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Land conflicts between smallholders and Fulani pastoralists in Ghana: Evidence from the Asante Akim North District (AAND)



Elias Danyi Kuusaana ^{a, c, *}, Kaderi Noagah Bukari ^b

^a Department of Economic and Technological Change, Centre for Development Research (ZEF), University of Bonn, Germany

^b Department of Political and Cultural Change, Centre for Development Research (ZEF), University of Bonn, Germany

^c Department of Real Estate and Land Management, University for Development Studies (UDS), Wa - Campus, Ghana

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ABSTRACT

Following the recent evolution in the demand for land due to population growth and urbanisation in Africa, there are rising contestations and conflicts over the ownership, access and use of customary land. The situation intensifies with increasing land values and scarcity as a result of commoditisation, individualisation and commercialisation of land within a new era of 'land grabbing'. Using qualitative data from in-depth interviews and focus group discussions, this paper examined the land tenure system in the Asante Akim North District of Ghana, and how it influences conflicts between Fulani pastoralists and smallholder farmers. The study found that despite a strong customary land tenure regime in Ghana, value-driven land market transactions have triggered conflicts between smallholders and Fulani herders. Conflicts with Fulani herders are largely linked to crop and water bodies' destruction, but underneath these is the citizenship construction of pastoralists. Conflicts in Agogo are therefore to some extent embedded in ethnicity because farmers construct Fulani identity as non-Ghanaian. There is also widespread perception by community members that chiefs sell lands indiscriminately and are corrupt. These perceptions have future implications for land conflicts. Hence, there is the need for more clarity in common property laws and deepened community consultations regarding stool land administration. There is also the need for approaches that promote improved win–win outcomes for both herders and smallholders.

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1. Introduction

Constraints to agricultural productivity in Africa have generally included weak linkages to product and inputs markets, and poor extension services. In recent times, limited access to adequate and secure land is a major problem for smallholders' sustainable production in Africa. Smallholders' limited access to land has been heightened by the commoditisation, commercialisation, competition and high demand for land by other stakeholders (Flintan, 2012). Due to pronounced tenure insecurity associated with land commoditisation, investment in agriculture (Toulmin, 2006) and sustainable soil management is reducing (Goldstein, 2008). Generally, insecure parcels are unattractive parcels for agricultural investments due to the hazards of expropriation (see Jacoby et al.,

2002; Peters, 2004). The status of land tenure has implications for investment, environmental sustainability and eventually productivity (Holden et al., 2009). In this regard, Place and Hazell (1993) and Deininger and Jin (2006) in their study of land investments in Kenya, Rwanda, Ghana and Ethiopia, found a positive relationship between tenure security and land investment in these countries. Similarly, Goldstein (2008) notes that people who are 'politically powerful' (within the traditional political set up) have more secured tenure to land, and hence, invest more in soil fertility and have substantially higher outputs.

In the Savannah and Sahel grasslands of West Africa, both smallholders and pastoralists suffer land tenure insecurity in times of agricultural diversification and expansion, conflicts and land grabbing (Flintan, 2012; Campion and Acheampong, 2014). Generally, land commercialisation transforms land tenure from communal towards individualised rights (Besley, 1995). The individualization of land rights, however, limits the use of common spaces without conflicts. For example livestock mobility and use of grazing lands, create tensions between nomads and smallholders.

* Corresponding author.

E-mail addresses: ekuusaana@yahoo.com (E.D. Kuusaana), bukarinoagah@yahoo.com (K.N. Bukari).

Beyene (2014) maintains the diversification of land use practices have significant effects on rangeland management, and sustainable use of natural resources in dry regions. Also, transnational land transactions have caused conflicts among farmers, pastoralists and leading to potential loss of arable land by smallholders in Ghana (Tsikata and Yaro, 2011, 2013). According to Acheampong and Campion (2014), large-scale land acquisitions for *Jatropha curcas* sometimes lead to violent conflicts between the biofuel investors, traditional authorities and smallholders. It is expected that when functioning land management institutions are established, they will be able to deliver on land tenure security (see Migot-Adholla et al., 1994; Kasanga and Kotey, 2001 and Anyidoho et al., 2008:1). Customary tenure systems have been praised for their ability to efficiently deliver land to all segments of land users at the community level, even in its largely informal nature. They are also promoted as being fluid and dynamic (Juil and Lund, 2002).

Notwithstanding the advantage of customary land institutions to adjust to changing conditions, they have failed to deal completely with land tenure insecurity in Africa and to reconcile the multiplicity of overlapping rights and interests – especially between smallholders (crop producers) and pastoralists. It is believed that the nature of the prevailing customary land tenure system in Ghana itself has exacerbated land tenure insecurity experienced all over the country (Tsikata and Seini, 2004:4). Similarly, Whitehead and Tsikata (2003), Amanor (2006), and Quan and Antwi (2008) have insisted that the social relations of local political power, inherent in customary land institutions will not improve land delivery to socially disadvantaged groups. The activities of herders and smallholder croppers have always had different dimensions of complementarity. Typically, herders gain access to harvested crop fields to feed their animals on free range basis, while the animals dropping fertilize crop fields. This complementarity between herders and farmers, however, has broken due to the growth in population in Africa and the continuous allocation of land and labour between large cattle herders and crop producers (Cotula et al., 2004). This broken relationship has tended to increase resource conflicts among herders and croppers.

A large migration of people seeking land to settle and farm is also a factor underlying land disputes in Africa (Yelsang, 2013). From these positions, land conflicts are essentially linked to the increased scarcity of land caused by demographic pressures and higher land values. Relations between pastoralists and indigenes are often tense, with few common social and cultural value interactions (Cotula et al., 2004). According to Yelsang (2013:387) uncertainties surrounding land scarcity and marketization, generates fears and suspicion between neighbours, and even within families. In 2006, two Ghanaian and two Fulani cattle owners were reported to have acquired a total of 190 acres of land and paid Gh 5000 as 'drink money'. Since 2009, Fulani pastoralists (Fulbe/Fula)¹ have moved into the Afram Plains of Ghana in search of grassland for grazing. This period also coincided with the acquisition of 13,058 ha of land by ScanFuel (Gh) Ltd² for *J. curcas* for which \$23,000 was paid as 'drink money'. Subsequently in 2012, many Fulani pastoralists who acquired pasturelands in the Asante Akim North District had their lands confiscated due to the demand for land for large-scale commercial agriculture. In their desperation for

alternative lands, Fulani pastoralists have come into conflicts with neighbouring smallholders.

It is against this background that this study examines how land tenure arrangements in the Asante Akim North District influences conflicts between Fulani pastoralists and smallholder farmers amidst recent trend of 'land grabbing'. The paper also studies the institutions and the actors in the management of land, and how a foreign corporation's demand for land for commercial agriculture, has influenced access to land by smallholders and pastoralists. This study is essential to understand the dynamics of pastoralists – smallholder conflicts in an area where agricultural land commercialisation has gained significant prominence. This study could form the basis for building channels for peaceful co-existence between smallholders and pastoralist in order to enhance their mutual benefits and to arrive at win–win outcomes. It contributes to the literature on smallholder-pastoralists' land conflicts by exploring the new dimensions of risks posed by 'land grabbing'. The paper is organised in seven different sections including the introduction above. The second, third and fourth sections of the paper reviews general literature on landholdings and land allocations systems in Ghana, nature and causes of land conflicts, and pastoralism and the activities of Fulani herdsmen in Ghana. The fifth section discusses the study area and methodology, while the sixth presents findings and discussions. The last section of the paper presents the general conclusion and makes recommendations for policy implementation.

