

Conflict actors influence the dynamics of agropastoral policies to accommodate their preferences and expectations in Ghana

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ABSTRACT

In many sub-Saharan African countries, numerous studies ascribe biases and inconsistencies in agropastoral policies to the perennial farmer–herder conflicts. However, insights into the assumptions underlying agropastoral policies and the strategies that actors involved in the conflict use to influence these policies are limited in countries with high incidence of such conflicts. We engaged the ‘act of governmentality’ (ways of governing) to examine how agropastoral policies in Ghana from colonial to contemporary times have influenced farmer–herder conflicts, and examined the strategies used by key conflict actors to influence the agropastoral policy process. Data were collected through documentary review, interviews, focus group discussions and facilitated workshops with a range of conflict actors such as farmers, pastoralists, chiefs, farmer and herder associations, and public officials. Our analyses indicated that whereas the colonial administration facilitated cattle ranching among natives of the Gold Coast, the postcolonial administration changed the approach by adopting a seemingly hostile strategy that largely neglected pastoralism for almost five decades. The state now favours sedentarisation, an approach that has been rebuffed by many farmers, farming communities, and some pastoralists. Policy inconsistencies have created tensions and a dynamic struggle across spatial scales, with each actor coalition employing diverse strategies to influence agropastoral policies to accommodate their preferences and expectations. The outcome of each policy cycle became an input for further contestation in a resource-depleting process that failed to produce equitable outcomes. Achieving a sustainable negotiated solution requires moving beyond the current segmentation towards well-structured and inclusive multi-stakeholder dialogue that allows for proper consideration of all actors’ concerns.

Keywords: environmental governance, farm–herder conflicts, Ghana, multiple governmentalities, nomadic herdsman, pastoralism, public policy, rangeland governance.

Introduction

Violent conflicts between farmers and pastoralists, popularly referred to as farmer–herder conflicts, have increased in many sub-Saharan African countries. The conflicts normally involve migratory herdsman who are mostly of Fulani origin (the largest pastoralist social group in West Africa) and sedentary farmers and/or farming communities. The conflicts have led to the loss of human life, maiming, destruction of food crops, killing of cattle, and insecurity among farming and pastoral communities (Turner 2004; Moritz 2006a; Benjaminsen *et al.* 2009; Abubakari *et al.* 2014; Kuusaana and Bukari 2015; Agyemang 2017). For example, 38 farmers were allegedly killed and many people wounded in a single day by pastoralists in Kilosa, Tanzania, in December 2000 (Benjaminsen *et al.* 2009). In total, 5479 fatalities were recorded from 1830 incidents of conflict involving farmers and pastoralists between 2017 and 2020 in central Mali (Krätli and Toulmin 2020).

Many factors precipitate farmer–herder conflicts, including resource scarcity, the competition over scarce land and water resources (Homer-Dixon 2010; Bukari and

Kuusaana 2018), identity and ethnocentrism (Tonah 2003, 2006; Bukari and Schareika 2015; Maingwa 2017), and political ecology¹ (Turner 2004; Benjaminsen *et al.* 2009; Moritz 2010; Benjaminsen and Svarstad 2021, p. 157–178). For example, Tonah (2006) attributed the farmer–herder conflicts in northern Ghana to competition for land and water resources that arose from population increase from 5500 in 1950 to 25,000 in 1960. Walwa (2020) reported that government officials in Tanzania blamed farmer–herder conflicts on climate change, and competition between farmers and pastoralists that had arisen from overstocking of livestock above defined carrying capacities. Conversely, Bukari and Schareika (2015) ascribed farmer–herder conflicts in Ghana to negative stereotypes and prejudices against Fulani pastoralists. They reported that second- and third-generation Ghanaian Fulanis are regarded as immigrants and non-citizens in certain parts of the country, and are excluded from accessing land and other resources. Political ecologists reject the explanation that resource scarcity causes conflicts, defining the environment simply as an arena in which social, political, and economic conflicts among actors are played out (Moritz 2006a). They hold that public authorities and development agencies in Africa perceive pastoralism as unproductive, unorganised, inefficient, contributing little to national economies, and environmentally destructive (Benjaminsen *et al.* 2009; Benjaminsen and Svarstad 2021; Moritz 2010; Nori and Scoones 2023). Therefore, it is perhaps not surprising that agropastoral policies in many sub-Saharan African countries favour crop production over pastoralism, with some countries not recognising pastoralists' right to pasture (Bassett 1988; Tonah 2003). This invariably provokes tensions between farmers and herders. For instance, a strong emphasis on food-crop development at the farmer–herder nexus in Tanzania is documented to have systematised an anti-pastoralist climate in the country (Benjaminsen *et al.* 2009). Consequently, in many sub-Saharan Africa countries, pastoralism remains on the margin in political debates, with small pastoral populations impeding access to political power and the ability to coherently influence policies that harness synergies between them and small-scale farmers (Scoones 2021). Tensions remain high among these competing actors.

Many actors have sought to manage tensions between farmers and herders with limited success. Customary authorities have previously used mediation and compensation (Bukari *et al.* 2018), whereas post-independent governments used expulsion and sedentarisation policies to manage the conflicts in Ghana. Herders of Fulani origin have been expelled, declared persona non-grata and prevented from entering and operating in Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana, Mauritania, Nigeria and other African countries in the past (Tonah 2000; Olaniyan *et al.* 2015). However,

Tonah (2005) suggested that the forceful expulsions of Fulani herdsmen across regional and national borders have been unable to manage the conflicts, but merely moved them from one region to another. Other countries (e.g. Ethiopia and Tanzania) have attempted sedentarisation by confining pastoralism to defined areas (Tobler *et al.* 2003; Benjaminsen *et al.* 2009; Little and Behnke 2010). This has been unsuccessful in managing conflicts because of limited land areas assigned to herders, that force them to search for pastures and water outside the confined areas (Benjaminsen *et al.* 2009).

Policies seek to reconfigure how existing social relations are ordered either by reforming power relations or by creating new subjects (people who conform to policies). Actors' perception of fairness in addressing their concerns influences their level of support for and the assumed legitimacy of a policy, thus affecting implementation success. Yet, the strategies actors use to influence agropastoral policies have been underexplored in the farmer–herder nexus. Studies that have documented policies the Ghanaian state has used to manage the perennial farmer–herder conflicts (e.g. Amanor 1995; Tonah 2003, 2006; Bukari and Kuusaana 2018) do not evaluate how particular perspectives and the interests they reflect are incorporated into policies aimed at managing the conflicts. Additionally, there is a dearth of knowledge on the assumptions underlying the policies and the strategies used by key actors involved in the conflicts to influence or resist agropastoral policies in Ghana.

We engaged the 'act of governmentality' (ways of governing) as an analytical lens to examine the notions underlying the policies used by the Government of Ghana to manage farmer–herder conflicts, their outcomes, and the strategies used by the key conflict actors to influence or resist agropastoral policies from colonial to contemporary time. We specifically: (1) analysed the focus, mode of implementation, and outcomes of agropastoral policies on farmer–herder conflicts in Ghana from colonial to the present time, and (2) examined the strategies used by the key farmer–herder conflict actors to influence agropastoral policies in Ghana.

