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Stereotypes, prejudices and exclusion of Fulani pastoralists in Ghana

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Abstract

The purpose of this paper is to analyze stereotypes and prejudices of Fulani pastoralists as they have become an important part of national and local community policies and discourses. We show how these attitudes have subtly led to Fulani exclusion and discrimination and structured community-pastoralist relations. Typical stereotypes and prejudices of Fulani include Fulani as armed robbers, rapists, violent and uncivilized. We argue that stereotypes, prejudices and practices of Fulani pastoralists' exclusion go beyond the normal perceptions of them being non-citizens and a non-indigenous ethnic group in Ghana, but have been developed through social cognitive categorization. Our study found that these perceptions have resulted in Fulani pastoralists being denied settlements in communities and the use of and access to resources. Besides, stereotypes and prejudices suffered by Fulani pastoralists are constructed in the community and media discourses and have been built historically and culturally. National and local policies such as national expulsion exercises of Fulani (e.g. Operation Cow Leg), local community evictions and confiscations of Fulani-acquired lands have led to subtle discrimination against them in many spheres of Ghanaian society. The paper uses insights from primary field data of interviews and observations, as well as reference to media and news reports.

Keywords: Stereotypes, Prejudices, Exclusion, Fulani, Pastoralism, Farmer-herder conflict, Ghana

Introduction

In Ghana, tribalism and ethnocentrism have generally been rejected, especially among the so-called indigenous ethnic groups. Yet snapshots of 'tribalism' and 'ethnocentrism' do exist in Ghana particularly in the body politic, in employment sectors and in relations between autochthonous and allochthonous groups. The Fulani (pastoralists) are regularly 'victims' of ethnically-based stereotypes, prejudices and discrimination within Ghanaian society. They are treated as 'non-citizens', 'aliens' and 'foreigners'. The Fulani (Fulbe)¹ are mainly nomadic and semi-sedentary pastoralists whose occupation is herding cattle. Most often, they cannot claim ownership of the land and natural resources they use as herders. Various Fulani groups inhabit the savannah-Sahel region of West Africa, especially in Nigeria, Niger, Chad, Senegal, Guinea, Mauretania, Mali, Burkina Faso, Benin and Cote d'Ivoire (Turner et al.

2011; Opong 2002). Apart from herding, there are huge numbers of Fulani engaged in business, trade, manufacture, religious learning and politics. Their population is estimated at 18 million. Nomadic Fulani are often 'minority groups', both in terms of power and population in countries where they have come to stay and where their settlements are spatially separated from those of the autochthon population.

The 'Fulani' are not one of the recognized ethnic groups² in Ghana, despite contact with the Ghanaian populace for over a century. With the exception of a few censuses that purposely included and counted Fulani as part of the population of Ghana, their numbers are not known and they are deliberately not registered in the national census. In national elections, second- and third-generation Fulani pastoralists are not allowed to vote, unless locally dominant political parties see them as enhancing their electoral chances. In the National Identification Exercise which was meant to compile a national database and identity cards for both citizen and non-citizens resident in Ghana, Fulani pastoralists were

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either refused to be registered in some areas or made to pay money by registration officials.³

Thus, at the national and community levels, Fulani pastoralists are excluded from socio-political participation and access to resources. Ghanaian citizenship and immigration policies have tended to put Fulani pastoralists in a negative light. Fulani per the 1992 Republic of Ghana (1992) even if born in Ghana but having no parent or grandparent born in Ghana before 1957, are explicitly excluded from Ghanaian citizenship except through marriage or naturalization after long stays. There have been state policies of Fulani pastoralists' expulsion from Ghana termed 'Operation Cow Leg' which has been carried out several times. Besides, local community policies of Fulani pastoralists' evictions, their limited access to land leases and their conflicts with local farmers have prompted community evictions and attacks as well as state/government interventions. These infringements and the production of stereotypes and prejudices they entailed have affected the relationship between local communities and Fulani pastoralists. Stereotypes and prejudices of Fulani pastoralists go beyond just discourses of them being non-citizens, but are rather based on cognitive social biases and categorization. In examining the stereotypes and prejudices vis-à-vis the Fulani in Ghana, particularly the pastoral Fulani, this paper argues that these attitudes towards Fulani pastoralists in Ghana have become an important part of national and local community policies and discourses, help to exclude the pastoralists and to structure pastoralist-community relations.

Study area and methods

This study was undertaken in several communities in the West African nation of Ghana which shares borders to the north with Burkina Faso, to the east with Togo and to the west with Cote d'Ivoire. As much as we would have liked to study the whole of Ghana, since our study deals with the topic from a national perspective, we had to select a limited number of communities from northern and southern Ghana: Gushiegu, Karaga, Sandema, Tamale, Kumasi, Agogo, Konongo, Kumawu (in Samsu and Mossipenyin) and Accra (see Figure 1). More than 70 % of the respondents involved were from Agogo and Gushiegu districts because many Fulani pastoralists are inhabiting these districts.

The study is qualitative in nature and based on ethnographic research that included participant observation, interviews, focus group discussions (FGDs) and the collection of media reports and news. The study group comprised purposefully sampled Fulani residents in Ghana, local farmers, Fulani pastoralists (including migrant herders, sedentary herders and cattle owners), local community residents, traditional chiefs, community leaders and government officials. They made up a total of 254 respondents. Our approach thus allowed us to look at stereotypes, prejudices and practices of exclusion as presented in the narrative of immediate actors as well as in Ghanaian media discourse.