2. Landholding and land allocation systems in Ghana

Ghana operates a hybrid system of land tenure – comprising both customary and statutory land tenure systems (Ubink and Quan, 2008). The customary land tenure system operates under the customs, rules, norms and traditions of the community, and differs from community to community across the country. Statutory tenure relates to lands owned by the state for public purposes or acquired through the state's powers of eminent domain in the interest of the public. Statutory tenure also refers to vested lands owned under customary tenure, but which are held and managed by the state for the beneficial enjoyment of the owners. It is estimated that about 80% of all landholding in Ghana is under customary tenure while the remaining 20% is held by the state for public purposes (Kasanga and Kotey, 2001; Mahama and Baffour, 2009). The various types of interests that can exist in Ghana are: allodial title, freehold title (customary freehold or common law freehold), leasehold; and a lesser interest created through sharecropping e.g. *abunu*³ and *abusa* tenancies (Ollennu, 1962; da Rocha and Lodoh, 1999; Government of Ghana, 1999).

The allodial interest is the highest land title in Ghana and is held by stools (skins),⁴ sub-stools, clans, families, as well as individuals

¹ Fulani is derived from Hausa and used in English to refer to these pastoralists. Fula is derived from the Manding languages and is also used in English. Fulbe is the original term for the people. This has been adopted into English, often spelt Fulbe. Available at: <http://www.africaguide.com/culture/tribes/fulani.htm> (Accessed on 21/12/2012).

² The name was changed from ScanFuel (Gh) Ltd to ScanFarm (Gh) Ltd in 2010 following a shift of the company's focus from *jatropha* in 2009 to food crops largely maize, soybeans, sorghum (with plans for rice production in the future).

³ In the case of *abusa*, the sharing proportions are two-thirds to the tenant farmer and one-third (1/3) to landlord. Under the arrangement, the tenant farmer bears the expense of clearing and cultivating the virgin forestland allocated by the landlord. The tenant is then rewarded with a two-third share of the returns for his investment in the land. Under the *abunu* system, the farm proceeds are shared equally between the tenant farmer and the landlord (da Rocha and Lodoh, 1999). With this tenancy, the landlord does not only provide the land but also contributes to the establishment and management of the farm. It suffices to mention that, under the *abusa* or *abunu* system, the farm itself may be what is shared and not the produce.

⁴ The use of the terms stool and skin represents the symbols of authority of chiefs in Ghana. Whilst the stool is the symbol of authority for chiefs in the southern part of Ghana, the skin (of an animal) is the symbol of authority for chiefs in the Northern part. There is often the tendency in Ghana to refer to the chieftaincy of a particular area as the stool or skin. There are even verbal forms created: to enskin, to enstool; and derived nouns: enskinment and enstoolment.

in some cases (see [Bentsi-Enchill, 1964](#); [da Rocha and Lodoh, 1999](#)). Among the Akan and in some Ga communities, stools and sub-stools hold the allodial title. In some parts of Adangme (Greater Accra), the Anglo (Volta region) and Adjumaku (Central region), families and clans own land. In the Upper East and Upper West regions and in some parts of the Northern region, Tendaamba hold the allodial interest ([Kasanga, 1988](#); [Bentsi-Enchill, 1964](#)). Individuals and families from the allodial landholding group mostly hold the 'customary freehold' – denoting the near maximal interest in land ([Bentsi-Enchill, 1964](#)). Chiefs and Tendaamba belonging to families also have interest in family or communal land ([Kasanga, 1988](#); [Kasanga and Kotey, 2001](#)). Both members of the land owning group (*subject usufructuary*) or strangers (*stranger usufructuary*) can hold the customary freehold interest.

Leasehold interest is a legal interest in land created in favour of a lessee for a specific duration, to occupy and use the lessor's land at a periodic fee. Under the current legal regime of Ghana, a lease can be granted for as short as one year and for a maximum duration of 99 years for Ghanaians, and 50 years for foreigners. In many instances, Fulani pastoralists in Ghana are into leasehold arrangements (purely cash-based) with allodial trustees (chiefs and usufruct holders). Since such land transactions by chiefs are completed with limited participation of usufruct holders, this has implications for peaceful co-existence, transparency and accountability. Whenever conflicts erupt with members of the host communities, the chiefs and the state are pressured by local communities to evict the pastoralists. [Boamah \(2014\)](#) has attributed the domineering stance of chiefs in land leasing to efforts aimed at re-establishing authority over customary lands and boundaries in Ghana. The last category of land interests in Ghana is customary tenancies in which a gratuitous tenancy is created when the landlord gives out his land to the tenant to use free of charge. The only known gratuitous tenancy in Ghana is a licence – seasonal, annual or indefinite licences which can either be for farming (farming licence) or building (building licence). *Abusa* and *abunu* sharecropping agreements are the commonest customary tenancies and are mostly in respect of tree crops ([Blocher, 2006](#)).

3. Nature and causes of land conflicts in Ghana

[Wehrmann \(2008\)](#) in a study of land conflicts in Ghana associated the causes of land conflicts to political, economic, socio-economic, socio-cultural, demographic, legal/juridical, administrative, technical (land management), ecological and psychological factors. The National Land Policy also outlines the causes of land disputes in Ghana to include multiple land sales, indeterminate boundaries of customary-owned land resulting from lack of reliable maps and plans, conflict of interest between and within land owning-groups and the state (Government of Ghana, 1999). Land disputes within landowning groups are more pronounced in parts of Ghana where families hold lands, and family heads fail to account for land revenue. [Ubink and Quan \(2008\)](#), [Tsikata and Yaro \(2011\)](#) and [King and Bugri \(2013\)](#) have identified that the lowering enthusiasm of chiefs towards transparency and accountability is compounded by the limited statutory compulsion for chiefs to deliver on their mandates.

[Ayee et al. \(2011\)](#) identified nine (9) types of land disputes in Ghana based on the nature of causes (see [Box 1](#)). Similarly, [Crook \(2005\)](#) studies of land disputes in Kumasi, Goaso and Wa, identified intra-family dispute, trespass/boundary dispute and unauthorised disposition of rights in land by chiefs as the commonest causes of land disputes in Ghana. The nature of land tenure in Ghana itself is blamed for the high level insecurity recorded ([Tsikata and Seini, 2004](#)). The complications associated with the land tenure system in Ghana re-emphasises the need to enhance

Box 1

Types of land disputes in Ghana based on the nature of its Cause

- i. Boundary disputes usually between different stools and/or between individuals;
- ii. Disputes between chiefs and individual farmers over the rapid conversion of farm land into residential plots, without consultation and adequate compensation;
- iii. Inter-family and intra-family disputes over family land boundaries, the division of plots and proceeds from land sales, and the right to use certain parcels of land;
- iv. Disputes between chiefs and local people over land allocation practices and the lack of transparency and accountability in land transactions;
- v. Disputes arising from delayed or inadequate payment of compensation payments for government acquisitions;
- vi. Disputes over multiple claims to compensation payments;
- vii. Disputes between government institutions and subjects of particular stools or individuals, for example, sale of lands acquired by government for public purposes to private individual/corporate developers, instead of original owners and expired leases (99-year leases in parts of Accra expired between 1989 and 1999, but there has been no notification to the original owners);
- viii. Disputes between private individual developers and stools/families/individuals;
- ix. Disputes over ownership of resettlement lands.