Understanding the strategies used by key actors involved in farmer–herder conflicts to influence agropastoral policies may hold new insights for transforming the conflicts, and yield mitigating options that optimise the contributions of farmers, pastoralists, government, and other actors involved in the conflicts to food security, livelihoods and environmental protection. Keeley and Scoones (2012) theorised that the process by which particular actors become established in (and others excluded from) the policy debate, and how, once established, such positions get challenged and transformed equally, influence the policy outcome.

We used Ghana as a case study because cases of farmer–herder conflicts have been rising there over the

¹Political ecology combines the concern of ecology and a broadly defined political economy, with emphasis given to the constantly shifting dialectic between society and land-based resources, and also within classes and groups within society itself (Blaike and Brookfield 1987).

past two decades. For instance, indigenous farmers raided a cattle-herding village in Zamashegu in the Gushegu District in the North East Region of Ghana, killed 13 men and injured several people in 2011, following allegations of food-crop destruction by herdsmen in the village (Abubakari *et al.* 2014). Allegations of rape, maiming, destruction of food crops and cattle killing led to attacks and counter-attacks between herdsmen and farming communities in the Agogo Traditional Area in the Asante Akim North Municipality of the Ashanti Region between 2002 and 2010 (Bukari and Schareika 2015; Paalo 2020; Yeboah and Brobbey 2023). Over 60,000 cattle were expelled from the Agogo Traditional Area in 2018, following a court order (Olaniyan *et al.* 2015; Paalo 2020). Cattle killing by state security agencies still continues in the municipality any time there is a perception of cattle population build-up in the area. A herdsman was alleged to have killed a 15-year-old boy on 17 January 2022 at Nhyiaeso, a farming community near Agogo, in retaliation for the killing of his cattle by unknown community members.² Farmer–herder conflicts in Ghana have been characterised by partisan politics, ethnocentrism, institutional maneuvering and failure, and subregional policies such as the ECOWAS³ Protocol on free movement of people and animals (Tonah 2003; Olaniyan *et al.* 2015; Paalo 2020). Furthermore, herdsmen of Fulani origin have been expelled on two occasions (1988 and 1999) by the Government of Ghana to neighbouring Burkina Faso (Tonah 2003).

We show that farmer–herder conflicts in Ghana are rooted in historical, institutional and policy contexts, and political ideologies (i.e. political ecology). We further describe how agropastoral policies in Ghana have been driven by market interest and responses to the narratives and actions pursued by actors in farmer–herder conflicts.

The paper proceeds as follows. We first present the analytical framework that guided the study and this is followed by a description of the data-collection and -analysis methods. The findings are then presented and discussed, ending with conclusions and recommendations.

Analytical framework

To unpack the history and dynamics of actors at the farmer–herder conflict nexus, we drew on the ‘act of governmentality’ as an analytical lens. Foucault (2008) defined government as the ‘conduct of conduct’ but Dean (2010, p. 18) provided a detailed definition of government, as follows:

any more or less calculated and rational activity, undertaken by a multiplicity of authorities and agencies,

employing a variety of techniques and forms of knowledge, that seek to shape conduct by working through the desires, aspirations, interests, and beliefs of various actors, for definite but shifting ends and with a diverse set of relatively unpredictable consequences, effects and outcomes.

Governmentality, then, refers to the ways of governing, different modes or mentalities of government, how individuals think about government, and the different rationalities involved in different types of government (Foucault 2008; Dean 2010; Fletcher 2010). Governmentality also denotes the study of how states use practices, techniques, and rationalities to shape the subjectivity of citizens by influencing their beliefs and actions (Dean 2010; Fletcher 2010).

Fletcher (2010, 2017) hypothesised that states use four governmentalities, namely discipline, sovereignty, neoliberalism, and governing according to truth, to ‘conduct the conduct’ of citizens. Discipline entails governance through encouraging internalisation of norms and values. Sovereignty relates to governance through top-down creation and enforcement of regulations. Neoliberalism relates to governance through manipulation of external incentive structures. Truth as an act of governance is concerned with governance in accordance with particular conception of the nature and order of the universe (Fletcher 2010, 2017).

The act of governmentality has been widely used in political ecology to understand how power works in environmental governance (e.g. Miller and Rose 2008; Bluwstein 2017; Choi 2020). Studies on government and governmentality start by asking ‘what authorities of various sorts wanted to happen, in relation to problems defined how, in pursuit of what objects, through what strategies’ (Rose 1999). Governmentalities do not operate in isolation; policy makers often seek to operationalise multiple governmentalities. Choi (2020) examined how local residents of Jeungdo in South Korea shaped their environmental behaviours. Whereas some local residents conformed, others contested or manipulated governmental ecotourism regulations. Hansen (2022) applied a governmentality lens to the European Union (EU) Forest Law Enforcement Governance and Trade (FLEGT) Voluntary Partnership Agreement (VPA) in Ghana. He identified that the Ghanaian Government is using multiple governmentalities to address deforestation and degradation and that the sovereign power and neoliberal governmentality in the FLEGT-VPA have not been well accepted by forest communities and farmers. They feel FLEGT-VPA primarily focuses on illegal logging and a particular understanding of the phenomenon, while pushing equally important issues such

²<https://www.myjoyonline.com/herdsman-allegedly-butchers-15-year-old-boy-at-nhyiaeso-near-agogo/>

³ECOWAS stands for Economic Community of West African States. It is a 15-member regional group with a mandate of promoting economic integration in all fields of activity of the constituting countries.

as forest and tree tenure, access and benefit sharing to a secondary position.

Li (2007) argued that Foucault and other governmentality scholars did not consider the results or effect of government strategies; they were convinced with the rationality of the interventions and typically stop short of examining the entanglement of idea with reality. Li (2007) called for expansion of governmentality studies to include reaction to government strategies or policies (referred to as 'counter practices'). Counter practices can be considered as acts of resistance, and can be open (publicly declared) or undisclosed, close or hidden, or infra politics (Scott 1985; Cavanagh and Benjaminsen 2015). Acts of compromises and accommodations are also considered counter practices. Li (2007) suggested two empirical questions for governmentality studies: (1) 'What are people connected with a government program as proponents, implementers or targets, actually doing?'; and (2) 'How are their practices interpreted by differently situated subjects?' We took inspiration from the governmentality framework and the suggested empirical questions from Li (2007) to develop the following operational questions for the study:

1. What has been the rationale of agropastoral policies and other policies enacted to address farmer–herder conflicts from the colonial to present time Ghana?
2. What mechanisms, procedures, instruments and techniques have the Ghanaian state used to implement these policies?
3. What subjectivities have been shaped by the policies?
4. What are the outcomes of these policies?
5. How do actors involved in the farmer–herder conflicts perceive these policies and how have they reacted to or influenced the policies?
6. What strategies or counter practices do the conflict actors use to influence agropastoral policies?