Our analysis of Ghanaian media reports involved print, electronic and online sources. These were mainly from the *Ghanaian Daily Graphic Newspaper*, Ghana News Agency.org (both state-owned), TV3 News Network, *Daily Guide Newspaper*, Citifmonline.com, *Ghanaian*

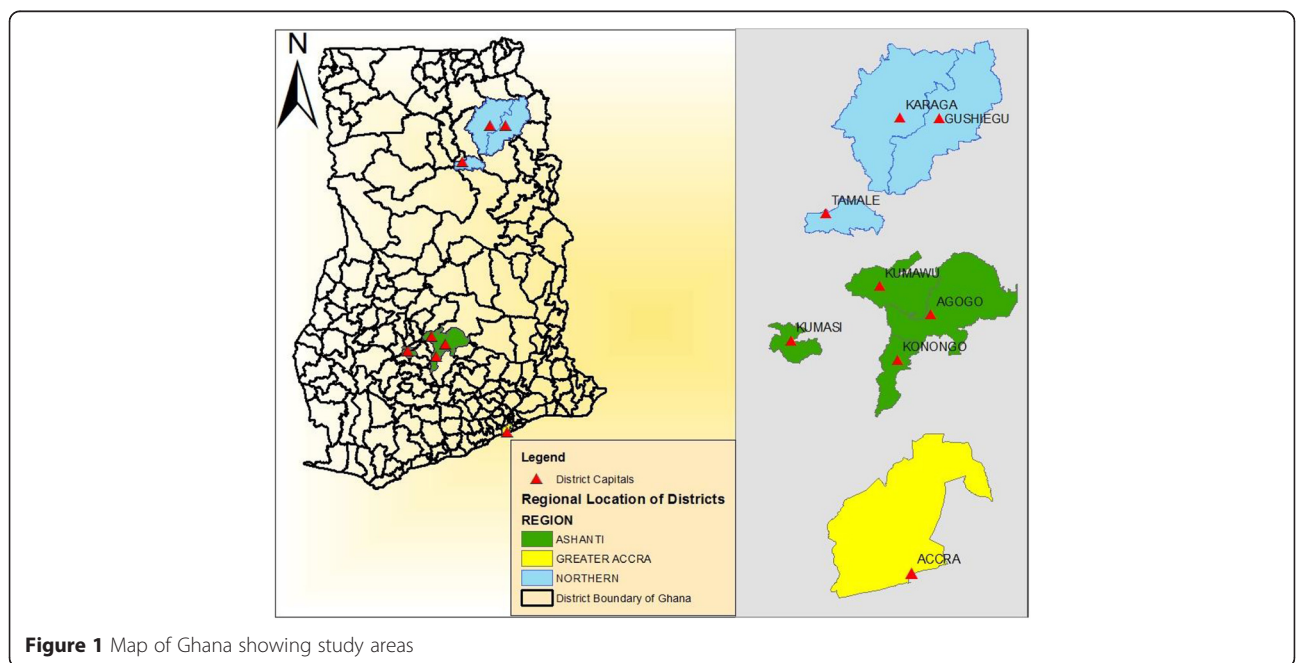


Figure 1 Map of Ghana showing study areas

Chronicle Newspaper, Joy FM (myjoyonline.com), ModernGhana.com, VibeGhana.com, Peacefmonline.com and Ghanaweb.com (privately owned). The analysis took the form of a sociological discourse analysis (see Ruiz 2009) that involved three levels: firstly, textual analysis in which discourses relevant to the topic from the media reports were characterized and a content analysis of the media texts done. This was, secondly, followed by a contextual analysis of these media reports where the communicative meaning of the discourses was analyzed and then, thirdly, by the interpretation of the discourses and generalizations drawn.

Theoretical perspective

Enormous studies have been done on stereotypes, prejudices and practices of exclusion of Fulani across West Africa. Frantz's (1975) study of stratification of pastoralists reveals challenges in their integration into African nations. Diallo (2001) looked at how citizenship, rights over resources and state and ethno-regional policies in northern Cote d'Ivoire exacerbated inter-ethnic conflicts between Fulani and Senufo communities, leading to frequent eviction of the Fulani. Similarly, Diallo (2009) found that local prejudices and stereotypes of Fulani in Burkina Faso have tended to undermine nomadic Fulani and thereby marginalizing them. In Ghana, Tonah (2000) equally examined local state policies and local prejudices against Fulani in Ghana, using data from Paga along the Ghana-Burkina Faso border. He also examined the national expulsion of Fulani pastoralists from Ghana in 1999/2000 that had been carried out by the Ghanaian state/government (Tonah 2002). Tonah argues that state and local policies have subtly discriminated against Fulani and tended to exclude them as many Ghanaians and the state itself consider them 'aliens' and non-citizens. Our study then goes beyond just local stereotypes, prejudices and practices of exclusion of Fulani in Ghana, but rather discusses them as broadly and as subtly seen in state/national and local policies narratives and presented through Ghanaian discourses.

Sociologically, prejudice and stereotypes often facilitate discrimination and exclusion against groups and even help to muster political support for laws and policies that lead to institutional discrimination (Dovidio et al. 2010). In attempting to understand exclusion, stereotypes and prejudices, we use the *social categorization theory* which implies collective signification of a whole group with prejudices and stereotypes built through cognitive categories. Dovidio et al. (2010) note that prejudices and stereotypes are based on people's propensity to categorize and thus to react to and judge other people by seeing them as group members rather than as individuals. Allport states that:

'Human mind must think with the aid of categories ... and once formed categories are the basis for normal prejudgment. We cannot possibly avoid this process. Orderly living depends upon it' (1954:20).

Importantly, the basis of the theory is that social biases are based on cognitive categories and that social categorization influences social perception and affects cognition and behaviour (Dovidio et al. 2010). In this study, the theory of social categorization allows for a critical interpretation of the situation of Fulani in relation to stereotypes and prejudices as resulting from social and cognitive categories and discursive interpretations.

Allport's (1954:9) conceptualization that prejudice is 'an antipathy based on a faulty and inflexible generalization. It may be directed toward a group as a whole or toward an individual because he is a group member' has provided a basis for discussions on discrimination and social categorization. Allport (1954) conceptualized prejudice as being caused by macro, social-structural, micro and individual factors. This includes ethnocentrism and in-group biases. Prejudices reinforce and are also reinforced by discrimination. Through prejudices, negative attitudes are built against other groups and occasionally lead to discrimination. Stereotypes are notions that members of different groups have about each other and that become part and parcel of their 'cultural knowledge' (Eriksen 1994). Thus, in stereotypes, a group holds negative or positive beliefs about another group such as an ethnic group or a race. Stereotypes are mostly negative although positive stereotypes about people are built too. The relation between prejudice and stereotype, although highly debatable, is explicitly stated by Allport (1954):

'The stereotype acts as both a justificatory device for categorical acceptance or rejection of a group, and as a screening and selective device to maintain simplicity in perception and thinking' (1954:192).

