

The Theoretical Milieu: Fulani herder-indigene conflicts in Tallensi-Nabdram, Ghana

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Abstract

Fulani herders have settled in Tallensi-Nabdram (Ghana) since the early 1980s, and new herders continue to arrive in spite of community resistance to the influx. Basset and Turner (2007) have argued that herders' journeys to humid West Africa have become "migration movements" in the sense that herders relocate to new areas in lieu of oscillating travel. Drawing on herders' and indigenes' notions of space and place, I extend this knowledge by suggesting that much as the migrations are responses to deteriorating environmental conditions in the Sahel, a nomadic spatial frame of reference enables herders to access and settle in others' territory despite almost continual resistance to them. The herders' influx and the indigene's responses have also generated a social (resource) dilemma which makes most stakeholders collectively worse off in time. To protect livelihoods, strategies that encourage indigene-herder cooperation are suggested.

Key words: *Space, Place, Political Ecology, Territoriality, Social Dilemma Theory, Livelihoods*

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Introduction

The climate of Sahelian West Africa presents treacherous living conditions for rural people who almost exclusively depend on the natural environment for their livelihoods. Fulani pastoralists, renowned for nomadism, co-exist in tense calm with indigenous communities as the herders migrate to southern West Africa seeking conditions that bode well for their livestock. Herder migration to humid west Africa has occurred since the 20th century, but the Sahelian droughts of 1973 and 1984 resulted in significant increases in herder "migration movements" which have become adaptive strategies to declining natural resource availability in source regions.

Generally, herders are unwelcome in countries such as Benin, la Cote d'Ivoire, Ghana and Nigeria, so conflicts with indigenes are common. Herders are usually accused of stealing cattle, destroying crops, encroaching on protected forests, and receiving government support that should be given to indigenes. These reports, coupled with Fulani's non-indigenous status in destination areas such as north-eastern Ghana, have produced a movement of indigenes who aim to expel herders from their land on the grounds of livelihood deprivation and misconduct. Herders on the other hand resist expulsion because their new destinations offer the best conditions for their livestock.

This paper extends Bassett and Turner's (2007) theory of herders' migration movements by drawing on notions of space and place to suggest that although political ecology is a relevant explanatory framework, herders' notions of space and place add another dimension to our understanding of their migration movements. The underlying theme of this paper in terms of herders' migration movements and indigenes' responses thereof is political ecology as political ecologists aim to understand the relations between nature and society by analysing access and control over resources and the resulting implications for livelihoods. The paper then draws on the politics of space and power to explain why the herder-indigene situation is a social dilemma and explores options for improved relations.

The study context and research methods

This study was conducted in Tallensi-Nabdram district, Upper East Region, Ghana. The district, which is the broader context of the study is 912km², representing 0.3% of Ghana's area. The climate is tropical continental consisting of rainy and dry seasons, so temperatures are consistently high, with the highest temperatures occurring before the rainy season in March and April. The accompanying savanna vegetation consists of xerophytes such as baobab (*Adansonia digitata*), shea (*Vitellaria paradoxa*), dawadawa (*Parkia biglobosa*), fig (*Ficus gnaphalocarpa*), red berry (*Lannea Acida*), and black berry (*Vitex doniana*) trees; and elephant grass (*Pennisetum*

purpureum), cat's tailgrass (*Sporobolus pyramidalis* P. Beauv.), thatching grass (*Hyparrhenia involucrate* Stapf) and torpedo grass (*Panicum repens* Linn.).

I refer to the open access and common property forests extending from the Burkina Faso border through Nungu and Zongoire, including the Red Volta East and West forest reserves, as the Namoranteng-Digare belt (Figure 1), although this study was limited to the communities of Datoko, Namoranteng, Zanwore and Digare and their village forests (the forest under the purview of a village chief and his people). The village forests help indigenes establish their sense of bearing in their vicinities; decipher their common property and open access reference points, as well as spatially situate the Fulani herders in relation to other villages and the broader forest. Thus, indigenes refer to herders who for instance live in the Zanwore forest as “Zanwore Fulani” and those in the Datoko forest as “Datoko Fulani”. For self-identification, herders do not refer to themselves as, for example, “Datoko Fulani” or “Digare Fulani”, but in speaking they use the village forest to situate themselves as in “I live in Zanwore forest”.

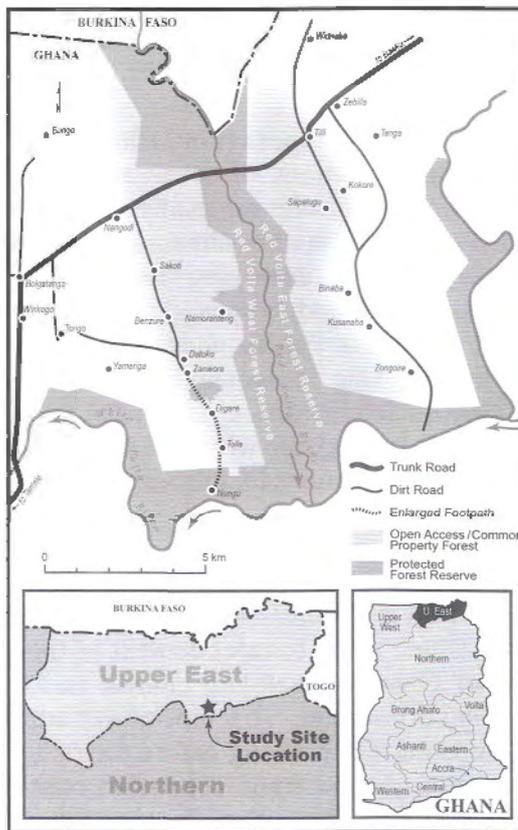


Figure 1: The study area, showing Namoranteng-Digare belt and study communities.
Source: Author's Construct.