The use of the act of governmentality to unpack agropastoral policies allows for an in-depth analysis of assumptions underlying the policies, the contribution of the policies to farmer–herder conflicts, and the reaction of arable farmers, pastoralists, and other conflict actors. The analytical framework underscores the heterogeneous nature of the conflict actors, their varied modes of interactions, and continued negotiations and compromises in agropastoral policy processes. The governmentality approach enables a thorough analysis of the mechanisms actors use to influence environmental governance, and establish the extent various actors succeed or fail, and reasons for successes and failures.

Methods

Data collection and analysis

A predominantly qualitative research design was employed, drawing on data from multiple sources for triangulation and reliability of the information generated. Data were collected in four phases, including preliminary data collection using the ECRIS⁴ model to define research indicators, policy reviews, in-depth interviews, and facilitated workshops. Field data collection commenced in November 2019 at Agogo in the Asante Akim North Municipal and Drobonso in the Sekyere Afram Plains District, both in the Ashanti Region of Ghana (Fig. 1). The locations were selected because of their long histories and prevalence of farmer–herder conflicts. We selected and visited eight communities (six at Agogo and two at Drobonso) where conflicts were prevalent, and prepared and refined a series of provisional qualitative indicators we had developed. We selected and interviewed arable farmers, landowners, religious and traditional leaders, groups and associations related to the conflicts, media houses, market women and abattoirs on the basis of their availability. We used snowball sampling to select herders and cattle owners. These actors were interviewed to obtain first-hand information on the nature of the conflict and the actors involved, as well as the effects of the conflicts on the local people and the local economy. Heads of two senior high schools were interviewed to ascertain the impacts of the conflicts on education. We also interviewed officials of the two main political parties in Ghana, the New Patriotic Party and the National Democratic Congress, to understand their position and strategies on managing the recurring farmer–herder conflicts. Officials of the district assemblies (local government) and district offices of the Ministry of Food and Agriculture were interviewed to ascertain the effects of conflicts on human security, development and agriculture in the two districts. The police were interviewed to ascertain the veracity of alleged crimes related to the conflicts, and the impacts of the conflicts on human security in the two districts.

An initial facilitated national stakeholder workshop involving 60 participants was held in November 2019 to explain the purposes of the study, present findings from the ECRIS model, solicit views, and identify additional actors, additional issues and qualitative indicators not captured under the ECRIS model. The workshop took place at Ejisu, a town outside the conflict zone in the Ashanti Region, to ensure the safety of participants, as arable farmers and herders were hitherto unwilling to sit together in any conflict-affected community. The workshop participants comprised representatives of arable farmers, pastoralists, farmer and pastoralist groups, youth groups, traditional leaders, religious

⁴ECRIS is a French acronym for 'Enquête collective rapide d'identification des conflits et des groupes stratégiques', which translates into 'Rapid collection inquiry for the identification of conflicts and strategic groups' in English. ECRIS involves the following six phases: (1) individual inquiry at each site; (2) a preparatory seminar; (3) the collective inquiry; (4) a collective evaluation seminar; (5) individual research at each site; and (6) a final seminar (Bierschenk and Olivier De Sardan 1997).

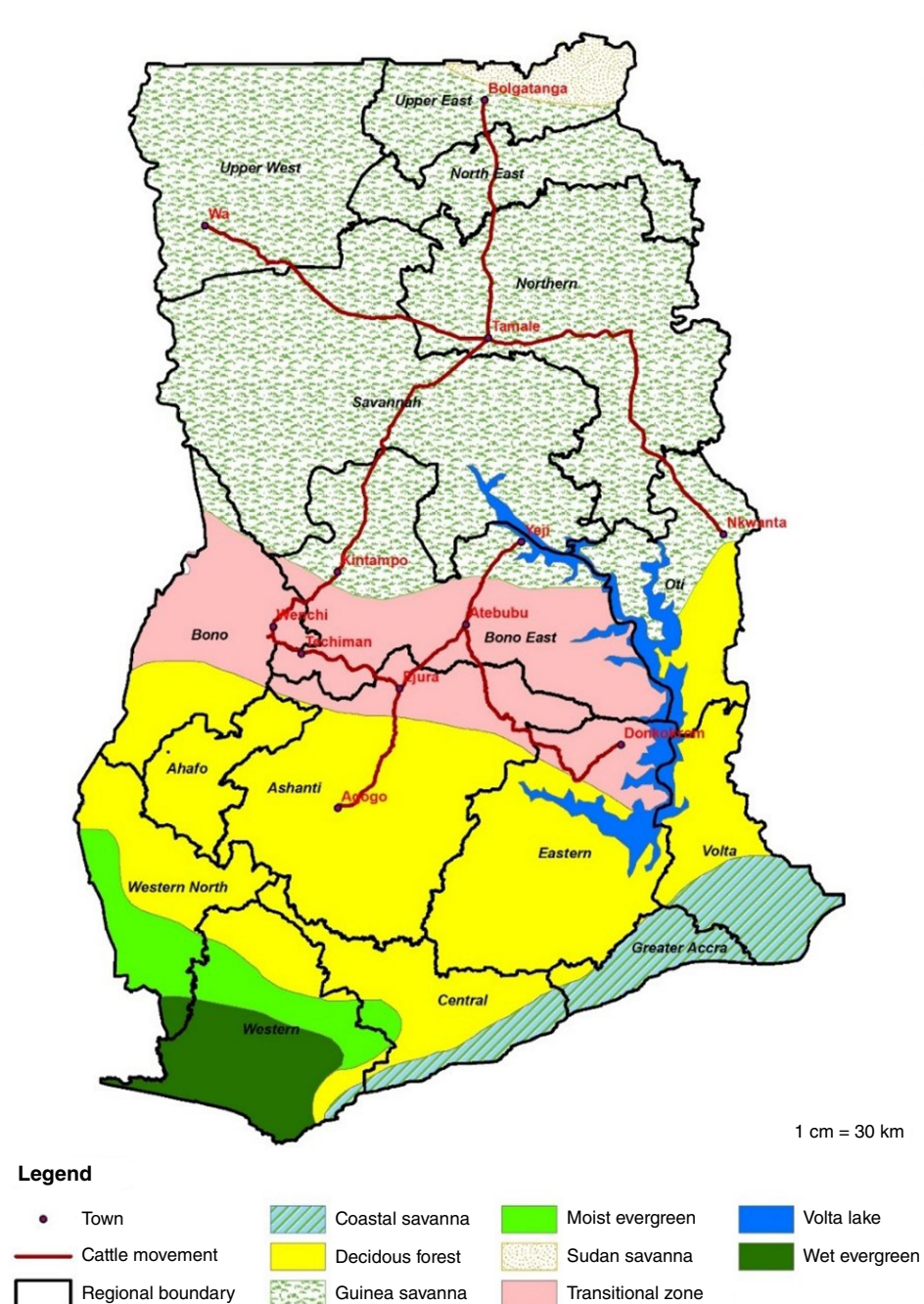


Fig. 1. Map of Ghana, showing ecological zones, cattle movements and hot-spots for farmer-herder conflicts.

leaders, civil society organisations (CSOs), academia, security agencies, district, regional and national officers of the Ministry of Food and Agriculture, and policymakers.