Thus, stereotypes are both causes and consequences of prejudice but not always. Eriksen (2010:40) states that stereotypes '...are widespread in societies with significant power differences as well as in societies where there is a rough power equilibrium between ethnic groups.' *Stereotypes* which are built over a long time become fixed and are difficult to change. We consider a group excluded when, based on its historical, political, cultural and non-citizenship status, it is subtly discriminated against.

Prejudices, stereotypes and discriminatory tendencies are often built between ethnic groups that relate to each other as autochthons and strangers (Lentz and Nugent 2000). Ethnicity is a very strong tool for political and social exclusion of other groups (Schlee 2008). It often comes together with ethnocentrism which includes

judgments of others' cultural values and a feeling of superiority over others. *Ethnocentrism* is coupled to prejudice, exclusion and discrimination and is used to organize the repression or domination of one group by another (Healey 2014). Thus, there are interlocking relations between prejudices and stereotypes and exclusion.

Fulani in Ghana

The Fulani are well-known in the anthropological literature for their skill in cattle keeping (e.g. Stenning 1959). The Fulani spread across West Africa and remain a minority in comparison to the so-called indigenous populations (Tonah 2005). They are also a minority in terms of power and access to resources in many states across West Africa. The pastoral Fulani are often moving across regions and national borders in West Africa. Ghana is a preferred destination for many of the Fulani pastoralists.

Fulani migration into Ghana according to Tonah (2005) is a recent phenomenon. The author notes that it was not until the beginning of the twentieth century that any significant Fulani presence in what then was Gold Coast was documented. The very first census in the Gold Coast in 1911 included Fulani because a number were found along the White Volta of northern Ghana. However, Fulani were seasonally moving southwards to Ghana long before the British arrived in the Gold Coast.⁴ Their first migration was to the northern part of present Ghana. Historically, according to Tonah (2005), three major reasons are responsible for Fulani migration into the Gold Coast (now Ghana) in the twentieth century: first, the expansion in cattle trade; second, the establishment and development of native farms by colonial authorities; and third, the Sahelian droughts of the 1970s and 1980s which forced herders to move with their cattle in search of pasture and water. Thus, the reason for Fulani presence in Ghana was economic and ecological. Since migrating into Ghana, some Fulani have settled permanently. Today, Fulani are found in almost all parts of Ghana where some are businessmen as well as engaged in many aspects of the Ghanaian society (see Oppong 2002). Their numbers in Ghana are not known, but they are estimated to be more than 14,000.⁵

Stereotypes, discrimination and prejudices of Fulani pastoralists in Ghana

We now present various stereotypes and prejudices of Fulani, especially the pastoral Fulani, in Ghana as portrayed in media and citizenship discourses that subtly contribute to their exclusion and discrimination.

Fulani pastoralists as armed robbers and bandits

A major prejudice in the general Ghanaian society is that Fulani engage in highway robberies. Fulani herders are

seen to be armed robbers or accomplices of robberies. Most of this is highlighted in the Ghanaian media (as illustrated below). Many in the interviews and FGDs claimed that Fulani herders harbour their friends from Burkina Faso or Nigeria to engage in robbery in the communities or link roads to communities and abscond afterwards. Fulani pastoralists are also seen to engage in banditry activities such as cattle rustling, animal theft (sheep, fowls, goats, etc.), theft of food crops and confiscating motor-bikes. Youth farmers in an FGD stated that '...on highways, Fulani are said to wield guns and other weapons to rob vehicles and people of their valuables.' When asked to prove the evidence that indeed robberies are done by Fulani, the respondents of the FGD claimed that the mode of dressing of the robbers, their language and looks are those of Fulani. Interestingly, one of the female victims of an alleged Fulani robbery claimed that 'on our way to Djentiri market (in Gushiegu), our bus was intercepted by a group of robbers and they took all our monies. Although the robbers disguised themselves, the scent of cow milk on them was obvious. When we were stopped, the robbers spoke in a dialect that was Fula and the scent as they drew nearer us to take our monies was obvious they were Fulani.'⁶ Others claimed that Fulani also connive with organized groups and butchers to steal cattle and sell them in cities.

Indeed, Fulani have been found implicated in organized crime of rustling cattle to other towns or countries to sell and also in cases of armed robbery. Highway robbers arrested by the police have involved Fulani, but not all robbers are always Fulani as Ghanaians from other ethnic groups are also involved. When others are arrested, their ethnic identification is never made known but Fulani are clearly mentioned in news headlines and even by the police. Take for instance the following newspaper headlines carried out by both state-owned and private media outlets in Ghana over time:

1. POLICE ARRESTS TWO FULANI ARMED ROBBERS⁷
2. ASHANTI POLICE GUN DOWN SEVEN FULANI ARMED ROBBERS⁸
3. 5 FULANI ROBBERS BUSTED⁹
4. 5 ARMED ROBBERS ARRESTED IN V/R¹⁰
5. TWO FULANI ARMED ROBBERS KILLED IN SHOOT-OUT WITH POLICE¹¹

In all these headlines, Ghanaian media discourses deliberately identify Fulani armed robbers by their ethnic groups and simply referred to the others as Ghanaian armed robbers:

'...Briefing the press, the Regional Police Commander, DCOP Ransford Moses Ninson, stated that the Police

administration has observed that *Fulani headsmen* together with some *Ghanaian armed robbers* who have been attacking people on highways and killing innocent citizens are hiding at these ghettos, hence the need to chase them out...¹² (emphasis added).

Simply identifying other armed robbers as Ghanaians and clearly naming Fulani armed robbers by their ethnic group name clearly illustrates ethnic labelling and the social categorization put on all Fulani by Ghanaians (through media discourses). In some instances, robbers disguise themselves as Fulani supposedly speaking and dressing like Fulani because these armed robbers know the public stereotype of Fulani as armed robbers. This cognitive categorization of individual Fulani engaged in armed robbers is used to classify the entire Fulani ethnic group as armed robbers.