Traditionally, village forests are divided into sections with names to enable resource users more specifically determine the locations of their things and activities. Drawing on this in combination with the settlement of herders in the study area, I have coined the term forestburb to emphasize the indigenous subdivisions of the forests and to operationalize the settlement of herders in the study area. The study area has dozens of forestburbs including Zomcla, Gbaruk, Ditinbul, Bolombok, Ngomee, Zombuluk and Saatoo which both indigenes and herders use for farming, grazing and harvesting forest resources. Indigenes do not use the forestburb to differentiate the herders, but the forestburb is a common reference point for where herders live. For instance, a herder and his family can be identified as Namoranteng Fulani living in Baanbe kol'k or Datoko Fulani living in Kumbuut. Herders similarly situate themselves in specific forestburbs on the assumption that people know what village forest those forestburbs are located in. For this study, herders were selected from Baanbe Kol'k (Namoranteng Forest), Taborabok (Zanwore), Kumbuut (Datoko) and Sombol (Digare) (Figure 2) for the high number of settled herders there and proximity to the villages, which maximises chances for herder-indigene contact.

This qualitative study involved 20 herders and 87 indigenes aged between 18 and 70. Using In-depth Interviews (IDI) and Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) as the instruments of data generation, fieldwork consisted of 59 IDIs and 6 FGDs. Sampling was based on purposeful random sampling as there was a “large pool of potentially information-rich cases and no obvious reason to choose one case over another” . Maximal variation sampling was used to constitute focus groups to benefit from a wide range of opinions. Data was manually coded according to themes in order to draw out the similarities, differences and convergences.