Past and present agriculture and economic policies of Ghana were reviewed to examine their focus, underlying assumptions and techniques the state has used to achieve policy objectives. Findings of the ECRIS model, policy review and the first facilitated national workshop served as entry points for in-depth interviews with arable farmers, pastoralists, traditional and religious leaders, local government representatives, executives, and representatives

of community and national associations. Other people interviewed were groups related to the farmer-herder conflicts, officials of statutory institutions charged with managing agriculture and the conflicts and CSOs. The interviews took place between January 2020 and June 2021, and were used to assess the actions and reactions of key actors affected by the policies and the conflicts. The interviews ceased when a saturation point was reached (Fusch and Ness 2015). The number of actors interviewed and the rationale for the interviews are presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Number of actors interviewed and rationale for selecting them.

Actor	Number interviewed		Nature of group/rationale for interview
	Preliminary stage	In-depth stage	
Arable farmers	10	30	To understand their roles in the conflicts, agropastoral policy process and how the conflicts have been affecting their livelihoods.
Pastoralists	10	20	To ascertain their roles in the conflicts, agropastoral policy process and how their livelihoods are affected by the conflicts.
Agogo Mman MMA Kuo	2	2	A worldwide association of citizens of Agogo that secured a court order to evacuate cattle that were not kept in kraal from Agogo. The rationale was to understand the history of pastoralism in the district and the group's role in agropastoral policy process.
Agogo Youth Association	2	3	A group formed to fight for the rights of indigenous arable youth farmers from Agogo. The rationale was to understand the role the group plays in agropastoral policy process.
District assemblies	4	4	Local government representatives in the Asante Akim North Municipal and Sekyere Afram Plains District were interviewed to understand how the conflicts affect administration of the districts and policies implemented by the local governments to manage the conflicts.
Traditional leaders	4	10	Chiefs, subchiefs and community heads from six communities in Agogo and three communities in Drobonso were interviewed to understand the role of traditional leaders in access to land for arable farming and herding as well as their roles in agropastoral policy process.
Religious leaders	3	6	Christian and Moslem leaders in the studied communities were interviewed to understand the role of religious leaders in the management of farmer–herder conflicts.
Civil society organisations	–	2	Officials of two CSOs based in the Northern and Upper East Regions of Ghana were interviewed to understand the contribution of CSOs in managing farmer–herder conflicts and their roles in agropastoral policy process.
Ghana National Association of Cattle Owners	2	4	Local and national executives were interviewed to understand the role of cattle owners in agropastoral policy process and management of the farmer–herder conflicts.
Animal Directorate of the Ministry of Food and Agriculture	–	3	To ascertain the roles policy makers and practitioners in the agricultural sector play in the agropastoral policy process. It was also meant to investigate policies the state was using to manage the farmer–herder conflicts.
District Department of Food and Agriculture	2	2	Officials of each district were interviewed to ascertain the role the department plays in managing farmer–herder conflicts and the effects of the conflicts on food security in the districts.
Ghana National Ranching Committee	–	2	To assess the reasons behind the draft National Ranching Policy and grazing corridors.
Police	2	2	To ascertain the veracity of reported crimes from farmer–herder conflicts and how the conflicts affect human security in the districts.
Political parties	2	–	To understand the rationale behind the parties' strategies for managing the farmer–herder conflicts.

Two facilitated district-level workshops were subsequently held at Drobonso and Patrensa (a town near Agogo) in August 2022 to share and validate the research findings. These workshops were attended by 61 and 63 participants from Drobonso and Agogo respectively, their composition being similar to the November 2019 workshop, with the exception of participants from national-level statutory institutions. Although arable farmers and pastoralists agreed to meet together at Drobonso, communal hostility toward herding required hosting the third workshop at a neutral venue outside Agogo (Patrensa). A final national workshop attended by 114 participants was later held to

share, triangulate and validate research findings at Ejisu in December 2022.

Notes from the ECRIS exercise, policy review, facilitated workshops and interview transcripts were thematically analysed. With the art of governmentality as the overarching lens, common themes from three of the four modes of government, namely discipline, sovereignty, and neoliberal rationality, were aggregated in the policy review. The fourth mode of governmentality, governing according to truth, was not identified in the analysis. These guided analysis of the rationale, mode of implementation, and the conduct of conflict actors in the agropastoral policy process in Ghana. We

analysed interview transcripts by inductively seeking common themes within the transcripts.

Findings are presented in line with the research questions. We used multiple quotes from our respondents to amplify their voices, with the following abbreviations distinguishing the actors: AF = arable crop farmer; CO = cattle owner; HM = herdsman; KI = key informant; OR = others.

Findings and discussion

The findings are presented in two sections. We begin by highlighting the focuses, modes of governmentalities and influence of agropastoral policies on farmer–herder conflicts from colonial to contemporary time in Ghana. Thereafter, we present the strategies used by the main conflict actors to influence those policies.

Multiple governmentalities in agropastoral policies: from Gold Coast to Ghana

We illustrate how the Ghanaian state has used multiple governmentalities, i.e. discipline, sovereignty, and neoliberalism, to implement agropastoral policies to develop the agricultural sector and also manage farmer–herder conflicts (see Table 2). We also describe the counter practices adopted by the key conflict actors to either influence or react to the policies to defend their interests.

The Gold Coast was colonised by Great Britain between 1872 and 1957, when it was renamed Ghana at political independence. Agricultural policies during the colonial period were geared toward production of export crops, especially

cocoa. Pastoralism did not receive attention until the 1920s when infrastructure development by the colonial administration opened up livestock trading between the northern and southern territories of the then Gold Coast (Tonah 2005). The colonial government used discipline and neoliberalism to promote cattle rearing in the Gold Coast colony (Table 2). Herdsmen of Fulani origin outside the colony were hired by the colonial government to transport imported cattle on foot from the borders to markets in southern parts of the colony. Private livestock traders became involved when they became aware the practice was lucrative. Archival records indicate frequent damage to crops as herdsmen moved cattle from the north to the main marketing centres in the south (Seini 2002; Tonah 2003). Tonah (2005) reported that the liberalisation of the cattle trade between French colonies and English colonies in the 1930s increased cattle trade volume across the borders of the Gold Coast and neighbouring French colonies. Restrictive policies were relaxed to promote cattle rearing in northern territories. The colonial administration established out-station government livestock farms, referred to as native administration farms, in locations throughout the northern territories to promote livestock production in general, and encourage the inhabitants to take an interest in improving livestock, aimed at opening the local economy and promoting food security in the north. Fulani herdsmen were given the responsibility to manage the native administration farms because they were more knowledgeable and experienced in livestock production and management than were the indigenous population. They were also to assist in improving livestock production methods through the transfer of skills and technology to the indigenous population (Tonah 2005).

After independence, the government's attitude changed, and pastoralism was characterised by neglect, hostility and

Table 2. Evolution of agropastoral policies in Ghana.