Source: [Ayee et al. \(2011\)](#)

customary land management with accompanying dispute resolution mechanisms and a means to enhance tenure security.

According to [Peluso and Lund \(2011\)](#), the confluence of territorialisation, property rights and commoditization of land, contribute to land conflicts and land tenure insecurity. [Yaro \(2010\)](#) attributes land conflicts to increasing commercialisation. In his view, lands are increasingly being commercialized in Ghana for both residential and agricultural purposes, which hitherto were not. Yaro (*ibid*) maintains that high levels of insecurity of land tenure are a characterization of customary lands. Under such tenure systems, pastoralists, women and settler farmers are among a variety of groups who suffer from land insecurity and lose when land is commercialised ([Kuusaana, forthcoming](#)). [Flintan \(2012\)](#) observed that in the past, pastoralists had access to vast tracts of rangeland that were managed through customary institutions. In recent times, however, Fulani dominated pastoralists in Ghana have been much accused of various infractions with smallholders. [Lund \(2011\)](#) links this trend to the fact that land and property rights in Africa are basically connected to citizenship and social identity. The politics of belonging and citizenship are therefore core to one's ownership of land and even the security of one's tenure. This explains why conflicts with pastoralists in Africa over land are intertwined with issues of belonging and citizenship. The nomadic Fulani are regarded as foreigner and not belonging to the social classes in their host communities.

4. Pastoralism and the activities of Fulani herdsmen in Ghana

Pastoralism in Africa over the last decade has seen drastic

changes. Based on Goldsmith (2013), Turner et al. (2011), Moritz (2010), Blench (2001) and Breusers et al. (1998), pastoralism in Africa is being shaped by: the changing climate which exacerbates competition for natural resources between pastoralists and farmers; increased conflicts with agriculturalists; increased migration of pastoralists towards semi-arid and forested regions in search of resources; and changing land tenure insecurity. Catley et al. (2013) stated that the changing nature of conflicts in pastoral areas has greatly affected future pathways in pastoralism. Similarly, the Overseas Development Institute (2009) notes that conflicts between pastoralists and smallholder farmers are a major challenge facing African pastoralists, and these conflicts are on the ascendancy in the sub-region. The Sahelian droughts of the 1960s and 80s in West Africa also greatly reduced the adaptive capacity of pastoralists, and caused many to migrate southwards (Benjaminsen et al., 2012). Describing the changing nature of farmer-pastoralist conflicts, Turner et al. (2011) in a study of Niger (Bokki, Katanga, Sabon Gida and Tountoube) found that changes in livelihood practices, increased expansion of cropped fields, increase in land use competition and land tenure have changed the nature of conflicts in these communities. They concluded that these changes could trigger more conflicts.

The Fulani pastoralists in the West Africa have had a long historical relation with farmers. Although their relations with farmers are a mixture of cooperation and conflict, conflict has often become more likely due to competition for space. Unlike East Africa where there are indigenous pastoralists' societies like the Pokot, Turkana, Abakuria and Samburu of Kenya, Maasai of Kenya and Tanzania, the Toposa of South Sudan and the Dassenatch and Mursi of Ethiopia, the Fulani in West Africa have often been considered strangers and non-citizens. Their access and rights to use environmental resources are always limited, and in some cases denied because their nomadic lifestyles take them beyond their resident community territories. Importantly, farmer-herder conflicts are seen within the larger contextual underpinning of political, social, and ethnic conflicts. This is because their causes as well as their actors are multifaceted.

Fulani settlements in Ghana date to the early 20th century (Oppong, 2002; Tonah, 2005). Their earlier settlements were in the northern savannah ecological zone of Ghana, but now also in the transition savannah zones and Volta basins and the Afram plains of Ghana. Fulani herders are today found in many parts of Ghana, tending their own cattle, or employed as caretakers for indigenes (Tonah, 2007). According to the West African Network for Peacebuilding (2012), tensions between local farmers and Fulani herdsmen in parts of the Eastern, Ashanti, Brong-Ahafo, Volta, Northern, Upper East and Upper West Regions were rising due to destructions of farmlands and water bodies. Some of the factors that often account for conflicts between farmers and Fulani pastoralists include destruction of crops by Fulani cattle (crop damage), disagreement over the use of land and water sources, ethnic cleavages, bush burning, power relations and the lack of state institutions in managing farmer-pastoralist conflicts (Tonah, 2005, 2007; Moritz, 2006; Abdulai and Tonah, 2009). Interestingly, resource scarcity and competition has surfaced as a major cause of conflict between farmers and Fulani (Dosu, 2011). However, Moritz (2006) reports that it is often difficult to determine the cause of farmer-herder conflicts since these conflicts can be about natural resources/land competition or intertwined with other ethnic, religious or political underpinnings.

5. Methodology

5.1. The study area

The Asante Akim North District Assembly (AANDA) is one of the newly created districts under Legislative Instrument (LI) 2057 in 2012. It was carved out of the then Asante Akim North Municipal Assembly (now Asante Akim Central Municipal Assembly). Agogo is the capital of the AANDA. According to the District Medium-Term Development Plan (2012), the district covers a total land area of 1125.69 sq. km. The district shares boundaries with Kumawu in the north, Kwabre East in the east, Asante Akim South and Kwahu East in the South and Asante Akim Central Municipality and Sekyere East at the West. Based on the 2010 Ghana Housing and Population Census, the population of the AANDA is 68,186 representing 1.4 percent of the region's total population. Males constitute 48.8 percent and females represent 51.2 percent (Ghana Statistical Service, 2014). The district has a wet semi-equatorial climate and experiences a bimodal rainfall, ranging between 1250 mm and 1750 mm per annum from May to July and from September to November. The AANDA is dominated by the Akan speaking people, but also with a large number of migrant ethnic groups mainly from the northern part of Ghana who have migrated primarily to engage in farming and to work as farm labourers. Some of the identified major ethnic groups include the Busangas, Frafras, Nankanis, Kasems, Mamprusis, Dagaabas and Dagombas.

Agriculture employs 72.7% of the entire population in the District (Ghana Statistical Service, 2014). Also, 72% of the farmers are smallholders who mainly engage in plantain, maize, watermelon, cassava, yam, oil palm and vegetable cultivation. The migration and presence of Fulani in the area is due to the two wet-seasons and hence providing greener pasture for cattle all-year round. The transition forest zone is conducive for both crop cultivation and animal rearing. This explains why settler farmers and Fulani herdsmen are both interested in this zone. The map shows the AAND and the study communities. Agogo is a very relevant case study because smallholders have reported that contrary to the belief that marginal lands were rented to the then ScanFarm (Gh) Ltd for *J. curcas* production, the area given to the company by the chief was a productive area which was also under maize, yam, plantain and cocoa production (see Acheampong and Campion, 2014).