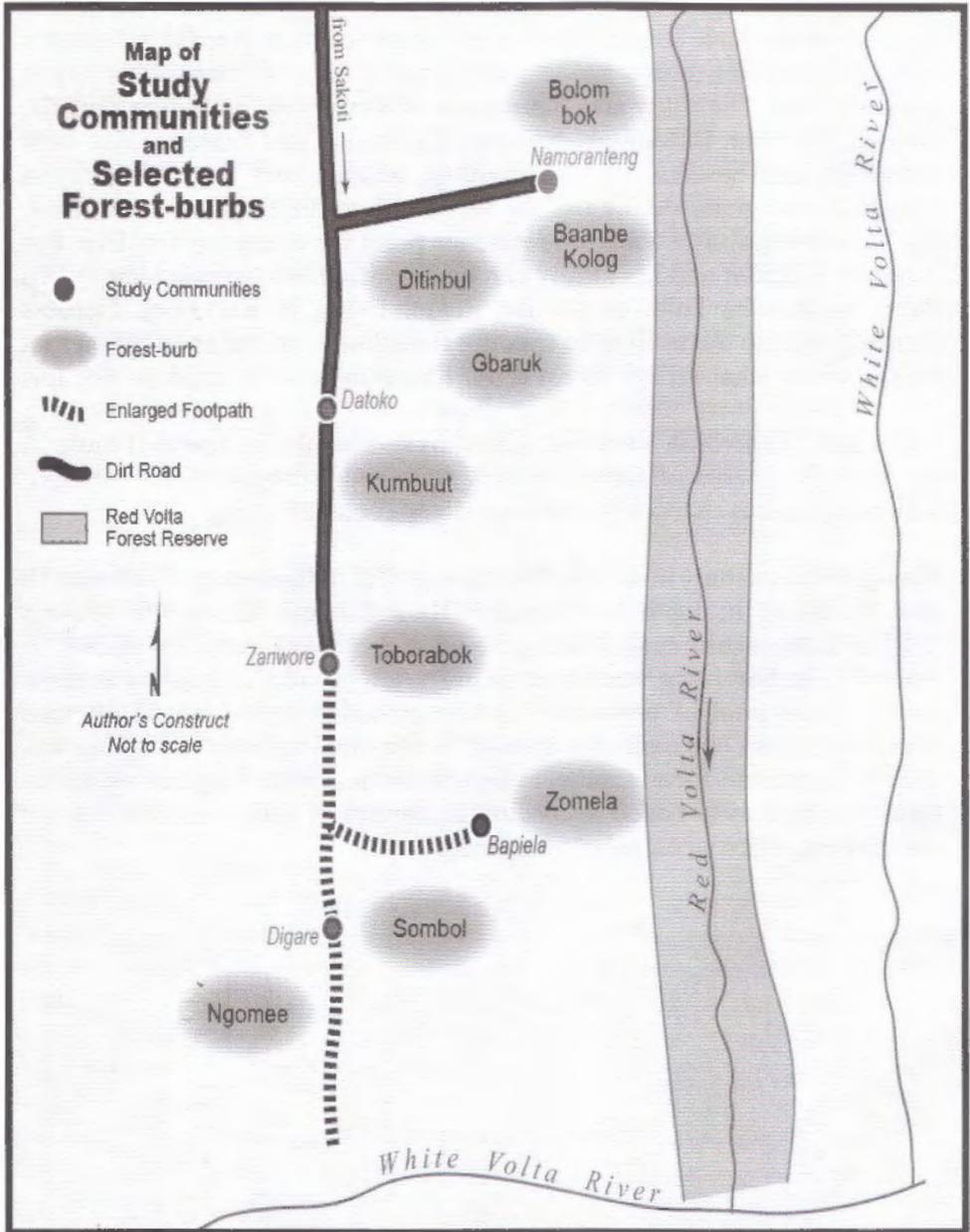


Figure 2: Study communities and selected forestburbs.

Literature Review

The Political Ecology and Herder Migration Movements

The Fulani are the largest nomadic group worldwide, with estimates of their population varying widely between 6 and 20 million . The figures of Fulani in Ghana fluctuate so widely that an accurate estimate of their population is at best a guesstimate. A recent survey put the population of Fulani in Ghana at 7300 but based on the reclusive transitory behaviour of most Fulani herders, the number of Fulani in the country, including the pastoralists, could be higher.

Political ecological considerations encourage the southward drift of herders to the savannas of West Africa, propelled by resource availability in destination areas . As these areas face deteriorating environmental conditions, residents cling to available spaces to make a livelihood, and have to increasingly do so in competition with the herders, resulting in several responses across West Africa. In la Côte d'Ivoire, when the government took steps such as identifying specified entry points for Fulani herders and providing dipping tanks to encourage the herder influx for their potential contribution to the country's beef exports to the Netherlands, the indigenous beef producers became aggrieved and, led by some local elite, agitated for an end to the programme . In Benin, managers of the Regional Park W were so concerned about wildlife displacement, disease transmission between livestock and wildlife, and de-branching trees for the livestock, that they developed stringent methods to keep herders out of the park, including hefty fines and the right to kill cows found in the protected forest . In Nigeria, competition between farmers and herders resulted in herders being denied access to dry season grazing resources . In Ghana, herders have had confrontations with indigenes in every region, including a famed expulsion from the Red Volta West Forest reserve in 2002 which resulted in the destruction of herder's property, the arrest of a local level politician and the 3-week imprisonment of six men from the village of Nangodi . These conflicts over land and resources occur in spite of Philips' suggestion that as nomads, herders use marginal lands settled people would not use.

Geographers have long thought that herders' movements corresponded with rangeland ecologies following the oscillation of the West African Inter-Tropical Front , and shaped the Stimulus-Response model that dominated herder migration discourse. The stimulus-response model suggests that the southward migration of the herders is a response to the harsh environmental conditions in the Sahel precipitated by droughts which "not only stimulated the southerly movement but also made it possible by displacing the ecological barrier ... further south" . In spite of its hegemonic stature, the explanatory appeal of the Stimulus-Response model dwindled as it over-

emphasised the role of rainfall in livestock movements and could not explain the migration process.

The decline of the Stimulus-Response model paved the way for Stenning's Migratory Drift model which depicts herder migration as more than a response to environmental hazards, but as a systematic migration process "that results eventually in a completely new geographical setting for a particular group". This kind of migration takes advantage of "social and ecological requirements for people and livestock to successfully move" and leads herders to scout potential areas because personal alliances are crucial before settling in an area or even for travelling through.

In the Namoranteng-Digare belt, alliances play a key role in the sedentarisation of herders, where sedentarisation refers to the *process* by which herders become settled in an area. The herders in this study, based on their migration and personal histories (or mode of sedentarisation) fall into four groups. These groups are: the *Alhaji* group aided by facilitators with business interests in the cattle business, *Naba* settlers who receive the express permission of indigenous leaders to settle, Yusuf settlers who are aided by fellow herders (friends or relatives) and *Happenstance* settlers who, as the category suggests, discover their ideal location accidentally. Herders thus rely on a web of networks, ecological knowledge, cattle health and resource access to transition from oscillating to sedentary pastoralism, bringing to the fore several related issues: herders are settling for prolonged periods-as long as thirty consecutive years- and have become part of the landscape of the Namoranteng-Digare belt, and indeed wherever herders are settled. Herders have perfected the art of resource access in their newfound "homes", and because they have become comfortable enough to have (almost) given up nomadism, a comprehensive anatomy of herders' settlement (from a geographer's standpoint, one of space and spatiality) is necessary to understand the dynamics therein, as there may be more to the influx than the mere beckoning of resources.

Space, Place and the "Sedentarist Metaphysics"

This paper extends herders' sedentarisation beyond political ecology using space and place notions as the backdrop because as a geographer, I think that peoples' "reading" of landscapes and humanscapes affects their attitudes. To develop this argument in relation to indigene's responses to the herders' influx, and what can be done about conflicts, the discussion begins with space and place as geographical concepts and fans out into territory and territoriality.