Period	Focus of policy	Mode of governmentality	Reasons for classification
Colonial era (1872–1957)	Promotion of export crops, mainly cocoa. Promotion of cattle rearing among indigenous Ghanaians in the northern territories of the Gold Coast colony to improve food security.	Discipline, and neoliberalism	Encouragement and internalisation of norms on cattle rearing, and provision of incentives for pastoralism.
Early period after independence (1957–1966)	Industrialisation and modernisation of agriculture. Hostility and neglect towards pastoralism.	Sovereign power	Enactment and enforcement of regulations by the state.
Late 1960s to mid-1970s	Promotion of agriculture as a poverty-reduction strategy. Modernisation of arable farming. Silence on pastoralism.	Discipline, and neoliberalism	Encouragement and internalisation of the culture of self-sufficiency in agriculture, and the provision of incentives for commercial agriculture.
Late 1970s to early 2000s	Favouring of arable farming over pastoralism. Expulsion of pastoralists under 'Operation Cow Leg'	Sovereign power, and neoliberalism	Enactment and enforcement of regulations against pastoralism by the state, and provision of incentives for arable farming.
Mid-2000s to date	Promotion of arable farming and pastoralism. Sedentarisation of pastoralists.	Neoliberalism	Provision of incentives for farming and pastoralism.

indifference by state officials. Agricultural policies post-independence were geared toward creating jobs for the increasing urban population through industrialisation. The government post-independence, the Convention People's Party, implemented a 7-year development plan (1963/64–1969/70) to modernise and increase state participation in agriculture. Policies were in tandem with the party's socialist ideology which targeted state and cooperative agriculture (Amanor 1995; Seini 2002). The government considered private livestock traders responsible for high meat prices in urban areas, and through the use of sovereign power established the Meat Marketing Board to purchase, handle and transport cattle in Ghana. The Meat Marketing Board later moved to importation of frozen meat from overseas when meat prices soared in Ghana following drought in the Sahel. Unlike the colonial administration, the Convention People's Party had not made any provision to develop the indigenous livestock sector. Indigenous pastoralists and livestock traders who felt their interests were at stake resisted by sabotaging the activities of the Meat Marketing Board and frustrating its officials (Amanor 1995). Cattle rustlers attacked and prevented cattle from crossing the Burkina Faso border to the Meat Marketing Board holding centres, making the cattle route insecure for livestock owners. This dissuaded livestock owners and traders from doing business with the Meat Marketing Board, making it short-lived (Amanor 1995).

Tonah (2003) argued that state policies after independence aimed to displace and not complement the activities of indigenous cattle producers. In effect, whereas the colonial administration used discipline and neoliberalism to encourage livestock industry growth and pastoralism among indigenous Ghanaians, the government post-independence (the Convention People's Party) used sovereign power to restrict pastoralism among indigenous Ghanaians. This echoes the assertion by some political ecologists (e.g. Benjaminsen 2008; Watts 2013; Benjaminsen and Ba 2019; Nori and Scoones 2023) that the policies of many sub-Saharan African countries have favoured farming, and have been inimical to pastoralists. For example, pastoral discourse in Tanzania has been largely influenced by a modernisation ideology, which considers pastoralism as unproductive and environmentally damaging. Pastoralists in Tanzania are required to reduce their herd size to prevent overgrazing and soil erosion, whereas farmers have been encouraged to increase their farm size to make the country food-sufficient (Ndagala 1982).

The overthrow of the Convention People's Party government in 1966 led to a policy change from socialism to private capitalist agricultural development. The focus of subsequent agriculture policies was on increasing food production, providing raw materials for industries, cocoa export, providing subsidies on agriculture inputs, extension services, and the use of agriculture as a poverty-alleviation tool. For example, the 'Operation Feed Yourself' and

'Operation Feed Your Industries', considered as 'discipline' and 'neoliberalism' governmentalities, were respectively instituted to boost food production, and provide raw materials for industries in 1974. The state encouraged citizens and educational institutions to grow food to feed themselves under 'Operation Feed Yourself', and provided incentives for large-scale agriculture to provide raw materials for industries under 'Operation Feed Your Industries'. The Structural Adjustment Program adopted in the 1980s also created an enabling environment for economic growth (i.e. neoliberalism) rather than direct intervention that favoured particular commodities. Many Ghanaians adopted new ideas and behaviours to conform to agropastoral policies of the government at the time.

None of the subsequent agriculture policies after the Convention People's Party made explicit provisions contrary to the livestock industry or to pastoralism. However, the state used sovereign power to implement policies hostile to pastoralists from the mid-1970s. Both the central and local governments (district assemblies) consistently discouraged the presence and settlement of Fulani pastoralists in Ghana, and usually took the side of indigenous arable farmers in any conflict between the two (Tonah 2003). For example, Fulani pastoralists were expelled across the Burkina Faso border in 1988 and 1999 (Tonah 2003), despite some herders having become Ghanaian citizens through birth or marriage. Both transhumance and sedentary herdsman and their cattle were expelled from the Agogo Traditional Area in 2018 by a joint police and military taskforce in an operation code-named 'Operation Cow Leg' (Paalo 2020). This could be explained by the fact that policymaking favours actors with the loudest voice or the actor in the majority.

At present, the major existing agricultural policy in Ghana, the Food and Agricultural Sector Development Policy (FASDEP II), uses neoliberalism governmentality. This policy aims to modernise the agriculture sector by strengthening both the crop and livestock subsectors, and does not discriminate against the latter or pastoralism. Two programs, 'Planting for Food and Jobs', and 'Rearing for Food and Jobs' have been launched under FASDEP II by the ruling New Patriotic Party to boost agriculture in Ghana. The 'Rearing for Food and Jobs' program aims to supply improved cattle breeding stock through artificial insemination for milk and beef production. In 2018, the government established a cattle ranch at Wawase in the Afram Plains of the Eastern Region to manage the recurring farmer–herder conflicts, and launched the Ghana Cattle Ranching Project Committee in 2019 to oversee the enactment of a national cattle ranching policy, development of three other state-funded ranches, and establishment of livestock corridors across conflict-prone areas in the country. The Ghana Cattle Ranching Project Committee is working to prescribe approved routes for transhumance. Interviewed Ministry of Food and Agriculture officials disclosed that consultants are

working on proposals to develop cattle routes at Fantiakwa, Kintampo and Kumawu in the Eastern, Bono East and Ashanti Region respectively. However, interviewed executives of the Ghana Cattle Owners Association expressed reservations about the effectiveness of the existing and yet to be established ranches to manage the farmer–herder conflict. They complained Ghanaian cattle are not accustomed to hay and are not well fed at the pilot ranch at Wawase. They requested an independent evaluation of the pilot ranch before new ranches were established.