5.2. Methods of data collection

The paper adopted mixed qualitative methods. It combined surveys, in-depth and focus group interviews for data collection. A case study approach was adopted to study the interaction between the social phenomenon and social actors (Yin, 2003). Qualitative data was collected between August and November 2012 and between June and September 2013 in the Asante Akim North District of Ghana using snowballing and purposive sampling. In-depth interviews were also conducted using semi-structured interview guides. Six (6) focus group discussions (FGDs) comprising of 8–10 purposely selected community leaders were also conducted. In Kumasi, Agogo, Behome, Abrewapong Matuka, Bebuso, Kowereja, Mankala, Kwame Addo, Nyemso, Kansanso, Kowereso and Nyamebkyere we also undertook surveys and interviewed smallholder farmers, Fulani herdsmen and cattle owners. From the District Police office in Agogo, we also obtained information on documented conflicts relating to land and herding in the area. In total, 145 people were interviewed for this study. Due to the qualitative nature of the data collected, we employed descriptive narratives to critically examine how the prevailing land holding systems influence land conflicts with smallholder and Fulani herdsmen in the

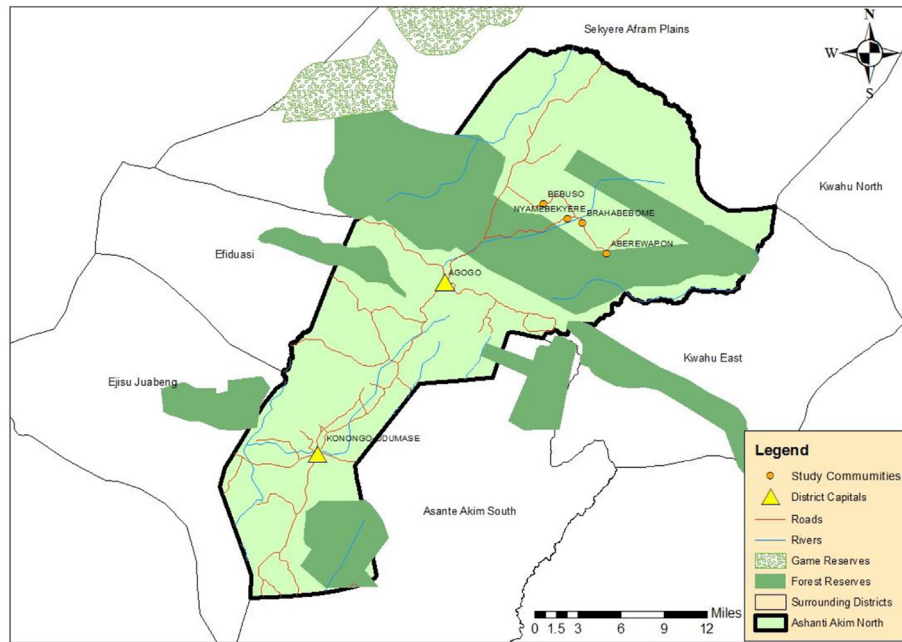


Fig. 1. Map of Asante Akim North district. Source: Authors, 2014

Asante Akim North District (Fig. 1).

5.3. ScanFarm (Gh) Ltd, Agogo – Asante Akim North District (AAND), Ashanti Region

ScanFarm (Gh) Ltd formally ScanFuel (Gh) Ltd came to Ghana in 2008 to obtain ‘idle’ and ‘underutilised’ farmland from the *Omanhene* of Agogo for the commercial production of jatropha. However, after completing the negotiations, 19,058 ha was granted through a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU). In 2010 ScanFarm’s concession was further reduced to 13,058 ha after 6,000 ha were ceded to Bernard Offori – a usufruct titleholder. ScanFarm (Gh) Ltd since 2009, diverted into maize production, soybeans, sorghum, and with plans to add upland rice production and teak. The company’s lease under registration with the Lands Commission is for 50 years⁵ in two streams of 25 years each. A lump sum of \$23,000⁶ was paid through the Agogo Traditional Council (ATC) for the land, subject to annual ground rent payment of \$1 per acre per annum with an annual upward review by \$0.50 and to a maximum of \$3.50 in 2014. Other issues included in the lease are unrestricted access to any water on the land for agricultural production. It was also emphasized that land disputes should first be resolved by the ATC. Also, the investors are obliged to promote and provide development including employment in the communities around their concession (Interview with ScanFarm Ltd in 2012).

6. Findings and discussions

6.1. Land tenure system in the Agogo area

Most lands in Agogo operate under common property

⁵ According to Article 266 (4) of the 1992 Republican Constitution of Ghana, no interest in, or right over, any land shall be created which vests in a person who is not a citizen of Ghana leasehold for a term of more than 50 years at any time. It is also generally the rule that agricultural leases should not exceed 50 yrs at any time.

⁶ Implying an average of \$1.75 per ha based on the lump sum payment and the size of plot that was rented-out. This figure is not different from reported averages of \$1 to \$2 per ha of agricultural land rentals globally.

arrangements where the land is managed by traditional authorities (stools) or the government in trust for the people. About 70% of the land in Agogo is held and managed by chiefs. Land in Agogo is mainly owned and managed by the stool, usufruct families and state. The Agogo stool owns the allodial title and administers land according to customary law pertaining to the area. The traditional council has the power to lease lands to large agro-investors, herders and smallholders. Autochthonous community members have the right to use the land for farming activities, when they apply to the traditional council through their respective *Odikro* (community chief) and use it as usufructuary holders. Although, community chiefs oversee lands in their communities and can make land allocations up to 5 ha, it is only the *Omanhene* (Paramount Chief of the Agogo Traditional Area) who has the powers to lease out lands. Some families in Agogo also own usufruct titles granted by the stool to engage in agricultural activities. These lands are held in trust for the families by their respective family heads. The families manage family lands, and through their heads they may lease or sublet such lands to any other party in consultation with the stool, but not necessarily with the stool’s consent. The Government of Ghana has also acquired some lands in the Agogo area for Afforestation Programs to reclaim degraded lands after the bush fires of 1983, which destroyed large tracks of hitherto cocoa farms and turned the land into savannah land. The Forestry Commission (FC) of Ghana manages these lands on behalf of the State.

Fulani cattle owners and herders acquire their lands through lease arrangements either directly with the Agogo Traditional Council (ATC) or from family usufructs depending on the size of land required. The first formal agreements between the ATC and herders were over a total of 190 acres of land for the rearing of cattle in 2006. Other cattle owners subsequently acquired lands in the area from family freeholders as well to rear their cattle. During the field interviews (in 2013) with cattle owners in Nyinatokrom, Abrewapong, Bebome and Nyamebekyere, they all reported that they acquired their lands from families and not the stool. Besides land leasing to herders, lands are also leased to settler farmers by family landowners and by the stool through the *Odikro* (Village chief). These lands are leased to settler farmers on share contract tenancies (*abunu* or *abusa* share tenancies) or informal cash-based

agreements.

Despite the recent rise in reports on farmer-herder conflicts in the Agogo area, some families are still leasing out family lands to the Fulani herders. The demand for more land by Fulani herders, smallholders and large plantations attracted the displeasure of the *Agogo mmaama kuo*⁷ and Farmers Associations in Agogo. The term *Agogo mmaama kuo* is refers to the local group that call themselves the concerned citizens of Agogo, and is believed to be fighting the course of the Agogo people in protecting their land rights and spearheading development in the area. Their major activity in the past included the demonstration against the *Omanhene* (Paramount Chief of the Agogo Traditional Area) and ScanFarm (Gh) Ltd over 'land grabbing' in the area, and against the activities of Fulani herders.