Geography is borne out of exploring beyond the horizon and being curious about the location of things. Allied concepts such as space, place and

territory are cornerstones of geographers' interest in location . although recent developments in the discipline have somewhat relegated location in favour of place . With an ever interconnected world bathed in micro and macro-scale mixing of people, cultures and livelihoods, place has almost lionised into a master metaphor. but to discuss it, theorists must almost necessarily begin with location and space, as they form part of a three dimensional coin.

Geographically, location connotes the existence of a certain piece of earth and what 'sits' on it. Location as a stand-alone concept is usually devoid of meaning and cultural significance , yet it is vital for contextualising peoples' needs, wants and livelihood strategies. A sense of location enables people to develop mental images of “what” is where and where to find “what”. Following from this, we ask why “what” is where it is, and how “what” can be harnessed for survival. The curiosity about what lies yonder produces an impression of vastness and openness that beckons movement, exploration and discovery. Once benefit can be derived from a geographic unit, that unit can be transformed into place which is an *organised world of meaning* . a *meaningful* location or a social space . However, the transformation of space into place depends on the needs of the people exploring that geographical unit, thus a space could be a place long before another group discovers that space could be their place.

The nexus of location, space and place is captured by Tuan when he suggests that “if we think of space as that which allows movement, then place is pause; each pause in movement makes it possible for location to be transformed into place”. “Pause” is critical because it indicates the role of time in the transformation of a location or a space into place. I think that Fulani herders have perfected the art of knowing where to look (location), wondering yonder (space) and deriving benefit from locations (place), which is why a lead herder could lose his position if he makes a decision that adversely affects the herd .

Beyond this nexus, place is thought about in humanistic terms so that “to live is to live locally, and to know is first of all to know the place one is in” - . Following this view of being human, nomads may be construed as having a deficit of attachment, which detracts from their humanness. But other evidence indicates otherwise. Treating space as a metaphor for nature, Cresswell has argued that transforming space into place turns “nature into culture” and kindles *sense of place* - individual or group identification with a geographical unit resulting from interaction with the unit , which all people can acquire irrespective of time spent in a geographical unit . Relph (1976) argued that if place implies being static (i.e. a figurative lack of movement), and people are constantly in motion, there is a paradox which can be resolved by recognising that “to have roots in a place is to have a secure point from

which to look out on the world, and to take stock of one's position in the order of things” . Thus people can leave a place and maintain that place as their frame of reference without diminishing their sense of being human or being attached to a geographical unit.

The place-based frame of reference for being human is *sedentary metaphysics* which Malkki – defines it as the tendency to locate people and their identities in particular spaces and boundaries. Sedentary metaphysics appears to empower the majority of sedentary people to view nomadism as an archaic way of life. Sedentary people thus enjoin nomads to jettison their way of life, develop roots and have a foundation with which to interact with the rest of humanity. Sedentary metaphysics was evident when Ghana's national security advisor, Brigadier General Nunoo Mensah criticised the free-ranging of herder cattle and advocated the enactment of laws to curb the practice . The General believed that the practice of free-ranging cattle was a hallmark of pastoralism and should be made obsolete. He did not realise that herders never allow their cattle to free-range because of the high stakes of losing control of the herd, of losing entrusted cattle and the fact that a herder's work day involves being with the cattle. On the contrary, free-ranging cattle is practiced by sedentary cattle owning groups such as those in the study area who use it as a dry season herd management practice. A ban on free-ranging cattle would thus adversely affect indigenes, the very people the General was intending to protect.

In view of this, *nomadic metaphysics*, “which values the 'routes' of the traveller and the nomad above the 'roots of place” . takes on significance. It makes room for considering nomadic and semi-nomadic worldviews before judgements about obsolescence and humanness. Nomadic metaphysics ups the relevance of space and place in the internal dialogue which guides herders' appreciation of space and the conversion of such spaces into places. Nomadic metaphysics makes it possible to include in the social contestations around the physical environment (essentially resources), notions of space, place and movement; and takes both perspectives into account on issues involving the influences of people's thoughts about their environment, and on how they use it or want to use it. If nomadic and sedentary lifestyles are diametrically opposed, it may suggest a similar digression in terms of place concepts which could play into Fulani herder-indigenic interactions in Ghana and West Africa.

The arena for negotiating spaces, places and territories can be derived from various authors' categorisation of space. Penrose , for instance, observes that space has “latent powers”, which enables the conceptualisation of space as something more than abstract. Developing this argument, she submits that space has a *material dimension* as well as *latent emotional power*. The material dimension of space is “substance fundamental to life on this planet.

Through its constitution of land, water and atmosphere, space encompasses the basic prerequisites of human survival” whilst latent emotional power emerges when the substantive qualities of space, filtered through human experiences of time and process, have the capacity to invoke an emotional response. Cox describes *spaces of dependence and spaces of engagement*, although his notion of *spaces of dependence* combines the material and the latent qualities of space that Penrose describes. Thus, not only does Cox define *spaces of dependence* as “those more-or-less localized social relations upon which we depend for the realization of essential interests and for which there are no substitutes elsewhere; they define place-specific conditions for our material wellbeing” (Penrose’s material space), he describes *spaces of dependence* “to include our sense of significance” (latent emotional power), and then derives *spaces of engagement* as “the space in which the politics of securing the space of dependence unfolds”. Similarly, Lefebvre distinguishes between perceived, conceived and lived space. Perceived space concerns the material sphere in which daily life unfolds and where production and reproduction occur; conceived space deals with the socially constructed discourses, signs and meanings of space; and lived space—the interface of perceived and conceived space—is the “terrain for the generation of “counterspaces,” and “spaces of resistance to the dominant order””.

