indiscriminate killing of cattle by the farmers through poisoning and shooting with guns largely causes pain and loss to the herdsmen causing them to stage reprisal attacks, which, in turn, result in farmer-herdsmen conflicts (Fieldwork, 2022).

Although the Fulani herdsmen are aware that some of their activities destroy the farmlands, it can be established based on the evidence uncovered from the findings that these farmers also purposefully take advantage of the situation to kill their cattle and cause them financial loss. Therefore, conflicts between farmers and Fulani herdsmen in the district are likely caused by a rising trend of behaviour that damages both parties' means of subsistence. These findings are consistent with earlier studies, which hold that expanding farming activities into grazing fields and livestock trails creates enough room for grazing livestock to access crop farms, resulting in livestock-induced crop damage in host communities and the frequently occurring farmer and herdsmen conflicts (Tonah, 2006).

4.1.2 Incidence of social vices of the Fulani Herdsmen

The findings further documented that the Fulani herdsmen caused several atrocities in the communities, such as murder, assault, robbery, and rape. Such incidences of social vices are also responsible for violent conflicts in the Ashanti Akyem North District. In an interview with one of the Assembly Members, he aptly stated:

In the past twenty-five years, the inhabitants of the communities used to walk from Kwekuntikrom to their farms in Nyamebekyere. Sometimes, these people returned home as late as 9pm. Many of these farmers have stopped because these Fulani herdsmen repeatedly assault, rape and murder native farmers, especially women, when they meet them alone walking on that road. These acts and practices pose dangers to the communities, as a result, sometimes, some communities

stage reprisal attacks on them, which in turn result in farmer-herdsmen conflicts(Fieldwork, 2022).

The issue was probed further during an interview with the police officers in the area. One of them remarked:

The Fulani herdsmen in the district are engaging in armed robbery and banditry activities such as food destruction, cattle rusting, animal and food crops theft, and impounding motorbikes. They generally commit these criminalities because they are armed with sophisticated arms; thus, they can easily gun you down when you confront them during their robbery activities. In protecting themselves against these acts of criminalities, the locals generally engage in reprisal responses, resulting in conflict between the herdsmen and smallholder farmers (Fieldwork, 2022).

The issue was further probed in an interview with the Fulani cattle owners. One of them, who was initially reluctant to speak, joined the conversation and remarked:

Sadly, every criminal activity such as murder, assault, robbery and rape case that is recorded in Agogo and the adjoining communities is attributed to Fulani herdsmen. Honestly, these robbers mask themselves and purportedly speak and dress as Fulani because they are aware of the public stereotype of Fulani herdsmen as armed robbers. This practice forces the local people to stage reprisal attacks, which lead to the Farmer-Fulani herdsmen conflicts (Fieldwork, 2022).

From these findings, Fulani herdsmen are accused of theft, rape, assault, and murder of farmers. Yet, the institutions to deal with these complaints emanating from Farmer-Fulani herdsmen interactions are lacking and inefficient. Thus, many communities have created community-based armed groups to supposedly guard against Fulani herdsmen's nefarious activities, such as the destruction of farms, theft, and rape, that caused threats to the lives of the inhabitants. Conversely, these groups that are supposed to guard the communities against

the destruction of farms and other social vices caused by Fulani herdsmen end up engaging in reprisal actions, leading to conflict. These findings confirm Tonah's (2006) observation that the absence of effective policies to ameliorate crimes such as murder, assault, robbery and rape in the communities often leads to reprisal responses against the herdsmen, resulting in conflicts.

4.1.3 Pollution of river bodies by livestock

The pollution of river bodies by livestock was also identified as a key driver responsible for the conflicts between farmers and Fulani herdsmen. The data indicated that these herdsmen usually drive their herds to contaminate the Bontre and Asuofu rivers, serving as the main drinking water source for inhabitants in the Mpesempese, Mantukwa and Aberewapong communities. Meanwhile, these Fulani herdsmen are less adamant about using the regulatory systems for such rivers. This issue was further explored during the interview with the participants to validate the findings. One of the local farmers from Mantukwa remarked:

Farmers in the Mantukwa and the surrounding communities are suffering because, whenever we come to our farms, we drink from the same river that is being polluted by the livestock with their hoofs, and droppings. Seemingly, this kind of activity largely triggers indiscriminate reprisal attacks on the Fulani herdsmen, contributing to the escalation of the conflict (Fieldwork, 2022).