Fulani pastoralists as rapists

Fulani pastoralists, who mostly live in the outskirts of villages and cities, are perceived as rapists of women who go to pick shea nuts and firewood in the forest or to the farm alone without male company. Again, the Ghanaian media seem to be drumming this claim:

1. WOMAN, 40, RAPED BY FULANI HERDSMAN¹³
2. COMMUNITY ARREST FULANI HERDSMAN FOR RAPE¹⁴
3. FULANI HERDSMEN RAPE WIVES BEFORE HUSBANDS AT AGOGO – WOMAN ALLEGES¹⁵

Most of these claims about Fulani pastoralists raping women are difficult to prove as neither the police have evidence of it nor are any formal complaints from victims made to the police. In an FGD with a group of young men whether they had evidence that Fulani herders are rapists, one of them stated that ‘we heard it happened somewhere and not here ...’. Accordingly, one of them stated that the difficulty in proving the issue of rape stems from the fact that many women in Ghana do not report or talk of rape cases for fear of stigma from the society and family members alike. Fulani pastoralists equally argue that their tradition and customs do not accept sexual contact with women who are not legally married to them. Instructively, this stereotype appears to incite hatred towards Fulani herders.

Fulani pastoralists as uncivilized, primitive and dirty people

Fulani and other ethnic groups in Ghana are divided by a number of cultural differences in the spheres of social and political organization, economic organization, food, dressing and general lifestyle. For many people in Ghana, Fulani are just pastoralists involved in raising

herds of cattle. However, the Fulani include a wide array of people who are businessmen, traders, settled farmers, educated officials and politicians.¹⁶ As a result of these cultural differences, Fulani pastoralists’ lifestyle is interpreted as primitive and uncivilized. Due to little appreciation and understanding of the rationale and importance of nomadic pastoralism by large sections of the population, this livelihood strategy is rather seen as an outdated tradition and lacking potential for modernization (Tonah 2000). Thus, there is a social categorization of Fulani as a homogenous group as well as an interpretation of their pastoral lifestyle as primitive and tantamount to uncivilized behaviour.

Ghanaians can easily point out examples of cultural difference between Fulani and other ethnic groups. They often name Fulani attire, food and customs. Building on these cultural differences, many negative stereotypes have been formed and are expressed in everyday discourses across Ghana. Clear examples include:

‘Fulani are uneducated, uncivilized and never attend school nor take their children to school’¹⁷

‘Once a Fulani passes by you, the scent of his/her perfume, soap or pomade is milk’¹⁸

‘You can never trust a Fulani and be friends with him. He will betray you’¹⁹

‘Fulani are very destructive like monkeys. They destroy farms within a matter of seconds’²⁰

‘Fulani have no town or land of their own. I am not sure of where they came from. But all we know is that they live in the bush’²¹

‘These are people (Fulani) always live in the bush with their animals. So their behaviour is much influenced by the animals. They think and behave like their cattle’²²

‘These guys (Fulani) are very filthy. The droppings from their cattle and their milk bring flies all over the place.’²³

There is emphasis on the fact that droppings from their cattle make the environment dirty and their method of milk processing attract flies resulting in infectious diseases such as cholera. Fulani pastoralists are also seen as very destructive of the environment. They are accused of polluting water bodies, burning bushes and cutting trees to feed their cattle. Others tag them with resource depletion and the destruction of some species of flora such as the shea tree (*Vitellaria paradoxa*)²⁴ and

thatch grasses (*Hyparrhenia involucreta* Stapf) for roofing houses. (It has to be noted here, though, that bush burning and other environmental destruction are not only done by the herders. Local farmers after harvesting set their farms ablaze and also cut down trees for firewood. Hunters equally set fire in search for bushmeat).

Some indigenous ethnic groups claim that marriage relations between them and Fulani is traditionally forbidden. The Dagomba, Konkomba and Asante (in some areas) have no marriage relations with Fulani people. Some see as 'waywardness' any member of their ethnic group who has sexual relationships with Fulani. A man claimed that anyone among his ethnic group who has a sexual or marriage relation with a Fulani is 'a completely useless human'. The reason is attributable to the inferior status given to the Fulani pastoralists who historically have herded the cattle of kings of some of these ethnic groups and were slaves to the king and the aristocratic class. In some instances, spiritual stereotypes and prejudices are held against Fulani pastoralists including their ability to fly in the night (also see Barre 2012); to talk to and command their cattle to kill; to possess spiritual powers to heal; to put spells on a person and kill him/her instantly with magical powers; and even to change themselves into cattle. All these are perceived in a negative light.

Nevertheless, not in all cases are Fulani stereotypically and prejudicially discriminated. Fulani have been *cultural neighbours*²⁵ to the Dagomba, Mamprusi, Gonja and Builsa ethnic groups in northern Ghana and have engaged in very productive cooperative relations with them. Cooperation and strong social networks between them and these communities are built in many ways such as exchanges of goods and services, entrustment of cattle to them, friendship, visitations, trade, communal labour, social solidarity and even marriage with some Ghanaians. The wife of the vice presidential candidate of the New Patriotic Party²⁶ (who himself comes from the chiefly Mamprusi ethnic group) is of Fulani extraction. And there have been many inter-marriages between members of indigenous Ghanaian ethnic groups and Fulani. Also, Ghanaian veterinary services are made available to Fulani herders across the country.