Not only do these categorisations of space illuminate the daily life practise of herders and indigenes, it brings to the fore how the resource area takes on place significance for the stakeholders and the jostling that transpires as both groups eke out their livelihoods. The categorisations also reveal the spaces (lived spaces, spaces of engagement and latent power) in which conflicts potentially brew. The protective instinct that comes with being natives of the land pitches indigenes against herders and brings territory and territoriality into sharp focus, especially as access to, or claim to territory, amounts to claim to resources.

Territory symbolizes a link between a piece of earth and a community and becomes pronounced when there is a threat to space. In view of the emotional and material potency of space, claim to space “transforms the resources that are necessary for human survival into our resources that are necessary for our survival”. When groups such as indigenes and herders with environment-dependent livelihoods squabble over territory through guises of space and place, the issue is really about resources. The connection between territory and resources draws power into livelihood relations which are the backbone of the herder-indigene relations in Tallensi-Nabdram and in Ghana. It introduces territoriality into the situation and is an essential frontier for exploring resource access.

Territoriality is “the geographic expression of power”¹; “the attempt to

affect, influence or control actions and interactions (of people, things and relationships) by asserting or attempting to enforce control over a geographic area". Therefore, territoriality is about establishing differential access to people, places or things. There are several ways to express territoriality, but rights to property, cultural norms and prohibitions about using spaces are the most common . Territoriality is predicated on non-territoriality which is the attempt to control or influence actions *without asserting control of an area* .

The significance of this situation is the paradox that as Burkina Faso nationals (in the case of our research participants) herders do not possess land in Ghana, and cannot lay legitimate territorial claims, yet they travel to, settle in, and eke out a living on Ghanaian territory. By using the penchant to explore, they "discover" new spaces, places and livelihood opportunities. The fact of indigenes already settled in the "new discoveries" produces a movement of people who feel a compulsion to protect their land from intruders. A race for space, a consolidation of place and an assertion of territory thus ensues among stakeholders who give little or no consideration to "the other". This lack of consideration for each other's livelihood needs is fertile ground for contestations around the access and use of resources, engendering more livelihood insecurity, and amounts to a social dilemma.

Herder-Indigene interactions as a Social Dilemma

Social dilemmas are situations in which each member of a group has a clear and unambiguous incentive to make a choice that--when made by all members--provides poorer outcomes for all than they would have received if none had made the choice. Thus, by doing what seems individually reasonable and rational, people end up doing less well than they would have done if they had acted unreasonably or irrationally.

The social dilemma theory is used to analyse social problems in which "individually reasonable behaviour leads to a situation in which everyone is worse off than they might have been otherwise". The theory is used to understand the dynamics of cooperation and non-cooperation, as individuals or groups decide on the degree to which they will cooperate (if at all) in order to provide public goods', which are benefits that cannot be feasibly withheld from individuals once the good has been made available to the group, even if those individuals did not contribute to the establishment or provision of the good. Within the body of knowledge on social dilemmas are resource dilemmas, which will be the focus of this paper. Basically, resource dilemmas are social dilemmas in which struggles over resources in terms of access and use are central issues. In this paper, the public good comprises the vegetative and water resources in the study area.

At the heart of many problems from the interpersonal to the international scale are social dilemmas as people tether their actions to the perceived advantages (power) of their “adversaries”. These behaviours, in the context of the social or resource dilemmas, are not necessarily objective, correct or productive, but affect the nature of the dilemma and people's decisions thereof. Pursuing this argument, Kollock (1998) has suggested that social dilemmas (including resource dilemmas) contain a deficient equilibrium in which at least one other outcome leaves everyone better off, but in which there is no incentive to pursue the preferred outcome. More serious social dilemmas are characterised by a dominating strategy, which yields the best outcomes for some individuals irrespective of what others do. Kollock (1998: 185) also notes that “the compelling and perverse feature of these dilemmas is that there is no ambiguity about what one should do to benefit oneself, yet all are hurt if all follow this 'rational' decision”. Finally, social dilemmas can be social fences or social traps, in reference to how people act in relation to resolving the dilemma. With a social fence, individuals forgo immediate benefit that eventually helps the group, but with social traps individuals accrue immediate benefits that make the majority of a group worse off over time.

The herder-indigene situation in Tallensi-Nabdum and indeed in Ghana can be seen as a social dilemma for several reasons:

- Both indigenes and herders use resources with little consideration for the other, resulting in crop destruction, competition for fodder and water, and sporadic violence.
- The situation involves cross-border (Burkina Faso and Ghana) and inter-ethnic relations between Fulani, Tallensi and Nabdum which impact the dynamics of resource rights.
- The herders settle with no community-wide consent obtained through traditional migration procedures, irking indigenes who feel their territories have been violated because the modes of sedentarisation described are not the established ways of in-migration into the area.
- Indigenes do not have a united position on the herder situation. The indigenous power brokers are usually in favour of the herders whilst “ordinary” people oppose the herders' settlement, a situation which is fertile ground for individuals pursuing parochial interests.