6.2. Institutions and actors of land management in AAND

A person desiring agricultural land must first approach the chief or other customary custodians including family/clan heads or their representatives and make a request for a specific parcel or any suitable unoccupied land. The chief usually is then allowed considerable time to consult with his council of elders for available vacant and suitable land for the particular farmer's needs. It may take a meeting or several meetings to arrive at a decision on an alienable location and after which an elder is nominated to take the investor to the parcel. An investor is allowed considerable time to examine the site and decide on it. The next stage involves the negotiation of a price (*drink money*) between the stool/family/clan and the lessee. If the purchase/rental price is agreed upon, payments are made to the stool and in exchange the lessee is offered an allocation note subject to the payment of administrative fees to the Stool's land secretariat. Where the parcel is located in the vicinity of a sub-chief (*Odikro*), the lessee will have to approach the particular *Odikro* to have his grant approved and publicised. The customary process is concluded with the cutting of the *tramma/guaha*.⁸

The cutting of the *tramma/guaha* signifies that the vendor/lessor has finally cut off the land and vesting it in the purchaser/lessee. The *guaha* cutting involves both parties and their witnesses cutting a twig or a leave at both ends into halves (See [Ollennu, 1962: 115–116](#)). Typically, the purchaser/lessee and grantor each provide a younger representative to cut the *guaha* to keep the event longer in the memory of younger people. This according to the focus group discussions (in 2013) in Dukusen and Afrisire is followed by the

⁷ The term 'Agogo mmaama kuo' is used to refer to the local group that called themselves the 'concerned citizens of Agogo' and are believed to be fighting the course of the Agogo people in protecting their land rights and spearheading development in the area. Their major activity included the demonstration against the *Omanhene* of Agogo and ScanFarm (Gh) Ltd over 'land grabbing' in the area and against the activities of Fulani herders.

⁸ According to Allott (1960:243) some of the Akan customary laws provide for the sale of land through the *guaha* ceremony. After the agreement to purchase has been reached, the land has been inspected, the price fixed, the boundaries cut and marked with special trees (themselves as evidence of the extent of land conveyed), the parties return from the forest within doors. The *guaha* ceremony then takes place before many witnesses for both parties. The vendor and purchaser each provide a representative usually a young boy to cut *guaha*. The vendor provides a piece of fibre on which are threaded six cowry shells. The two persons cutting *guaha* then squat down; each passes his left hand under his right leg and grasps one end of the string of cowries, holding the three cowries nearest to him. The respective parties keep the cowries used in the ceremony forever, in order that in case of dispute between them over the sale, the cowries may be produced as evidence. In fact the production of the cowries is an essential piece of evidence as to the sale. After the ceremony the purchaser offers drink and sheep to the vendor as *aseda* (thank you). This may vary significantly across the country. In the Northern regions of Ghana, a typical 'guaha' will involve the breaking of kola-nuts, the sharing of tobacco or the sacrificing of a ram. See also [Ollennu \(1962: 115–121\)](#).

performance of libation and invocation of the spirits of their gods and ancestors to seal the deal and strip the Stool off all interest in the said land for the entire sale or lease period. Since writing is considered alien in the customary land system in Ghana, the cutting of the *guaha* according to the respondents sealed the grant. However, with the resurgence of land conflicts and further steps towards land securitisation, many a buyer of customary lands proceed to translate the oral grant into written deeds. For prudence in business credit access, written leases and title certificates are more preferable.

However, majority of lands granted to smallholders and herders are still thriving on oral, negotiable, flexible, and yet complex terms of references as also noted by [Udry \(2011\)](#). These processes are summarised in [Fig. 2](#). About 95% of the smallholders operating in our study area are operating on oral leases, sharecropping and seasonal licences. This is because; the procedures of acquiring secure title to land through long term leasing are both cumbersome and expensive. Thus, most smallholders do not obtain them – leaving them vulnerable to dispossession when chiefs receive lucrative offers from large agro-enterprises. Following these customary processes of land acquisition, the stakeholders involved in customary land administration in the study area were identified to be the paramount chief (*Omanhene*), his council of elders, the *Odikros* (Village chiefs), family usufruct holders using customary land and the Customary Land Secretariat (CLS). Institutions responsible for land management are therefore limited to chief-taincy and the family in the informal parlance but may extend to the Lands Commission and Customary Land Secretariat (CLS) where land rights are formalized.

6.3. Impacts of land tenure on Fulani and smallholder conflicts

[Acheampong and Campion \(2014\)](#) study of large-scale land acquisition for commercial production of biofuel crops in 11 communities in Ghana including Agogo found that the land acquisitions have led in some cases, to violent conflicts between biofuel investors, traditional authorities and the local communities, and loss of livelihoods for local farmers due to expropriation. This in their view has affected households' food production; and land tenure insecurity of households. The authors for instance found that:

"... In Agogo in the Ashanti Region of Ghana, most farmers reported that, contrary to the belief that *Jatropha* does well on marginal lands, the land given to the *Jatropha* Company (formerly ScanFuel Ltd., now ScanFarm Ghana Ltd., Agogo, Ghana) by the chief was a productive or fertile land which was being used to cultivate crops such as maize, yam, plantain, and cocoa. The farmers claim that this has forced them to move to marginal lands, which are unproductive or infertile. The sizes of land lost to *Jatropha* cultivation by 109 respondents who were able to provide this information ranged from 1 to 1000 acres. The majority (69.7%) of the 109 respondents reported that they lost up to 10 acres, 7.3% lost between 11 and 20 acres while another 7.3% lost more than 100 acres ..." ([Acheampong and Campion, 2014: 4592](#)).

[Wisborg \(2012\)](#) study of the ScanFarm (Gh) Ltd transnational land deal in Agogo, Ghana found similar results in which the production shift of biofuel production to large scale mechanized food production triggered community agitation and resistance over loss of farming land and environmental impact. Households for instance depending on charcoal production were affected by the land deal due to the reduction in tree cover cleared for ScanFuel/ScanFarm production thereby losing their income. Similarly, [Campion and Acheampong \(2014\)](#) study of chiefs' role in fuelling conflicts in