Additionally, the issue was explored in an interview with Fulani herdsmen, and one of the discussants recalled:

We (Fulani herdsmen) use this river as the main source of drinking water for our cattle, but we regulate the process of accessing the water to ensure that the river is not polluted through the activities of our cattle, because we know that the same river is used by the local farmers whenever they come to their farms. Yet, sometimes, these watchdog groups in the communities launch reprisal attacks on our cattle because the main source of drinking water for inhabitants is being contaminated by our livestock whenever these herdsmen go

there to access water from the rivers for their cattle (Fieldwork, 2022).

Confirming these findings, the District Chief Executive said in an interview:

Truly, in Ashanti Akyem North District, one of the conditions stated between the traditional council and the Fulani herdsmen in the agreement was that the Fulani herders were required to construct boreholes to provide a source of drinking water for their livestock. However, this agreement was not fulfilled by the Fulani herdsmen, resulting in the cancellation of the agreement by the Kumasi High Court in 2012. Now, these herdsmen routinely take their animals to water sources used by the inhabitants as sources of drinking water for their animals, which, in part, leads to the pollution of these rivers. This growing practice is one of the drivers accounting for the Farmer-Fulani herdsmen conflict in Agogo and the surrounding communities (Fieldwork, 2022).

From the narratives, it can be established that the non-existence of sufficient sources of drinking water for the livestock of the herdsmen in Agogo and the surrounding communities generally causes these herdsmen to access water from rivers used by the inhabitants of the farming communities such as Mpesempese, Mantukwa and Aberewapong as the main sources of drinking water for their cattle. Meanwhile, this practice is not part of the agreement signed between the traditional council and the herdsmen when lands were released to them. These findings show that this practice carried out by the herdsmen ends up creating tension between the herdsmen and the locals. These findings align with Homer-Dixon's (1999) submission that the struggle for access to scarce resources for survival due to growth and climate change often results in conflicts between farmers and Fulani herdsmen in the host communities.

4.1.4 Lapses in the legal system of the state

Information gathered also reveals that the legal system, which has the dictate to resolve and avert conflicts through the delivery of fairness to all people without fear and favour, has not been efficient in carrying out that task. These lapses have caused people to lose trust in the legal

system; hence, people resort to conflicts as a useful strategy to pursue fairness in society. During an interview with the assembly members, one of them remarked:

The court system does not respond swiftly in punishing murderers, since the country's law enforcement and criminal justice systems are inefficient. Therefore, people have become irritated that both the native farmers and Fulani herdsmen generally prefer to use violence as a strategy to address their problems (Fieldwork, 2022).

Moreover, the issue of lapses in the legal system of the state was further explored in an interview with the Fulani herdsmen. One of them remarked:

Both local farmers and the Fulani herdsmen do not trust the legal system. They are aware that the system is prejudiced and relaxed; in that, the court typically prefers to soothe tensions rather than to pursue justice, when cases of farmers and Fulani herdsmen are sent to court. Consequently, both the native farmers and the Fulani herdsmen prefer to use conflicts as a way of addressing their disagreements (Fieldwork, 2022).

From these excerpts, it can be established that the court systems are not proactive in pursuing justice when cases of Farmer-Fulani herdsmen conflicts are sent before the court. Thus, the farmers and Fulani herdsmen prefer to use arms instead of the legal system for justice, resulting in increased conflicts in the district. These findings conform to the previous works of Moritz (2012) and Mwamfupe (2015), who argue that government policies and the court system are unfair in addressing land tenure use and land conflict. Hence, the farmers and herdsmen lack confidence in them and thus resort to conflicts to resolve disagreements.