Agropastoral policies in Ghana have also been influenced by the ECOWAS protocol, which recognises the health, social, environmental, economic and political implications of transhumance. The protocol allows free passage of people and livestock across points of entry and departure from member countries on condition that they have the ECOWAS International Transhumance Certificate (Article 5 of the ECOWAS protocol). Articles 7 and 14 of the protocol mandate transhumance to follow the routes and periods set by host countries respectively. However, interviewed executives of the Ghana National Association of Cattle Farmers and the officials of the Animal Directorate of the Ministry of Food and Agriculture reported that most transhumance herders do not follow the dictates of the ECOWAS protocol. Whereas some herders do not use the approved routes in Ghana, others move and feed their cattle at night and end up destroying crops. These sentiments were shared by many arable farmers and sedentary herders at the facilitated workshops.

Counter practices: mechanisms actors use to influence agropastoral policies in Ghana

Having described how the Ghanaian state used different strategies or multiple governmentalities to regulate the agropastoral sector and manage recurring farmer–herder conflicts, we now describe the counter practices or strategies the key conflict actors have used to influence agropastoral policy processes in Ghana. Farmers, pastoralists, chiefs/landowners, cattle and farmer associations and community groups were identified as the key conflict actors from the ECRIS exercise. Other actors included family heads, central and local governments, the police, military, Ministry of Food and Agriculture and CSOs.

Various actors used diverse strategies by drawing on their identity, political manipulation, knowledge and social organisation to influence agropastoral policies.

Farmers

Movement of cattle from northern to southern Ghana stated in the 1970s and was driven by dwindling grasses in the north, tsetse fly control, and lush vegetation in the south. The conflicts between farmers and herders in southern Ghana, especially Agogo, started in the 1990s following

the need for more land for cultivation by farmers and industrial plantations (Bukari and Kuusaana 2018).

Farmers use identity, networking, formation of conflict advocacy institutions, citizen resistance, social disturbance, court actions, narratives on livelihood impacts and violence, and the threat of non-participation at national elections to influence agropastoral policies in Ghana. Most farmers interviewed in Agogo considered pastoralists to be foreigners or strangers, and asserted that Agogo lands belong to native Agogo people. The few farmers and community members who accept that some sedentary herders are Ghanaians reported that cattle owners mostly employ Fulani herders (perceived predominantly as foreigners) to herd their cattle. Notwithstanding this, cattle owners and herdsman recognised as Ghanaians but who hail from elsewhere in Ghana are considered strangers at Agogo, irrespective of the time-frame their parents or grandparents have lived in the town. This assertion was confirmed by a 50-year-old interviewee who doubled as a farmer and cattle owner:

My parents migrated from northern Ghana to settle at Agogo about 60 years ago. My siblings and I were all born in this town. We consider this place to be our hometown, but we are referred to as ‘strangers’. I am not the only person who suffers this form of discrimination. Every cattle owner or herder at Agogo is perceived to be a stranger or migrant. Most Agogo residents do not differentiate transhumance from settled herders. Many perceive all herders to be of Fulani origin. Agogo indigenes who own cattle are forced to give them to herders to take care of them outside the district. I was forced to move my cattle to Drobonoso in the Sekyere Afram Plains during Operation Cow Leg in 2018 when residents of Agogo stated that they do not want any cattle in Agogo. (AF/CO/03, 2019, 11 November)

This corroborates Tonah (2005), who claimed that the indigenous farming population regarding migrant Fulani pastoralists as ‘strangers’ is common in West Africa. For example, indigenous Karaboro farmers in Burkina Faso regard Fulanis as ‘strangers’. Classification of groups into ‘indigenes’ and ‘strangers’ in practice affects their access to land and water resources (Tonah 2005; Ribot and Peluso 2009; Bukari and Schareika 2015). Although ‘strangers’ may not be prevented from accessing water, land and other resources, the rights and regulations governing those resources favour indigenes (Tonah 2005; Bukari and Schareika 2015).

In the case of Agogo, the natives used indigeneity as a right to request state protection against Fulani herders perceived as foreign intruders by farmers. Between 2008 and 2010, some indigenous farmers and youth in 18 communities affected by the conflicts formed groups to advocate eviction of herders from the Agogo Traditional Area. Three of the notable groups were Agogo *Mman MMA Kuo*,⁵ the

⁵Agogo *Mman MMA Kuo* – translated to mean the Agogo Natives Group.

Agogo Town Development Taskforce and the Agogo Youth Association. These groups wrote letters to the then Asante Akim North District Chief Executive, the Ashanti Regional Minister, the Ashanti Regional Security Council, and the President of Ghana to evict herders from their communities. They held press conferences to protest the alleged rape of women by nomadic herdsmen, persistent crop destruction, and the impact of such destruction on their livelihoods. They organised a violent demonstration that resulted in injuries and loss of life in April 2010. The groups banned the conduct of funeral rites in the Agogo Traditional Area, and prevented the paramount chief from performing the funeral rites of his late uncle.⁶ It is worth noting that the paramount chief is the only person vested with the power to ban funerals under customary laws in Ghana. However, his authority was undermined following his inability to manage the recurring conflicts. A leading member of the Agogo *Mman Mma Kuo* recounted that:

We (referring to himself and the groups) were able to ban the performance of all forms of funeral rites in Agogo because of the failure of the Agogo Traditional Council led by the paramount chief to evict the herders from our land. Agogo citizens have lost trust in them. The land that was leased to the cattle owners belong to us the people of Agogo. The paramount chief only holds the land in trust for us. I told the police who arrested me that although I do not hold any power to ban funerals, I was not ready to lift the ban on funerals. I was released from police custody without any prosecution. (KI/02, 2019, 13 November)

The Agogo *Mman Mma Kuo*, with funding from the Agogo Worldwide Association, initiated a court action against the Government of Ghana and the Agogo Traditional Council for the removal of cattle herdsmen and their cattle from the Agogo Traditional Area in October 2011. The court granted their request in January 2012, and compelled the Ashanti Regional Security Council to expel all cattle from the area. The evacuation was delayed, but took place in January 2018, during which all cattle, including those in kraals, were evicted from Agogo in an operation code named, 'Operation Cow Leg'.

Farmers and community members also used the threat of not voting in presidential and parliamentary elections to influence agropastoral policies in their favour. The then-presidential candidate of the ruling New Patriotic Party and the parliamentary candidate of the party for the Asante Akim North Constituency in the 2016 general elections publicly campaigned to establish cattle ranches in Agogo and elsewhere in Ghana to manage the farmer–herder conflicts. The

plan was repeated in the 2016 manifesto of the party. However, Agogo residents have expressed disagreement with cattle ranch establishment within their municipality, the Asante Akim North Municipal, and threatened to vote against the Member of Parliament and any local government representative who supports cattle ranching. The Asante Akim North Municipal Assembly (the local government) has consequently suspended planned cattle ranch construction within the municipality, an outcome confirmed by an official of the ruling party in an interview:

The New Patriotic Party considers cattle ranches as one of the effective strategies for managing the farmer–herder conflicts. That is why the party included it in its 2016 election manifesto. The party, however, needs the vote of many of the people to stay in government. As a political party, we cannot go against the will of the people who elected us. This explains the party's decision to suspend the establishment of a cattle ranch at Agogo. We will implement it once the people accept it. (KI/04, 2019, 13 November)

An official of the main opposition party, the National Democratic Congress, admitted that farmer–herder conflicts have taken a partisan twist. He said that Fulani pastoralists are perceived to be sympathisers of the National Democratic Congress, and the party's presidential candidate was blamed by the New Patriotic Party for introducing and encouraging pastoralism in Agogo.