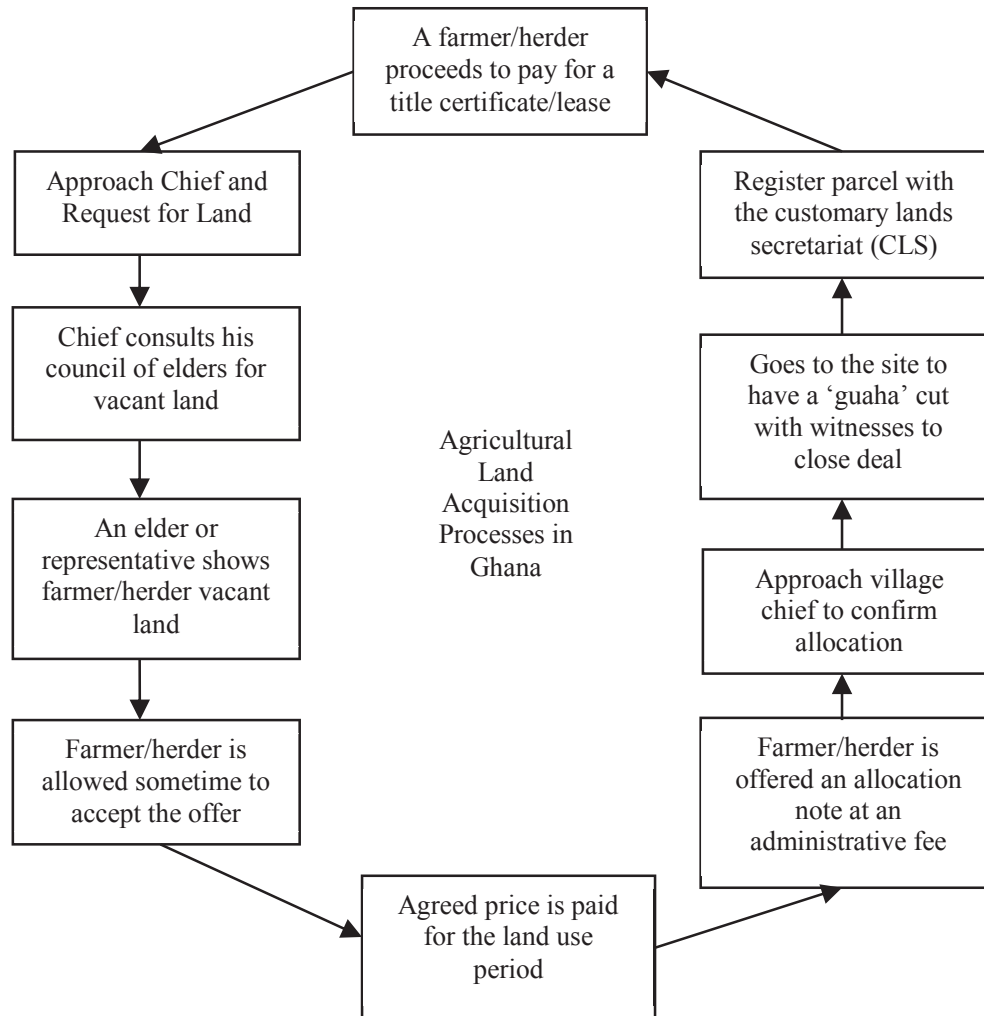


Fig. 2. Processes of Agricultural Land Acquisition in Ghana. Source: Authors' illustration (2013) from FGDs in study communities.

industrial *Jatropha* investments are mainly seen in chiefs' arbitrary lease of communal lands to agro-investors without information on the amount of money received, the acreage of land leased, and the displacement of farmers.

Though the Agogo State operates on a stool land tenure system, several indigenous families of the stool hold various usufruct rights. The landholding system in the AAND allows the stool to make various land allocation to various land users in areas that are not under usufruct rights (Field Data, 2013). In instances where such usufruct rights are infringed upon, the owners are offered alternative land or compensated promptly, adequately and fairly. Article 36 (8) of the [Republican Constitution of Ghana \(1992\)](#) stipulates that stools administer stool land as fiduciaries for the entire community, and use the proceeds from land transactions for benefit of the entire community. However, in reality this is not always the case. [Ubink and Quan \(2008\)](#) have emphasised that some chiefs have administered stool land as though it were their private property and have benefited unilaterally from such proceeds.

In our particular case study of the AAND, we observed from the interviews that in communities such as Dukusen, Afrisire, Nyan-tokrom and Nsonyameye where large lands were allocated for large-scale farming and herding, community members had no information on the transaction amounts and could not point to any recent benefits in the form of projects emanating from the management of stool land revenue. For example, with the ScanFarm

(Gh) Ltd concession, some 75 usufructs were reportedly displaced together with some settler farmers ([Wisborg, 2012](#)). This subsequently raised concerns about compensation payments and sparked several demonstrations in Agogo in 2010. Cash compensation was paid at Gh' 33/US\$22 per acre or Gh' 74/US\$ 49 per hectare (Interview with ScanFarm (Gh) Ltd in 2012). The communities around ScanFarm (Gh) Ltd are about 70% settler farmers from the northern regions of Ghana. They pay a rent of Gh' 40 per acre in a season or the value of 1–3bags of maize upon harvest as agreed with their landlords (focus group discussion in Dukusen, 2013).

According to the Civil Society Coalition on Land (2009), the boom in commercial agriculture especially for biofuel feedstock in Ghana, has led to the alienation of some autochthonous communities from their communal lands. The acquisition of 13,058 ha of land by ScanFarm (Gh)⁹ Ltd for a 50-year period, greatly influenced land tenure in the AAND. Even though it was reported that the company has been operating since 2008, it has only been able to use only 10% of all the land acquired. Also, after switching production focus from *Jatropha* in 2008 to food crops including maize,

⁹ ScanFarm (Gh) Ltd is a Norwegian company which came to Ghana in 2008 to obtain 'idle' and 'underutilised' farmland from the Agogomanhene for the commercial production of *jatropha* but has now shifted its focus to food crops, largely maize, soybeans, sorghum (with plans for rice production in the future).

sorghum and soybeans in 2010, its relationship with smallholders and herders have changed tremendously. Areas that were reportedly used for commercial farming or cattle herding, were characterised by access to water and to a large low-lying of savannah graze land. Water became an issue because ScanFarm (Gh) Ltd in their lease agreement were granted uninterrupted access to water for their farm production. This included access to the Afram and Oweri rivers which drain the area, and are sources of water supply for smallholders and herders as well. Competing access to water and variations in the nature of water use among the stakeholders, is a potential source of conflict.

Conflicts were also reported regarding straying animals of herders into farms of smallholders and also into ScanFarm's maize field. In August 2013, while this field survey was conducted, there were reports that some cattle belonging to unidentified Fulani herdsmen strayed into ScanFarm (Gh) Ltd.'s maize farm and destroyed their crops. The Company has resolved to kill such animals subsequently and surcharge the animal owners. The situation has compelled smallholders and herders to compete for productive lands outside the concession of ScanFarm (Gh) Ltd. Even though ScanFarm (Gh) Ltd is currently not producing on about 90% of their concession, all this area is protected from intrusion by smallholders and headers. Our interviews with farmers in Dukusen (in 2012) revealed that some settler farmers cultivating yam in the same vicinity of ScanFarm (Gh) Ltd were dispossessed. Some of the farmers in our focus group discussions in both Dukusen and Afrisire communities reported that the activities of ScanFarm (Gh) Ltd and Fulani pastoralists, who are apparently paying commensurate rents annually for land uses, have reflected in increases in their annual rents as well. Such sentiments promote tensions and competition for space between smallholders and Fulani herders, who are regarded as aliens.

During our survey, we did not receive reports of conflict between ScanFarm (Gh) Ltd and smallholders in the area in respect of water rights. Though it was reported that ScanFarm (Gh) Ltd had rights to obtain water if needed for their production activities, farming was largely rain fed in the study area. ScanFarm (Gh) Ltd use of water at the time of the study was limited to water needed to dilute insecticides or herbicides for application. Even though this water was obtained from the River Afram, where surrounding communities also accessed water for domestic purposes and for vegetable production, there were no recorded conflicts and no exclusions to the use of this water. With plans of ScanFarm (Gh) Ltd to undertake upland rice production in the near future, we foresee potential infringement on communal water use rights. We also envisage that the emergence of small-scale vegetable production along the River Afram will have potential impact on water quality due to the application of agro-chemicals. Though Fulani herders have been relocated far from the ScanFarm (Gh) Ltd concession, recent reports about stray-cattle on their maize farm raises further concerns about the interaction among smallholders, herders and large agro-investors in common spaces. This is much applicable in the use of common water sources or the siting of farms in previous animal trails to water sources. These potential conflicts in our view are due to the lack of broader stakeholder consultation with community land users during the allocation of land to Fulani herders and to ScanFarm (Gh) Ltd.