The result of these is a situation that involves displeased indigenes, unwavering herders' participation in indigenes' space and the manipulation of power by both sides to gain an edge in terms of resource access. The difficulties of expelling herders from Ghana has led many indigenes to

blame leaders for the continued herder presence and in some cases officials have accused other officials of politicising the situation: "The district administration is trying to create a scenario that there are many alien herdsmen here so that it can be given funds to get them out. This is a clear politicisation of the farmer-herder relationship".

The social dilemma theory is about cooperation, thus the psyche of the actors is critical for arriving at cooperation. The theory suggests that the "structural mechanisms that may motivate decision-makers to pursue the interests of the group or organization, rather than their own interests" are important for the development of cooperation. If a social unit harbours mistrust, it is almost futile to elicit member cooperation on issues . This the case because people cooperate based on information they have about their "opponent" . There is also a tendency to cooperate if people can take from the good rather than if they are to give to it'. The herder-indigene dilemma persists because neither group wants to compromise on their interest in the environment. Indigenes' non-compromise stems from their position as natives and Ghanaians intent on exercising the ultimate control and decision making rights - excluding the herders from the resource base. The herders, on the other hand, are uncompromising because they single-mindedly focus on the wellbeing of their cattle by seeking the best available environments for them.

These positions lead to fractious relationships, strengthening the in-group identification of like-minded people. In social dilemmas, group member identification increases the likelihood of cooperation within groups. In fact, people with strong social identification show greater restraint in resource dilemmas and are willing to cooperate more in the provision of public goods as member identification de-individuates group members, decreases psychological distance between them and draws their ambitions closer . Following this logic, strong in-group identification would be counterproductive to cooperation between groups, which is why in social dilemmas involving negotiation between groups, transformation of motivation in which "self-interest at the personal level is redefined at the collective level" become turning points - the kind of momentum needed to broker cooperation across the aisle.

Thus far, this paper has used political ecology and a variety of space concepts to discuss herder migration movements and the fact that the problem itself constitutes a social (resource) dilemma. The next section synthesises these issues to offer fresh insights into the political ecology of herder sedentarisation and suggests ways for getting past this resource dilemma in order to improve herder-indigene relations and protect all stakeholders' livelihoods.

The Synthesis: Quest, Survival and Progress in Tallensi-Nabdam

Outside the political demarcations that make Tallensi-Nabdam a district, Tallensi and Nabdam are separate traditional areas with a hierarchy of leaders, boundaries and expectations of what can transpire within those boundaries. That the Fulani are aliens in Ghana is not in dispute, but it is “alienness” which heightens indigene disapproval of herders settling in their village forests. The herders involved in this study originate from the Burkina Faso provinces of Sanmatenga, Zoundwéogo, Namentenga and Nahouri. To settle in Ghana, herders crossed an international boundary, but such boundaries are both “gateways and barriers... areas of opportunity and insecurity, zones of contact and/or conflict, of cooperation and competition, of ambivalent identities and/or aggressive assertion of difference” which complicate the volatile relations between herders and indigenes in the face of environmental decline.

Thus for herders, crossing the border is an opportunity to secure their livelihoods, but it brings challenges they would otherwise not encounter in their national territory, such as the exigencies of settling for protracted periods in foreign territory and indigene exploitation of Fulani identity to assert property rights. From the perspective that citizenship does not entitle one to resources but entitles one to enter the struggle for resources, the herders, in theory, come in at a disadvantage. Ghana's inability to expel them from the country in spite of measures such as Operation Cowleg I, II and III and several community-herder events, and the herders ubiquitous presence in all this regions in Ghana as of 2012 however shows that in practice, the herders deflect opposition quite well. It is also a testament that herders' migratory movements are not just a matter of political ecology but of territoriality, and stakeholders must grasp this point to successfully navigate the resource dilemma.

An account of how herders settle in an area illustrates the interplay between space, political ecology and territoriality in the herders' ability to resist expulsion. Herders' notion of space is liberally defined to mean an area that is visibly uninhabited. This corresponds somewhat to Sacks' idea of empty space “where things to be contained are not present”; so their notion of space, “separates space from things and then recombines them as an assignment of things to places and places to things”. In the herders worldview thus, there is no natural association of space to people or jurisdiction, and vice versa. Space is functional. An uninhabited geographical unit is empty and available for the establishment of “base camp” and qualifies them to use rights. Indigenes have a starkly different, in fact opposed view - there is no empty space. All space is occupied because it is within the purview of some authority. After all, forests are named after jurisdictions, and hence common property forests belong to their chiefs and

people, irrespective of use.

Nonetheless, after the “discovery” of empty space, adult male herders make the migratory movement that eventually tames that space into culture. They use their available mode of access (Naba, Alhaji, or Yusuf) to fashion a successful journey. They consult herders who “discovered” the “frontier” for a sense of conditions such as indigenes’ resistance to herders. These inquiries are not to avoid the space but to decipher their positionality. They also select a location and settle, usually without the knowledge of indigene leaders, and bring over their women and children within two or three months of the initial settlement. Migration movements are synchronised with the rainy and dry season, and the health of the livestock within one herding year. If cattle do not thrive in that time, most herders consider other options, for in migratory movements; time and timing are crucial.