4.2 Implications of the Farmer-Fulani Herdsmen Conflicts on Economic and Human Security

4.2.1 Economic implication

Data from the field indicate that farming is the main occupation of many of the inhabitants of the district; thus, the Farmer-Fulani herdsmen conflictsduly affect the daily livelihoods of families. Confirming these findings, one of the assembly membersrecounts:

Many of the inhabitants in this district are farmers,we mainly engage in farming activities. Therefore, the destruction of our farmlands, bush burning, and ‘threats’ by the Fulani herdsmen in our communities affect our farm proceeds, and, thus, pose a huge danger to the daily livelihoods of families in the district (Fieldwork, 2022).

Similarly, one of the Fulani herdsmenstated:

The indiscriminate killing of our livestock is very worrisome because we do not go to school, and cattle rearing is our main occupation;that is what we do to providefor our families (Fieldwork, 2022).

From these findings, it was found that the Farmer-Fulani herdsmen conflicts impact agricultural yield as farmers find it challenging to secure the services of cattle needed for ploughing, weeding of fields and transporting harvested crops.These findings agree with Moritz’s (2012) submission that farmer-herdsmen conflicts in host communities affect the lives and livelihood of those players and also serve as a threat to national food security primarily because it distorts the sustainability of agriculture and pastoral production.

4.2.2 Human security

The data revealed that the Farmer-Fulani herdsmen conflicts adversely impacted human security in Agogo and other communities in the district. Confirming this, one of the police officers stated:

The conflict between the farmers and Fulani herdsmen has resulted in the loss of several lives, population displacements, livelihood crises, and emotional and physical injuries to many people(Fieldwork, 2022).

The narratives show that social relations built over the years between these livelihood groups within Agogo and neighbouring communities are destroyed. The data indicate that the Fulani herdsmen consider the farmers as potential enemies that threaten their survival and destiny. In contrast, the farmers also see the herdsmen as intruders in their communities who are bent on damaging their farms' products. This creates an atmosphere of mutual distrust and animosity that gives rise to conflict, resulting in hunger, unemployment, health hazards, and loss of property. These findings confirm Okoli and Atelhe's (2014) previous conclusions that apart from the killings by nomads and reprisal attacks by the indigenes, some people become widows, widowers and orphans, while others are maimed or injured, and others are internally displaced due to farmers and Fulani herdsmen's conflicts in Nigeria.

5. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This article investigated the drivers of Farmer-Fulani herdsmen conflicts and their implications for economic and human security in the Ashanti Akyem North District of Ghana. The findings revealed that these conflicts are mainly caused by a web of factors, such as the destruction of livelihoods and properties, the incidence of social vices by the Fulani herdsmen, pollution of river bodies by livestock, and lapses in the legal system of the state. However, in the past decades, government policies have failed to resolve the Farmer-Fulani herdsmen conflicts. This phenomenon has persistently resulted in regular threats due to the mistrust, tension and use of small arms and light weapons by the farmers and Fulani herdsmen in the host farming communities in the Ashanti Akyem North District of Ghana. Following the above, the paper recommends the following steps to resolve these recurrent conflicts:

- The Government of Ghana must explore partnerships with the international community and the private sector to drill more boreholes (solar-powered) in strategic locations in the Ashanti Akyem North District to enhance the dry season resilience of the Fulani herdsmen, as a way of co-ordinating and minimising the movements in the farming season to prevent the destruction of livelihoods and properties.
- Further, the government should evaluate and legally determine transhumance routes and ensure that security personnel are deployed to protect the routes of the Fulani herdsmen. They should also facilitate the co-ordination of herdsmen's operations with farmers to

alleviate conflicts by forming local community committees on conflict prevention and resolution as defined in the ECOWAS Protocol on Transhumance.

- The government must formulate human rights-based policies in all preventive and response efforts, including systematic settlement following national and international human rights principles to resolve the abuses and violations experienced by the Farmer-Fulani herdsmen during conflicts.

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