The acquisition of land by ScanFarm (Gh) Ltd was purely top-managed by the *Omanhene* of Agogo and the traditional council, with limited involvement of community chiefs and village leaders. There was generally limited information flow and community involvement throughout the acquisition process. For example, the household interviews confirmed that over 90% of households in the area have no idea about the price paid for the land, the term of the lease, the boundaries of the parcel, and terms and conditions under

which the transaction was completed. By and large, there remains a wide disconnect between the expectations of surrounding communities in terms of social infrastructural developments, employment and other knock-on effects through markets, and the actual benefits recounted on the ground. According to [German et al. \(2010\)](#), many of the purported ecological and rural livelihood benefits from commercial agricultural projects especially *J. curcas* have not materialised and many companies are yet to fulfil their promises especially on employment and social infrastructure. These lapses in information flow and accountability of traditional authorities for revenues accruing from customary land transactions in the area sparked off the demonstrations against ScanFarm (Gh) Ltd and against pastoralists in the area. It was also largely reported that land transactions were completed secretly at the *Omanhene's* palace (Paramount Chief of Agogo) and not at the Customary Land Secretariat (CLS). We attribute these lapses in customary land administration in the AAND to the nature of land tenure, which empowers the chief to negotiate land prices, collect land revenue and to use such revenue for the "*maintenance of the stool in keeping to its status*" according to Article 271 of the [Constitution of Ghana \(1992\)](#).

6.4. Historical development of farmer-pastoralists conflicts

Fulani historical settlements in Ghana predate colonialism. As noted earlier, their permanent settlements and establishment of formal relations with local people were only in the early part of the 20th Century, particularly following the expansion in the cattle trade and the Sahelian droughts of the 1960s ([Tonah, 2005](#)). Their first destination was in the Guinea savannah belt of northern Ghana. In southern Ghana especially around the Afram Plains, their contacts and interactions with the local people were rather late and much recent. Fulani migrations into Agogo for that matter are much recent. The historical background of local relations with Fulani is traceable to the late 1970s. From the 1970s–1990s, Fulani used to occasionally migrate from Nigeria through Benin and Togo, then to the northern part or eastern corridor of Ghana through Akosombo and make their sojourn to Agogo. They especially migrated to the area in the dry season in search of pasture, and returned when the rain falls in their origin regions. The local people at that time had fewer contacts and relations with the pastoralists. Conflicts at the period were few and hardly violent. The first reported case of Fulani-farmers conflict was in 1997, when some farmers in Bebome, Abrewapong, Kowereso, Kansanso and other communities reported to the local assembly of a group of Fulani herders with 'strange' cattle numbering over 1000 on the community lands. Following this report, the Government of Ghana dispatched a team of veterinary and security officials to drive the Fulani away. Subsequently, [Tonah \(2002\)](#) reported that in 1999 young men armed with guns and machetes attempted to drive Fulbe pastoralists out of the grasslands in the Agogo area. They shot and killed three Fulani pastoralists, while many others sustained gunshot wounds ([Tonah, ibid](#)). This did not, however, stop the Fulani annual migrations to the grasslands in the Afram Plains. They continued to come to the area, and their relationship with many other resource users and migrant farmers began to take shape.

The aggravation of violent confrontations between smallholders and Fulani in the Agogo area since 1997, led to formal agreements between four cattle owners (2 Ghanaian and 2 Fulani) and the Agogo Traditional Council (ATC) in 2006 to lease out lands to these cattle owners. After these formal agreements were concluded, the operations of these cattle owners also saw the migration of other nomadic pastoralists to the area. These nomadic pastoralists, mostly Fulani did not have any formal agreements with the ATC, but entered into informal land arrangements with other usufruct

landowners. As a result, competition for space among the different resource users increased considerably. According to the representative of the *Omanhene* of Agogo (Paramount Chief of the Agogo Traditional Area), between 2009 and 2012, there have been more than 50 cases of conflicts between farmers and herdsmen with some reported deaths. He claimed that the year 2012 saw the significant rise of violent confrontations/conflicts between farmers and Fulani herders. He explicitly summarises the background to the conflicts:

“The Fulani problem is a very complex issue here. The Fulani have been here for some time, and by then there were no conflicts. Even if there were, conflicts were not violent as it is today. It was only four people who came to see the Agogo Traditional Council for a lease contract of land to rear cattle. However, between 2010 and 2012 the conflict became very violent and intensified. This was because some Fulani from Niger, Mali, upper part of Nigeria and other parts of Ghana who had no agreement with the traditional council also brought their animals to graze because they saw their countrymen (fellow Fulani) animals grazing on the fertile lands. But the animals of the Fulani who had no contract with the traditional council were destroying the crops of the local people. Farmers and the local people also needed more land for cultivation ... This created tension between the local folks and the herdsmen (Fulani) since we were not also able to identify the cattle that belonged to the original four cattle owners who came to the traditional council to seek for land for their animals” (Interview with Representative of the *Omanhene* of Agogo, 18/7 2013, emphasis added).

Obviously, the interview traces violent conflicts mainly to the quest for land by different resource users, and the ‘influx’ of other unidentifiable Fulani pastoralists into the area. It stands to reason that when the identity of pastoralists is known, the predisposition of conflicts with local crop producers is very minimal. Alternatively, if the Fulani land transactions are facilitated by a native of the host region/country, it has an important role in reducing herder-smallholder conflicts. Fulani settlements that are granted land directly by the local chiefs and traditional councils have more secure rights, and their tenure is hardly contested as compared to those granted by usufruct holders.

Unlike the Fulani who have a much recent arrival history in Ghana, migrant farmers’ settlements in southern Ghana dates back to the early 1930s when new frontiers were explored for the commercial production of palm oil and cocoa (see Amanor, 2006). Migrant farmers in the Agogo area originated mainly from the northern part of Ghana in the 1970s to engage in growing food crops and to work as farm labourers (Hill, 1970). They acquired land from local chiefs and usufruct holders on sharecropping basis to engage in farming. Also, as non-autochthons and landless people in the area, lands are allocated to them orally, and these lands can be taken back when the usufruct landowners and chiefs desire. Hitherto the 1970s and 1990s, many of the lands settler farmers acquired were often not given much monetary value. However, with increase in the demand for land and the quest for it by other resource users, migrant farmers stand threatened as they are made to pay more, and compete with resourceful users such as ScanFarm (Gh) Ltd and Fulani pastoralists. Landowners in an interview (in 2013) for instance, revealed they preferred to lease lands to Fulani pastoralists because “they pay huge sums of money for the short-term leases” unlike the migrant farmers. According to Boamah (2014), local chiefs are motivated to lease land to herders and large agro-companies because some customary lands over the years are occupied by ‘non-compliant migrants’ who fail to pay customary tributes/rents.