The process by which herders select an area to settle demonstrates their recognition that space is a volatile issue. They do not move into an area because it has great conditions; they try to ensure that the risk to themselves and livestock is minimal. Once this initial caution evaporates, they proceed with activities which evidence that they are on their way to crossing the threshold for turning “nature into culture” - they build sturdier huts and kraals, consolidate a grazing routine, make a farm, a barn and a few “friends” from the Ghanaian communities. The transition from occupying a space to a place represents new beginnings for the herders, but for indigenes place is continuity. The herders are thus seen as an encroachment on the status quo and a threat to space.

Place is a filter of perception, even the perception of fellow humans, so it is little wonder that all indigene respondents perceived herders as fundamentally different:

We think that they are different people. They fly in the night. Their men do not sleep indoors except when it is raining. After the rain they must come lay outside. So in fact we have taken them to be different human beings altogether. Their behaviour is different. They are not part of us. Some think they should be sacked since they are not the same as we are (Respondent from Datoko).

Although this may be an exaggerated perception of the herders, agitations for their expulsion have xenophobic undertones, reiterating Anderson and O'Dowd's conceptualisation of borders as platforms for the assertion of identities and difference. Indigenes solidify this standpoint because herders cannot make claims to territory in the area as territory is tied to indigenous settlement, so from the indigene angle herders do not belong and should not use “our resources”. Indigenes' justification for herders' expulsion is “bad

behaviour" (i.e herders violate the rules and norms of place). Since place influences behaviour herder's "bad behaviour" is seen as a threat to space, so indigenes' respond by asserting spaces and boundaries. However, in natural resource politics contests are over resources as well as place meanings, so indigenes' declaration that "this is our land" also implies "these are our resources", and intruders, especially if they herd tens of cattle, are not welcome.

Indigenes invoke the scarcity of environmental resources as the reasons to evict the herders, but the herders' ability to use networks to remain shows their resourcefulness in the exercise of power without claiming territory. This is consistent with Brun's view that being out of one's place does not preclude the ability to exercise power. Herders have used a number of covert and overt strategies in Tallensi-Nabdam to stay in spite of opposition to them, mainly through territoriality. Some of these strategies of territoriality are bragging about access to influential people, making leader friendships, annexing cattle routes, paying compensation for crop damage and being physically aggressive.

These dimensions come into sharp focus with a correlation of sedentarisation history, place attachment and the nature of the social dilemma. Naba settlers appear to have the most place attachment and resistance to expulsion. They are also most likely to use overt territoriality such as flaunting their association with leaders and challenging crop damage. They are defiant because "those who can expel us want us to stay. As for the indigenes, they know nothing and they don't have power. They make noise" said a Naba settler from the Baan be Kol'k forestburb.

The settlement history of the area has a bearing on indigenes' ability to counteract herders' territoriality. Villages are inhabited by migrants who technically consider themselves "strangers" irrespective of how many generations are native to that land. In Digare, every respondent was a first generation settler and some herders in the Digare forest had been settled longer than them. This has an impact on the dynamics of power and who is entitled. Indigenes admit that as settlers they are constrained in what they can demand of leaders who are original settlers of the land and who possess the last word in most traditional issues. To put things in perspective, when the Chief makes a decision it has the feel of a decree, even if that chief is or appears weak. In one village, the chief is a regent and has been for 15 years, yet indigenes grudgingly submit to his support of the herders. Alhaji settlers are sanguine in their settlement because the Alhaji phenomenon was popular in the 1980s and 1990s and most of them have established deep roots. Compared to Naba settlers though, Alhajis are mellower in their attitude, because their ties to indigenous leaders may not be as strong. Yusuf and Happenstance settlers are sensitive to indigene displeasure because their ties

to the power brokers are weak as they settled before establishing contact with the leaders. As a combined unit though, the herders are powerful, deepening the dilemma and predisposing herder-indigene relations to acrimony.

The foregoing discussion has illustrated how notions of space and place, in tandem with time, influence herder sedentarisation on foreign soil. Indigenes' agitations for herder expulsion have been unsuccessful, thus they continue to contend with the herders for vegetation resources, crop destruction claims and physical insecurity issues. Herder settlements, resource-related conflicts and the fact that rational behaviour does not always produce the best outcomes, suggest that the livelihoods of stakeholders are in jeopardy.

Social resource dilemmas arise from disagreements regarding the distribution of public goods. Thus a public good such as the open access forest cannot be feasibly withheld from indigenes, just as indigenes have no control over the goings, comings and doings of herders in the forest. If this resource is made available to "good" herders, it is impractical to deny it to "bad" herders. The dilemma therefore arises over how individual members of both communities, with differing dispositions toward each ethnic group and their own, cater to their parochial interests to the neglect of the group. Some indigenes solidly support the herders because they keep cattle with them or get some financial gain. Where a subset of a group breaks the unity in the community, it disrupts group social identification and retards efforts to reach across the divide. It is also the perfect backdrop for in-fighting that undermines the livelihoods of the majority of stakeholders.