Some farmers blamed the recurring conflicts on the imposition of a new and alien land use (grazing) into a traditionally arable farmland. A religious leader in Agogo stated that:

God in His wisdom created different kinds of land for specific agricultural practices. Agogo lands are for arable farming and not for cattle rearing. Our ancestors had farmed on Agogo lands for many years without having any problem until Fulani herders came here in the late 1990s. The lush grasses and rivers across Agogo lands attracted the herders to Agogo but arable farming and pastoralism cannot be practiced on the same piece of land. The two land uses are not compatible. Government should relocate pastoralists to ensure peace in Agogo. (AF/05, 2019, 8 November)

We argue that the strategies used by farmers opened up a new frontier⁷ that challenged established rights, and subsequently established a form of territorialisation⁸ at Agogo. Frontier dynamics dissolve existing social orders, namely, property rights systems, political jurisdictions, right, and

⁶Funerals are important social events that are used to mourn and celebrate the lives of departed ones in the Akan culture in Ghana.

⁷Frontiers "are sites where authorities, sovereignties, and hegemonies of the recent past have been or are currently challenged by new enclosures, territorialisations, and property regimes" (Rasmussen and Lund 2018).

⁸Territorialisation involves the attempt by an individual or group to influence, affect, or control objects, people and relationships by delimiting and asserting control over a geographic area (Sack 1986).

social contracts (Rasmussen and Lund 2018). The customary and statutory authorities in their attempt to maintain their legitimacy had to evict herders and cattle from Agogo.

Pastoralists

Pastoralists use network or groupings, advocacy, mediation, partnership with CSOs and statutory institutions, discourses on the economic and nutritional benefits of pastoralism and stories of discrimination against minority groups to influence agropastoral policies in Ghana. The Ghana National Association of Cattle Farmers (GNACAF) was formed and registered in 2010 to unite cattle owners, with the aim of advocating development of the cattle industry. Interviewed executives of the association stated that the need to educate members to adopt best industry practices and manage farmer–herder conflicts motivated them to form the association. The association has become the mouthpiece for herders, and tries to challenge the narratives on farmer–herder conflicts provided by farmers and by other actors, especially the media.

Interviewed executives of the GNACAF and some cattle owners stated that agropastoral policies in Ghana discriminate against pastoralists, and that numerous misunderstandings and misconceptions exist about pastoralism. An executive recounted the following:

Many Ghanaians think pastoralists are primitive or negative minded people. School children at Forifori, a community in the Afram Plains, run into the bushes whenever they see a herdsman because they have been warned that all herdsmen carry guns and are criminals. About 80% of conflict escalations are blamed on herdsmen by the media. The media is interested in sensational stories and do not crosscheck or investigate their facts. They have not been fair to pastoralists. (CO/05, 2020, 10 June)

An interviewed cattle owner attributed the (perceived) biases in agropastoral policies to the small number of pastoralists compared with arable farmers in Ghana. He recounted the following:

Politicians do what the masses want. Farmers are in the majority in Ghana. That is why Operation Cow Leg was carried out in Agogo in 2018. The Kumasi High Court did not order the total evacuation of all cattle at Agogo. The directive was to drive away cattle that were not in kraals and those kraals that were illegally located inside the protected forests. It was the Agogo residents and farmers who called for the total evacuation of all cattle from Agogo lands. Their consistent chats of ‘we do not want any cattle in Agogo’ and their numbers forced a government which had promised to establish ranches in its manifesto to kill

and drive away cattle from Agogo when it gained political power. (AF/CO/03, 2019, 11 November)

This corroborates the report by Nori and Scoones (2023) that pastoralists have little influence on state policies because of their small population numbers.

Interviewed pastoralists blamed negative media reportage for unfavourable policies against pastoralism. For example, an interviewed cattle owner referred to a series of video documentaries on the causes and effects of farmer–herder conflicts in Ghana with the title, ‘Violent Shepherd: the Ugly Story of clashes between Nomadic Herdsmen and Farmers.’⁹ The documentary attributed the causes of conflict to crop destruction, rape of women, and killing farmers, herders and other community members, along with a lack of trust between politico-legal institutions and indigenes. The respondent stated the documentary provided a single viewpoint, and explained it related the grievances and terror meted out to farmers and other indigenous groups by herdsmen. He queried the basis of the questions posed to the only two herdsmen interviewed in the documentary vis-à-vis the number of farmers and community members. He believed the reporter asked the questions to satisfy accusations brought against herdsmen by farmers. He also expressed displeasure at labelling all cattle herdsmen as transhumance.

Interviewed executives of the GNACAF stated that their association engages with chiefs, the police, local government representatives and the Ministry of Food and Agriculture to mediate between farmers and pastoralists whenever an accusation of crop damage by cattle is made. They explained that cattle owners are required to compensate farmers whose crops are destroyed by cattle after joint inspection and assessment. They stated GNACAF liaised with the Peasant Farmers Association of Ghana to develop a ‘peaceful coexistence policy document between crop and cattle farmers’. The document aimed to create dialogue among stakeholders in the cattle and crop industries, and which had input from representatives of farmers, cattle owners, district assemblies and the police. Areas for grazing, names of cattle owners and the number of cattle they own in each district were to be documented. According to interviewed executives, if cattle destroyed a crop and the herder in charge was not found, all cattle owners within the nearby area were to contribute to compensate the affected farmer. The document, they said, worked in some districts until it was suspended for the development of a new policy by the current government.

Some interviewed cattle owners blamed the lack of data on the economic importance of the livestock industry for unfavourable policies towards pastoralism. They stated that many people are unaware of the number of Ghanaians that depend on the cattle value chain. A cattle owner mentioned that

⁹<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PhMAantM8f4>; <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IDSSIQfzLg>

Many Ghanaians think pastoralism is about cattle owners and herdsmen only. People should be educated to know that the cattle industry offers employment to laborers, butchers, market women and many other people. Restaurants and traditional eatery operators all depend on pastoralists for meat. (CO/02, 2020, 12 April)

Data on the contribution of pastoralism to the Ghanaian economy is scanty because ruminants, non-ruminants and poultry are merged in livestock-industry data. The livestock sector contributes 7.0% to agriculture gross domestic product (GDP), and 1.3% to national GDP in Ghana (Ministry of Food and Agriculture 2004). The sector provides animal protein to enhance the nutritional status, and employs a large part of the population, particularly in rural areas (Ghana Statistical Service 2020).