Also, local citizenship discourses as Lund (2011) argues, is important in local farmer and migrant farmer relations. The mere citizenship of the migrants of being Ghanaian does not give them automatic access to land, unlike the local citizens. Thus the politics of belonging and citizenship (autochthony) are core to their ownership of land, and the tenure security of migrant farmers. The increase in demand for land by smallholders, pastoralists and agro-industrialists, has invariably changed land relations in the Agogo area. Although, there are no obvious violent land disputes between the autochthonous people and migrant smallholders in the Agogo area, there exist some potential for conflicts as land relations continue to be monetized. The monetisation of land transactions have seen some migrant farmers employ various tactics to evade rents payable. For example, Yelsang (2013) has reported of how settler farmers in some Bono communities either under declare output or fake poor harvest in order to pay lower rents. Minor conflicts that exist between local people and migrant groups therefore mainly centre on counter claims on usufruct rights and indeterminate tenure arrangements. However, in comparison to Fulani pastoralists, migrant farmers enjoy steady relations with the autochthonous people. They also have comparatively secure land tenure, and may still be more likely to access land for farming.

6.5. Land and conflicts between Fulani herders and smallholders

From the study, it was found that farmer-Fulani herder conflicts have always been the result of crop destructions, resource scarcity, cattle rustling and other social factors like cultural and ethnic differences as was reported by the studied stakeholders. Farmers and herders interviewed, also advanced these same reasons for conflicts between them. However, underlying all these is the issue of farm/grass land scarcity. The quest for land breeds competition between farmers and herders, who see each other as antagonists instead of partners with potential mutual benefits. Scarcity of land for agricultural expansion, for instance, compels farmers to move further to grazing lands to expand their farms. This brings them into direct competition for space with herders. As emphasized in the discussion of the history of conflicts in the area, violent confrontations between the smallholders and herders intensified following the formal land lease agreements between cattle owners and the Agogo Traditional Council (ATC). It is probably the case that, usufruct holders followed the example of the ATC to make land allocations to Fulani pastoralists without communicating this to the *Omanhene*. Since these latter allocations were without recourse to the laid down customary processes, they ignited conflicts easily when local residents discovered these new arrivals of Fulani herders. Thus, commercialisation of agricultural land may result in the exacerbation of claim over idle or unoccupied communal lands. Some usufruct holders in the process make land allocations to migrant farmers and herders, as a means to establish their ownership claims. Unfortunately, conflicts have intensified between the farmers and herders in the Agogo area, resulting in some deaths and injuries. Police records on conflicts involving farmers and Fulani herders in Agogo from 2009 to March 2013 reveal a total of 62 cases as indicated in Table 1.

Hence, land conflicts between farmers and herders have been

Table 1
Police reported cases involving Fulani from 2009–March 2013.

Cases reported	Number
Deaths	12
Injuries (Gun shots)	16
Crop damage (for only January to March 2013)	35

Source: Extracted from Ghana Police records, Agogo (August, 2013)

compounded by the presence of many other 'alien' cattle owners and Fulani herders in the area, who do not have formal land lease contracts with the traditional council and landowners. Since smallholders already cultivate most of these low lands, the presence of cattle is a threat to crop production. Sometimes, herders argue that their spatial access to pasture lands and sources of water (rivers, streams and ponds) are often impeded by smallholders, due to the location of farms across animal trails. Farmers grow crops on these pathways to the pasturelands and water bodies which make it difficult to access them without cattle causing damage to crops.

The existence of these traditional factors of herder-farmer conflicts does not necessarily result in violence, until the underlying issues come to play. With increases in the value of land, the Agogo Stool and some usufruct holders are inclined to allocate land for pasture instead of farming. As Flintan (2012) notes, increased competitions over land make conflict between pastoralists and farmers inevitable. Chiefs are under immense pressure to evict Fulani herdsmen in the Agogo area. Some confiscated lands are already being converted into croplands. Lands in areas like Bebome, Abrewapong and Nyamebekyere, where Fulani herders acquired grazing lands have all been seized. These lands have now become farms making it difficult to get land for grazing. The Fulani herdsmen claim each time they acquire land after a few months of grazing on it; the land is confiscated by farmers and used for farming activities. The farmers argued that some chiefs or family heads leased out many lands to cattle owners without consulting the users of the land.

Explicitly, farmers and herders see crops destructions as the main cause of conflicts between them. However, underlying this is the issue of land. It is the quest and competition for land by both herders and farmers that are resulting in the destruction of farms, and therefore the conflicts. Crop destructions are always the immediate course. In our view, if crop destructions were the main cause of herder-farmer conflicts, farmers will negotiate and dialogue for compensation payment anytime this happens. This is never the case from the Agogo case study. Also, if land were valueless, no one will fight over it. The concentration of resources in Agogo for both farming and herding, make the area conducive for habitation, but also prone to resource use conflicts. This is because the resources available in the area, brings many stakeholders in the same space. Just as Greiner (2012) notes, the value or potential value of a resource can be a major driver of conflicts in pastoralists' communities.

One cannot lose sight of the role of ethnicity and the alien-citizens dichotomy in the herder-smallholder conflicts in Ghana. Fulani citizenship in Ghana is generally disputed. Fulani are not one of the autochthonous ethnic groups, and therefore have no property rights. Conflicts in Agogo are therefore to some extent embedded in ethnicity because farmers construct Fulani identity as non-Ghanaian. Ethnic boundary making is thus constructed in relation to Fulani rights, access and use of natural resources. In a focus group discussion (in 2013), local farmers clearly assert the ethnic factor: "strangers who have no rights over our lands are here fighting us. They should go back to their countries." As Gurr (1993) espouses, communal groups which are made up of members of a similar identity and share a distinctive collective identity based on cultural (ethnicity) and *ascriptive* traits, mobilize in defence or promotion of their self-defined interests. Local people and Farmers especially have always mobilized at the communal level against herders to defend natural resources. Collective action (in forms of attacks) against herders is based on the shared interest of local people, stemming from their identity as Akan, as well as parallel distribution of power and vested interests. Entrenched prejudices and negative stereotypes of Fulani pastoralists have also been intertwined with land conflicts between the groups. For instance,

community members perceive Fulani pastoralists as thieves, armed robbers, murderers and rapists. These perceptions fuel agitations against the Fulani and lead to collective violence against them.

7. Conclusion

Our study was basically about how the land tenure system in the Asante Akim North District influences land access and conflicts between Fulani pastoralists and smallholder farmers. The choice of the AAND was particularly important because of the emerging interest and competitions for land by various actors including smallholder farmers who require more land to expand their farming activities; Fulani pastoralists who also find the AAND very conducive with large pasture lands for cattle rearing; and finally the interest of large agro-investors in acquiring land for commercial farming and tree plantations. These varying interests have created high levels of competition for agricultural land in the study area. This study revealed that Fulani pastoralists' access and rights to land are often limited primarily due to their non-citizenship status and this opens them to abuse by local smallholder farmers. Herders continue to suffer land tenure insecurity because their titles are not registered. This makes them vulnerable to expropriation without restitution or compensation. Conflicts between farmers and Fulani pastoralists are basically over overlapping land use rights, but always seen explicitly attributable to resource scarcity, crop destructions and intrusion. It is the quest for land by smallholders to expand their farmlands in the savannah belt, that bring them into conflict with Fulani pastoralists, who equally require much grazing land. Also, future problems of land and water rights are likely to emerge when agro-enterprises, pastoralists and smallholders demand water from the same source as they expand and diversify their production. In the future, issues of 'water grabbing' should be given critical attention in future.

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