The social dilemma of herders and indigenes in Ghana contains more of a dominating strategy than a deficient equilibrium. Both indigenes and herders would gain if they agree to cooperate within some parameters but differences in notions of space, place and expected behaviour distort the autochthon-migrant (or native-alien) status quo and keep the groups leery of each other. However, the financial superiority of herders (in cattle) and active territorial strategies gives them an edge over indigenes, notwithstanding the fact that indigenes are traditionally entitled to property rights and herders are not. Yet irrespective of what indigenes do, herders continue to tap into the public goods that indigenes want to exclude them from. From this standpoint, herders have a dominating strategy, which is a disincentive to their cooperation with indigenes. In addition, the tendency of some indigenes to accept "gifts" from herders draws indigene communities into a "social trap" which leaves them worse off. The result is a sense of resignation, which emboldens herders to deepen their roots. Under such circumstances, the propensity for violent conflict always exists.

To transform this dominating strategy into a deficient equilibrium, group consensus is important and leadership is critical, yet leadership from the indigene to the national level appears to be lacking. All over the sub-region and certainly in Ghana, states have taken measures to exclude herders from the resource base, not to mention the exploitation of both indigenes and herders as a result of leaders' "belly politics", which is not to suggest herders' lack of complicity in the development of the dominating strategy. Tonah reports that when an expulsion is imminent, herders get a head start from indigene contacts. Also, when herders are expelled from one community, they move to the next available one, thus transferring the problems from one community to another. Such occurrences draw indigene communities deeper into social traps even as herders increase the scope of their dominating strategy. When violent conflict erupts, indigenes take the brunt of the destruction, and because of persistent poverty, they take a longer time, if at all, to recover. Ad hoc measures, which are essentially political responses to indigene agitation, perpetuate the social trap. The realities of the herder settlement in Tallensi-Nabdam indicate that a more measured approach to tackling the dilemma is required.

The insights on group leadership from the social dilemma theory could help move herder-indigene relations forward. Many leaders and local elite use language that spotlights group identity and member identification. The literature on leadership and social dilemmas however suggests that leaders could better protect their people's interests by de-emphasising group identity and focusing on dialogue that finds common ground between stakeholders' livelihoods. Herders maybe aliens but their dominating strategy puts them notches above indigenes leaving indigenes worse off when leaders stress "us" and "them" and how "they" must go. The import of this point is that the leaders need to adjust their positionality and language to bridge the gap between the groups and not widen it.

Beyond this, an assessment of the relations between herders and indigenes unveils severe lack of trust in a triangle involving leaders, indigenes and herders. Indigenes have repeatedly been neglected by their leaders who promise to cater to their interest. Tallensi-Nabdam is pregnant with accounts of how assembly representatives, chiefs and even politicians have taken sides with herders because money or livestock changed hands. It is little wonder that some indigenes kill cattle to draw attention to the social injustice they face.

Conditions that lead to a transformation of motivation are necessary to improve the odds against indigenes. In Tallensi-Nabdam, some "ordinary" indigenes and a few influential villagers, work against the realisation of community goals on livelihoods and resource access. It is a form of belly politics in which indigenes deny the destruction of crops so as to continue

benefitting from the herders. Such commitment to the herders increases the psychological distance of members within the group, ruptures group coherence and leaves room for herders to essentially “divide and rule”. For this reason, people favourably oriented toward the herders need tactful reorientation of social identification in which their fluidity between herders and indigenes becomes an asset for navigating the difficult issues involved in arriving at cooperation between herders and indigenes in the study area.

Resolving the problem should also include an admission of the permanence of the herders in Tallensi-Nabdam and indeed, in Ghana. District assemblies and indigenous leaders need to take steps to strengthen the position of indigenes in relation to the herders instead of leaving them to their devices. Such steps would include community sensitisation on the implications of selfish behaviour on the whole community—the social trap—and leadership orientation that includes positivity and negotiation skills.

Finally, each village should have a locally constituted “herder committee” comprising highly regarded community members who would liaise with the existing herders regarding the complaints of both indigene and herders, negotiate how to resolve arising matters and keep the community updated on new arrivals and departures from their area. To arrive at a deficient equilibrium, the modalities of resource access should be clearly stipulated with pre-agreed penalties so that herders will attach more regard to the indigenous political structure. Locally derived resource access modalities would also increase stakeholders' tendency to cooperate across the divide as a result of knowing what the others are doing. The negotiation of resource management agreements that protect the interest of both groups would also help. Within these parameters, more secure livelihoods, forest protection and reduced propensity for conflict can become achievable goals.

Conclusion

This paper has argued that the herder-indigene situation is a social dilemma wherein herders have a dominating strategy that benefits their livelihoods. Contrasting notions of space and place psychologically prepare herders to move into Ghana and harness resources, although they have no inherent use rights. This divergence of thought underlies the imbalance in herder-indigene interactions on various levels. Seeking herder expulsion is not a pragmatic solution, as the dynamics of movement indicate that the herders are now a permanent part of the Ghanaian landscape. In areas of persistent poverty such as Tallensi-Nabdam, it is time to adopt or adapt these recommendations to safeguard the livelihoods and personal security of stakeholders.

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