Fulani pastoralists as violent and causers of farmer-herder conflicts

There has been a supposed increase in violent farmer-Fulani herder conflicts, and this is particularly reported in the Ghanaian media. There are quite a number of attacks on both local farmers and Fulani herders resulting in deaths and destruction of properties in almost all the ten regions of Ghana. The conflicts are especially high in Agogo in the Ashanti Region and in parts of the Eastern and Northern Regions. Historically, Fulani pastoralist

conflicts with local farmers in 1988/1989 and 1999/2000 led to expulsions of the former by the Ghanaian Government through the security agencies (see Tonah 2002). Thus, the Ghanaian state itself sees farmer-herder conflicts as the fault of Fulani. In these conflicts, it is 'us' against 'them'. And the blame is put on Fulani herders' destructive behaviour - 'they intentionally drive their cattle into peoples' farms destroying large acres of crops and when you confront them they kill you.'²⁷

Importantly, media discourse in Ghana tends to portray farmer-Fulani herder conflicts in Ghana with Fulani being the culprits. These conflicts are reported - both in print and electronic media - as gory, violent and increasing. Between 2010 and 2013, there were as many as 60 media reports of clashes between local farmers and Fulani herders in many parts of Ghana (based on the media studied for this paper). Media discourses of these conflicts can be characterized by the following:

- The media put the blame mainly on the Fulani herders. The Fulani are seen as the ones perpetuating violence.
- There is focus on the atrocities and gory activities of the Fulani against local residents of communities rather than the atrocities of local residents against the Fulani.²⁸

The media discourse seems to contribute to the violent responses of communities to conflicts with Fulani herders. Just as Schröder and Schmidt (2001) posit that the framing of violence discourse helps to legitimize violence before it is applied, the continuous hype of these conflicts by the media contributes to the justification of violence against Fulani herders. This is not to suggest that some Fulani pastoralists are not sources of conflict but they are surely not the only sources of violence as portrayed in the Ghanaian media and narratives of local people. For instance, one of the news items reads that:

'There have been series of reports about Fulani herdsmen terrorizing people in some parts of the country, especially the Afram Plains in the Ashanti, Eastern and Brong Ahafo Regions.'²⁹

Fulani claimed that another instance of bias towards them was the 14 Fulani who were killed and their properties looted and destroyed by a group of Konkomba farmers in some communities in Gushiegu on 7 and 8 December 2011, without any single person being held responsible. There have been calls for actions to be taken against Fulani pastoralists³⁰ and in some cases open calls on community members to attack Fulani pastoralists in the communities.³¹ Thus, both media and

local discourses frame Fulani as the ultimate causers of violent attacks on local farmers.

Some media reports and local discourse have portrayed Fulani pastoralists as a security threat to Ghana. An opinion leader interviewed in this study stated that ‘... they are very dangerous and a threat to our lives. These are people who carry AK 47 rifles and other weapons with them ...’. Some have even suggested that they are likely to exacerbate already existing conflicts, especially in the northern part of Ghana.³² Security expert, Kwesi Aning, however disagrees that the Fulani are a security threat. He maintains that:

‘What poses a threat to our collective security is the way that the so-called “indigenous” Ghanaians perceive the Fulanis, most of whom are actually Ghanaian citizens. Ghana’s handling of the Fulani grazers is a complete violation of the ECOWAS Protocol on Trans-Humans, which Ghana has signed up to. The protocol regulates the movement of nomadic herdsman within West Africa. It spells out rules and regulations about where they should pass with the cattle, where there should be boreholes for their water and where there should be veterinary outposts to treat them ... We (the Ghanaian authorities) are not following the protocol. This is a failure of the state, plus a deliberate manipulative process by communities in which Fulanis either pass through or are located, to intimidate, to steal, to abuse and to attack them...’³³

Kwesi Aning thus sees most Fulani as Ghanaian citizens and the treatment meted out to them as a violation of the ECOWAS Protocol. He therefore sees the presence of Fulani pastoralists not as a security threat. His comments are reflective of the understanding of some 31 Ghanaian intellectuals whom we interviewed via phone on the question ‘do you consider Fulani Ghanaians?’ Twenty-eight of them agreed that some were Ghanaians as far as they satisfy the Ghanaian constitution’s provision on citizenship.

Fulani pastoralists as non-citizens

The general perception of a large section of Ghanaians is that all Fulani are non-Ghanaians and therefore have no rights as citizens. Unfortunately in Ghana, ethnicity and citizenship are intricately linked. The perception that once an individual does not claim primordial ethnic identity the individual is not a citizen tends to negatively affect the Fulani and contribute to discrimination against them. This is why Schlee (2009:223) observes that national politics and ethnicity (and citizenship) have influenced pastoralists’ relations where it is often assumed that ‘every group had a homeland and the right to expel minorities by force.’ The attainment of citizenship in Ghana as indicted in Articles 6 and 7 of the 1992

Constitution of Ghana could be through other means rather than only by parenthood, indigeneity or ethnicity. Citizenship, for instance, can be attained through marriage or naturalization. However, all other ethnic groups such as the Akan, Mole-Dagomba, Ga-Dangme and Ewe who claim indigeneity are recognized by the Ghanaian state whilst Fulani are not. There is a claim of primordial identity by these indigenous Ghanaians based not only on ethnicity but along national citizenship rights that classify them as legal citizens as well as bona fide owners of land and other resources as against Fulani. The ‘strangeness’ of Fulani pastoralists is seen as the basis for their limited access to resources, land use and land rights. Whilst few Ghanaians do accept that there are Ghanaian Fulani who are distinct from say Burkina Faso or Nigeria Fulani, many think Fulani are not entitled to Ghanaian citizenship. In the light of rising violent tensions between Fulani herders and local farmers in many parts of Ghana, the Ghana Immigration Service in 2010 and 2011 started deportation of Fulani they considered illegal citizens in the country.

Again, when it comes to herder-farmer conflict or Fulani engagement in robbery, the media discourse looks at differences between Fulani and local people within the framework of a citizenship versus non-citizenship (Ghanaian versus non-Ghanaian) dichotomy. This is documented by headlines such as:

1. FULANI HERDSMEN OUTSTAY WELCOME IN GHANA³⁴
2. A FULANI IS A FULANI, NOT A “GHANAIAAN FULANI”³⁵
3. THE ‘GHANAIAAN FULANI’ I NEVER KNEW³⁶

Explicitly, writings in the media tend to reflect this citizen-alien discourse. For instance:

‘... There is nothing in our official population census/ records to confirm that we have an ethnic group called Ghanaian Fulanis. Identifying the Fulani elements as “Ghanaian Fulanis” is wayward; it is a mere attempt to justify a self-constituted position on this populace and to seek sympathy for a lost cause. A Fulani is a Fulani, whether he is in Ghana or not! A Fulani who has acquired Ghanaian citizenship may be a Ghanaian (and recognized as being of Fulani extraction) but none is a “Ghanaian Fulani” ... Fulanis have their roots elsewhere and must not hide behind our altruism to tempt us. Every historian and keen social commentator knows that the Fulanis are alien to Ghana, having all along been known as citizens spread across Northern Nigeria and its environs (cutting across Chad, Niger, etc.) as well as the Fouta Jallon mountains (especially the Sene-Gambia region) ...