For some time, pastoralists have been using both traditional and electronic media to tell their stories or change the narrative against them. For example, the Fulani community in Ghana appealed to the media in September 2021 not to ignore crimes committed against their members.¹⁰ A group of herders and cattle owners in the Sekyere Afram Plains have threatened to defend themselves and their cattle from police brutality and killing of cattle if police from the Asante Akim North Municipality pursue them in the Sekyere Afram Plains. They explained that the people of Sekyere Afram Plains District accept cattle on their land. The cattle owners have negotiated for grazing lands and therefore do not understand why police from Asante Akim North Municipality have been pursuing and arresting herdsmen working at the Sekyere Afram Plains District. The cattle owners believe the police are biased against them, and are overstressing the policy directives of the Asante Akim North Municipality.

Chiefs/landowners

Customary authorities in Ghana grant and control access to land for both farming and pastoralism. Interviewed farmers reported that chiefs/landowners gain more money and in-kind donations in the form of cattle from pastoralists than from farmers. An interviewed farmer stated that chiefs give priority to grazing at the expense of farming, and therefore disadvantage their own subjects whose interest they are supposed to serve, because they hold the land in trust for them. An interviewed traditional leader at Agogo rejected this accusation, and recounted that the Agogo Traditional Council included measures aimed at preventing destruction of food crops by cattle in the lease agreement the Council had with cattle owners. Herders were required to herd their cattle some distance from farms, and dig their own wells to prevent competition for water with humans. He explained that non-adherence to the agreements led to the conflicts and the subsequent removal of cattle from Agogo.

Interviewed farmers and pastoralists explained that chiefs are mostly the first point of contact when cattle destroy crops in many villages. Chiefs therefore influence agropastoral policies by granting access to land, and mediate on impasses between arable farmers and pastoralists.

Unlike their counterparts in the Agogo Traditional Area, the chiefs and people of Drobonso in the Sekyere Afram Plains District of the Ashanti Region accept pastoralism. They have cattle as their totem. Many cattle owners have therefore acquired land for cattle herding in the district. However, the Chief of Drobonso recently clashed with the Agogo and Sekyere Afram Plains District Security Councils over the latter's decision to kill and drive cattle away from his traditional area. He insisted that he and his people are not against pastoralism. The District Chief Executive for Sekyere Afram Plains responded on live radio that the decision to remove cattle from the district was a joint decision between the Asante Akim North Municipal, Sekyere Afram Plains and Kumawu Districts.¹¹ He stated the exercise was conducted to ensure peace and security. We assert that the disagreement between statutory (police and local government) and customary institutions in strategies to manage the conflict is a case of institutional failure. Ghana practices legal pluralism, and the failure of these two institutions to find a common course is promoting what Benda-Beckmann (1981) called 'shopping forum and forum shopping'. Pastoralists go to customary institutions for land and redress, whereas farmers go to state institutions for redress.

Other actors

The Peasant Farmers Association of Ghana (PFAG), a nationwide association, and the Community Life Improvement Programme (CLIP), a not-for-profit organisation based in the Northern Region of Ghana, were the two CSOs involved in managing farmer–herder conflicts in Ghana. They undertake training for farmers and pastoralists, and have been advocating livestock corridors and cattle ranches across the country. An interviewed official of PFAG recounted that the organisation aided farmers and pastoralists to develop a joint memorandum of understanding on the payment of compensation for crop damage. The PFAG serves on the National Cattle Ranching Committee.

An interviewed official of CLIP stated that the organisation is working with the GNACAF and other stakeholders to demarcate and secure livestock corridors across the conflict hotspots. He further mentioned that CLIP has been promoting the formation of water-management committees across conflict-prone communities. The committee is to ensure that cattle do not pollute water bodies or compete with people for the same water source. This strategy resonates with Turner's (2004) assertion that livestock do not enter cropped fields

¹⁰<https://www.ghanaweb.com/GhanaHomePage/NewsArchive/Don-t-ignore-crime-against-us-Fulanis-to-media-police-1361716>

¹¹<https://www.myjoyonline.com/drobonsohene-accuses-agogo-police-of-unlawfully-killing-cattle-dce-reacts/>

due to scarcity of fodder but due to poor management by herders. The committee comprises the chief or his representative, an arable farmer, a herder, women's group representative, Agriculture Extension Officer, and an Assemblyman.

Conclusions and way forward

This study has raised awareness of the assumptions underlying agropastoral policies in Ghana and the strategies the Ghanaian state has used to manage perennial farmer–herder conflicts. The study showed that farmer–herder conflicts in Ghana are not driven by competition for scarce resources (resource scarcity), identity, or ethnocentrism alone. We do not deny the contribution of these factors in the conflict, but assert that farmer–herder conflicts in Ghana are rooted in historical, institutional and policy contexts, and in political ideologies (i.e. political ecology). The Government has used multiple governmentalities to govern the agropastoral sector and manage the perennial conflicts. The colonial government used discipline and neoliberalism as its modes of governmentality to promote pastoralism among indigenous Ghanaians to address food security, whereas the government immediately post-independence used sovereignty to prioritise farming over pastoralism in an attempt to modernise agriculture. Succeeding governments have used discipline, sovereignty and neoliberalism to govern the agropastoral sector and also manage farmer–herder conflicts.

The findings have shown a policy inconsistency between the central and local governments, whereby the Asante Akim North Municipality has defied the central government policy on ranching. It has also described institutional failure in the Sekyere Afram Plains District where statutory and customary institutions use contradictory and inconsistent rules to manage farmer–herder conflicts.

Agropastoral policies in Ghana have been dynamic in response to market interest, but also in response to the narratives and actions pursued by actors in farmer–herder conflicts. Past policies focused on spatially separating farmers from herders, whereas the more recent policy attempts to promote the spatial co-existence of crop production and ranching are opposed by farmers. Herders also exhibit reservations about the policy, which may account for the delay in its full implementation.

The analytical framework enabled a comprehensive description of the strategies used by the different levels of government (central and local government) to regulate the agropastoral sector and the strategies the key actors use to influence the policy process. Actors affected by the policies have contested or manipulated them to their advantage. Pastoralists who have been negatively affected by changing policies are now organised, and both visibly and secretly resist policies considered inimical to their livelihood or industry. Unlike early years post-independence when pastoralists sabotaged the operations of the Meat Marketing

Board, the former are working with state and civil society organisations to change the narrative about pastoralism. However, these pastoralist strategies are yet to make major impacts on policy formulation and implementation.

Incoherence in agropastoral policies by the state has brought mistrust among farmers and pastoralists. Ghanaian pastoralists have not joined jihadists and other armed insurgents as has happened in some countries in East Africa and the Horn of Africa (see Moritz 2006b; Benjaminsen and Ba 2019), but continuous discrimination and stereotyping may predispose them to tribal wars and other forms of crime. The state needs to listen to and address the concerns of all actors for a peaceful coexistence between farming and pastoralism. We recommend a policy approach that involves well-structured and inclusive stakeholder engagement, allegations supported with evidence, and negotiated positions so that policies that emerge eventually may be more acceptable to parties to the conflict. The capacities of both statutory (local government) and customary authorities must be strengthened to resolve farmer–herder conflicts at the community or local level.

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Data availability. The data that support this study will be shared upon reasonable request to the corresponding author.

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