The Fulanis *have never been known or recognized as part of the ethnicities constituting the Ghanaian citizenry*³⁷ (emphasis added).

Discursive commentaries such as the one above use primordial identities to justify claims that Fulani are a non-indigenous ethnic group in Ghana and have no share in Ghanaian citizenship. These discourses are equally present at the local level where community members and youth groups have questioned claims of Fulani being Ghanaian citizens and the right to reside in communities and have access to land and use of resources.

Exclusion of Fulani pastoralists as seen in local and state policies

Negative stereotypes, prejudices and discriminations against Fulani pastoralists are usually made due to their being non-citizens and invariably have no rights as citizens in Ghana. However, this goes beyond their non-citizenship status. Stereotypes, prejudices and discriminations have been subtly built up over the years.³⁸ Fulani had been servants and cattle herders for other ethnic groups. Historically, Fulani presence in present day Ghana was to rear and herd cattle. Two of the three reasons for their arrival in Ghana given by Tonah (2005) involve cattle: the expansion of the cattle trade and the establishment and development of native farms. These factors attracted many Fulani herders who, in the 1960s, 1970s and 1980s, were suffering from the Sahelian droughts. Although they have had contacts with the local people before colonialism, their permanent settlement in Ghana was motivated mainly by the entrustment of cattle by local people.

After many Fulani herders had arrived in Ghana, cattle were entrusted to them by major ethnic groups like the Dagomba, Mamprusi and Gonja, mainly because of Fulani skill in herding and caring for cattle. These relations developed into patron-client relationships (see also Hickey 2007; Turner 1999). Many of the herds belonged to aristocratic and rich people. Even up to now, cattle are entrusted to Fulani who remain liable to their 'master'. In Gushiegu for instance, a cattle owner may give a Fulani herder land to build and farm but can evict him therefrom if he 'disobeys' him, the master. Recent demands for herding labour attract herders. Ghanaian cattle owners look for 'skilled' Fulani labour to herd their cattle because of the lack of herding labour within Ghana where Free Compulsory Universal Basic Education (FCUBE) makes it compulsory for every child to go to school and also because of many Ghanaians' lack of interest in such herding jobs.

In social categorization theory, prejudices and stereotypes become fixed and with time develop socially and

cognitively in society (Dovidio et al. 2010). Beliefs and ideas about Fulani have been built over time and passed on from generation to generation. For instance, the perception that Fulani are violent and are not willing to adapt to modern life has long been held and is a commonplace in local community discourse. These mindset views have led individuals to develop prejudices, defined as 'negative attitudes towards the entire group' and thus have led to them being socially and cognitively categorized in the society (see also Bonilla-Silva 1997). Prejudicial attitudes may induce individuals to real actions, exclusion or discrimination against minorities (Bonilla-Silva 1997). In light of the data presented here, it can be assumed that the attitudes towards the Fulani in Ghana have in fact contributed to their subtle exclusion from society. Some communities, for instance, explicitly refuse to accommodate Fulani because of their image as violent, armed robbers and destructive. Eriksen (2010) therefore states that stereotypes can justify privileges and differences in access to a society's resources; negative stereotypes in particular can be used to deny other groups' access to resources.

The attitudes discussed above, although not overt official state policy, are implicitly and subtly embedded in local and national policies and lead to Fulani pastoralists' exclusions in many spheres of the Ghanaian society. First of all, the state expulsions of Fulani pastoralists officially carried out by joint security forces called Operation Cow Leg (OCL) and Operation Livestock Solidarity have variously been carried out with the aim of getting out 'alien Fulani out of Ghana.' OCL is still used by the state especially when conflict between pastoral Fulani and local farmer communities such as in 1988/1989, 1998/1999, 2010 and 2015³⁹ increases in intensity.⁴⁰ The state has often resorted to expulsion as if Fulani pastoralists were the only people culpable in these conflicts. Tonah (2002:22) states that the expulsions of Fulani show that '... they are still considered "foreigners" by the government and large parts of the population ...' The history of the Aliens Compliance Order in 1969 in Ghana which deported all foreigners without valid documents led to strings of retaliations especially from Nigeria. Fulani were equally affected.

These policies culminated in the promulgation of the ECOWAS Protocol on Free Movement of Persons⁴¹ which basically allows the free flow of persons, goods and services including Fulani with their cattle into all ECOWAS countries for 90 days without a visa. The state compliance with the protocol is seen by local farmers and community members as politically allowing 'strangers' (Fulani) to enter into their land, thereby resulting in the commission of offences against local farmers. The complaints often result in the state expulsion policies against the Fulani to

satisfy the interests of local groups and communities. Despite several of these expulsions, Fulani pastoralists often return to Ghana. These expulsions tend to rather worsen farmer-herder relations (Tonah 2002) as antagonism between Fulani and local communities intensifies.

Fulani are also affected by eviction from lands and settlements in the communities where they have been living. Some have often suffered land confiscations and total eviction from communities in instances of conflicts with local farmers or when they are accused of robbery and banditry. In some areas where Fulani pastoralists have money and are able to buy land, there often is opposition to the sale of land to them.⁴²

Fulani integration into the Ghanaian has been poor. Integration is used here in the sense of sociological theory to mean inclusion of people in the social and political system of a country (Esser 2000). Following Esser's (2000) classification of integration into acculturation, placement, interaction and identification, Fulani are not well integrated into the Ghanaian society, unlike the case of other West African countries. Fulani are much integrated in Senegal for instance, where they participate in mainstream politics and leadership. In general integration theory, migrants after many years of stay basically become included and assimilated in the receiving society (although not in all cases; see Healey 2014; Depalo 2007). This is not the case for the Fulani in Ghana. Even in communities where they settle, segregation of Fulani herders' settlements and those of the local community is conspicuous. Besides, despite long stays and everyday interaction with local people, they are still deeply and cognitively excluded in community participation and life in issues such as marriage (except few instances and communities in Ghana), citizenship (both local and national citizenship) and resource access.

Implications of stereotypes, prejudices and exclusion of Fulani pastoralists

Stereotypes, prejudices and exclusion of others provide negative effects to society as a whole. Most of the pastoralists interviewed reiterated that they do not feel welcomed and seen as part of the Ghanaian society because of these negative stereotypes, prejudices and practices of exclusion. In an FGD at Bulugu in Gushiegu with second- and third-generation Fulani pastoralists, they stated that they do not feel they belong to the Ghanaian society, not because they see themselves as non-citizens but because they are continuously set apart. Besides, they claimed that some of them are compelled to relocate to other countries although they preferred to live in Ghana. Also, the opportunities for resolving farmer-herder conflicts and providing cooperative avenues are seriously hindered by many of these exclusion policies. Tonah

(2002) has stated that state expulsion exercises sending pastoralists out of Ghana have rather increased farmer-herder conflicts. Pastoralists' local connections and ties with some chiefs, stock owners and cattle businessmen protect them from the expulsions because some of the cattle are owned by these people. A cursory look at conflict development from the 1980s to date clearly shows that the main justification for the state expulsions which is to end conflicts has failed, and rather has seen increased attacks and deaths of local farmers and pastoralists.

Both Fulani pastoralists and local community members are armed to defend themselves, making violent clashes almost inevitable. In Agogo, whilst police records from 2009 to March 2013 show 12 violent deaths in the area involving farmer-pastoralist attacks, local community farmers in an FGD counted 21 deaths of community members in the same period. Gushiegu which hitherto had no records of violent farmer-pastoralists has also seen violent attacks since 2011 with 14 pastoralists being killed within three days (6 to 9 December 6 2011). These events have even lessened interaction between the Ghanaian society and Fulani pastoralists and therefore negatively affected efforts to end violence, armed robbery and crime. A police officer succinctly puts as 'if we continue to see the Fulani in a very difficult light, those of them who are good will not cooperate in exposing the bad ones.' As pastoralism is being pushed to the brink of collapse with continuous expulsions and exclusion of Fulani, many of them especially in Agogo, are relocating to other countries such as Burkina Faso.

Conclusions

This paper analyzes various prejudices and stereotypes in Ghanaian national and local policies, discourses and practices that have contributed to exclusion of Fulani pastoralists in terms of their access to resources, land, belonging and settlements in local communities. National and local discourses have regarded Fulani pastoralists including those of second- and third-generation as migrants and non-citizens. Besides, the paper shows that these prejudices, stereotypes and practices of exclusion have affected and structured relations between the pastoralists and local people, especially farmers. There are less chances of pastoralists' cooperation with local people, as well as Fulani integration into society; rather, these attitudes contribute to an escalation of violence in cases of conflict. Whilst we refuse to generalize that all people in Ghana hold these views against the Fulani, there are clear indicators that in local attitudes, discourses and policies, media reports and government action have overtly and covertly excluded and marginalized Fulani. These are mainly seen in national expulsion exercises, local community evictions and lack of access

and rights to resource uses in the community. National and local polices and discourses on Fulani pastoralists need rethinking. Fulani are not homogeneous, and each individual Fulani engaged in crime or bad behaviour does not need to represent social categorizations that blame the Fulani as a whole group. Ghanaian media discourse is a major force that contributes to the social and cognitive categorizations of Fulani.

Endnotes

¹Fulani which is derived from Hausa is the English term for these pastoralists. Fula is derived from the Manding languages and is also used in English. Ful is the original term for the people. This has been adopted into English, often spelt Fulbe. In French, Fulani are called Peuls. See Davidheiser and Luna (2008). From Complementarity to Conflict: A Historical Analysis of Farmer-Fulbe Relations in West Africa. *African Journal on Conflict Resolution*, 8 (1): 77–104.

²Ghana's 2010 Population and Housing Census categorized ethnic groups into eight: Akans (47.5%), Mole Dagbani (16.6%), Ewe (13.9%), Ga-Dangme (7.4.1%), Gurma (5.7%), Guan (3.7%), Grusi (2.5%), Mande (1.1%) and others (1.4%) to include foreign ethnic groups and foreigners. Ghana's total population as of 2010 was 24,658,823. Other previous censuses as well have these as the classification of ethnic groups in Ghana.

³This allegation was made in the Northern, Upper East and Ashanti and during interviews with Fulani and claimed by Fulani to have been nationwide. This is clearly a case of corruption and is not sanctioned by the state.

⁴This information is based on interviews with elderly people in Gushiegu and Agogo.

⁵See Joshua Project. (2015). Fulani, Maasina in Ghana http://joshuaproject.net/people_groups/11773/GH (Accessed 16 November 2014)

⁶Interview with female trader, Gushiegu town (17 November 2013)

⁷Ghana News Agency. (4 March 2012). Police Arrest Two Fulani. <http://ghananewsagency.org/human-interest/police-arrests-two-fulani-armed-robbers-40087> (Accessed 16 November 2014)

⁸VibeGhana.com (27 January 2013). Ashanti Police gun down seven Fulani armed robbers <http://edition.myjoyonline.com/pages/news/201301/100535.php> (Accessed 16 November 2014)

⁹Ghana Review International (4 October 2011). 5 Fulani Robbers busted. <http://www.ghanareview.com/Restyle/index2.php?class=News&date=2011-10-04&id=50552> (Accessed 16 November 2014)

¹⁰Citifmonline.com (26 September 2014). 5 armed robbers arrested in V/R. <http://citifmonline.com/2014/09/>

[26/5-armed-robbers-arrested-in-vr/](http://citifmonline.com/2014/09/26/5-armed-robbers-arrested-in-vr/) (Accessed 16 November 2014)

¹¹ModernGhana.com. (2 June 2012). Two Fulani Armed Robbers Killed in Shoot-out with Police <http://www.modernghana.com/sports/399172/1/two-fulani-armed-robbers-killed-in-shoot-out-with-.html> (Accessed 16 November 2014)

¹²In fact, the identity of the said robbers was not identified, yet it was concluded they were Fulani. See Daily Guide (16 June 2014). 30 Ganjamen Busted. <http://www.dailyguideghana.com/30-ganjamen-busted/> (Accessed 16 November 2014)

¹³ModernGhana.com. (16 January 2003). Woman, 40, raped by Fulani herdsman. <http://www.modernghana.com/news/30043/1/woman-40-raped-by-fulani-herdsman.html> (Accessed 16 November 2014)

¹⁴Ghana News Agency. (8 April 2011). Community arrest Fulani herdsman for rape. <http://ghananewsagency.org/human-interest/community-arrest-fulani-herdsman-for-rape-27535> (Accessed 16 November 2014)

¹⁵Myjoyonline.com (16 August 2011). Fulani herdsman rape wives before husbands at Agogo – woman alleges <http://edition.myjoyonline.com/pages/news/201109/73031.php> (Accessed 16 November 2014)

¹⁶The chairman of People's National Convention (PNC) party in Ghana, Alhaji Rahman Ramadan, is a Fulani.

¹⁷Informal conversation with female teacher, Sandema

¹⁸Interview with female trader, Gushiegu Town

¹⁹Interview with male farmer, Toti - Gushiegu

²⁰Interview with Fulani male farmer, Bebuso - Agogo

²¹Interview with Chief, Agogo

²²Interview with male teacher, Gushiegu town

²³Interview with male teacher, Gushiegu town

²⁴Shea is economically valuable to farmers especially women. The nuts from the shea are sources of income to them because they are sold out for export whilst locally used for making cooking oil and pomade.

²⁵The concept of *cultural neighbourhood* according to Gabbert (2014) was developed from long-term comparative anthropological fieldwork to describe inter-ethnic relations between the groups of southern Ethiopia where cultural and ethnic diversities are part and parcel of inter-ethnic communication. Cultural neighbours could be friends and allies, who cooperate in peaceful ways, or enemies, who are respected for their strength and virility and engage in conflicts.

²⁶The New Patriotic Party is Ghana's main opposition party.

²⁷Based on FGD in Agogo (8 July 2013)

²⁸One Fulani herder remarked on 14 January 2014 that 'in the month of December 2013 alone, four Fulani

herders have been killed. My brother, did you hear any media outlet or radio station talk about it or even mentioned the issue? But if it were a resident of Agogo killed, you will hear all the radio stations in Ghana talking about it for a whole week.'

²⁹See Myjoyonline.com (30 August 2011). Fulani herdsman must go-Asante Akyem North MP.

³⁰See Okoampa-Ahoofe, K. (1 February 2014). Fulani herdsman were first to declare war. <http://vibeghana.com/2014/02/01/fulani-herdsmen-were-first-to-declare-war/> (Accessed 16 November 2014)

³¹The member of the parliament of the Asante Akim North Constituency (Agogo) has stated that he will mobilize the people of the area to fight against the presence of cattle in the area. See Myjoyonline.com (29 January 2014). MP declares shoot to kill in Agogo. <http://www.myjoyonline.com/news/2014/January-29th/mp-declares-shoot-to-kill-in-agogo.php> (Accessed 15 August 2014)

³²Justin Bayo is reported saying "They (Fulani herders) cross over into the country fully armed and with no regard for our laws. If unchecked they will escalate the many dormant conflicts especially in the north over land.' See IRIN. (29 April 2010). GHANA: Police crackdown on migrant Fulani. <http://www.irinnews.org/report/88957/ghana-police-crackdown-on-migrant-fulani-herdsmen> (Accessed 24 October 2014). Justin Bayo was the coordinator at the time of the statement. He has since left WANEP.

³³IRIN. (29 April 2010). GHANA: Police crackdown on migrant Fulani herdsman <http://www.irinnews.org/report/88957/ghana-police-crackdown-on-migrant-fulani-herdsmen> (Accessed 17 November 2014)

³⁴Kokutse, Francis. (3 August 2011). Africa Review - Fulani herdsman outstay welcome in Ghana <http://www.africareview.com/News/Ghanaians-tire-of-hosting-Fulani-herdsmen/-/979180/1212908/-/1dqyejz/-/index.html> (Accessed 15 August 2014)

³⁵See Bokor, M. J. K. (8 October 2011). A Fulani is a Fulani, not a "Ghanaian Fulani." <http://www.ghanaweb.com/GhanaHomePage/NewsArchive/artikel.php?ID=221015> (Accessed 15 August 2014)

³⁶See Manu, Bernard. (11 October 2011). The 'Ghanaian Fulani' I never knew. <http://www.ghanaweb.com/GhanaHomePage/features/artikel.php?ID=221334> (Accessed 15 August 2014)

³⁷Bokor, M. J. K. (8 October 2011). A Fulani is a Fulani, not a "Ghanaian Fulani." <http://www.ghanaweb.com/GhanaHomePage/NewsArchive/artikel.php?ID=221015>

³⁸Interviews with Fulani elders

³⁹Myjoyonline (13 May 2015). Fulani herdsman to be kicked out in Operation Cow Leg <http://myjoyonline.com/news/2015/May-13th/fulani-herdsmen-to-be-kicked-out-in-operation-cowleg.php>

⁴⁰These were based on interviews with Fulani who all claimed to have been questioned by emigration officials whilst others were expelled.

⁴¹See Discover ECOWAS. *ECOWAS Protocol on free movement of persons, the right of residence and establishment*. <http://www.cfr.org/world/economic-community-west-african-states-ecowas-protocol-free-movement-persons-residence-establishment/p28124>. (Accessed 15 August 2014)

⁴²In interviews in Agogo, Kumawu, Gushiegu and Karaga districts, Fulani complained of difficulty in buying land.

Competing interests

The authors declare that they have no competing interests.

Authors' contributions

KBN conceived of the study and carried out the field study under the supervision and guidance of NS. KBN did the analysis of the interviews and drafted the manuscript. NS did a thorough revision of the first, second and third drafts of the manuscript. Both authors read and approved the final manuscript.

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