Case studies on conflict and cooperation in local water governance

Report No. 3

The case of Lake Agofou
Douentza, Mali

Signe Marie Cold-Ravnkilde
Signe Marie-Cold Ravnkilde
PhD Candidate, Danish Institute for International Studies, Copenhagen, Denmark
List of all Case Study Reports
-in the Competing for Water Programme

Tiraque, Bolivia
Report No. 1: The case of the Tiraque highland irrigation conflict
Report No. 2: The case of the Koari channel

Douentza District, Mali
Report No. 3: The case of Lake Agofou
Report No. 4: The case of the Yaïre floodplain
Report No. 5: The case of the Hombori water supply projects

Condega District, Nicaragua
Report No. 6: The case of “Las Brumas” community
Report No. 7: The case of “San Isidro” community
Report No. 8: The case of “Los Claveles” community

Con Cuong District, Vietnam
Report No. 9: The case of the Tong Chai lead mine
Report No. 10: The case of the Yen Khe piped water system

Namwala District, Zambia
Report No. 11: The case of the Kumalesha Borehole
Report No. 12: The case of the Mbeza irrigation scheme
Report No. 13: The case of the Iliza Borehole

For other publications and journal articles, see www.diis.dk/water
Table of contents

1. Introduction ...................................................................................................................... 5

2. Methodology ..................................................................................................................... 5
   2.1 Definitions ....................................................................................................................... 5
   2.2 Case selection and supporting data ............................................................................... 6
   2.3 Studying local water governance ............................................................................... 7

3. Context ................................................................................................................................ 7

4. Narrative description of the case ..................................................................................... 10

5. Roles of selected actors ................................................................................................... 13
   5.1 Key institutional actors and interests ......................................................................... 13
   5.2 Role of women and the poorest ................................................................................... 15

References ............................................................................................................................. 17

Annex 1: Overall Timeline .................................................................................................. 18
Annex 2: Overall Actor Matrix ............................................................................................. 19
Annex 3: Expanded matrix for the poor and women .............................................................. 21
Annex 4: Overview of political administrative levels in Mali ............................................. 24
1. Introduction

This paper describes a case of local water conflict and cooperation in Douentza District in Mali, and is one of several similar papers developed within the Competing for Water research programme. The papers were initially prepared as part of the internal documentation for the research programme, but have been made publically available on the internet as illustrated examples of local water cooperation and conflict.

The paper is focussed on an empirical description of the roles of different actors within the case. For more in-depth analysis reference is made to the various papers and articles prepared (or in preparation) by partners in the Competing for Water research programme.

2. Methodology

The case discussed in this paper was selected for in-depth study from an inventory of local water conflict and cooperation conducted in five rural districts in Bolivia, Mali, Nicaragua, Vietnam and Zambia under the three-year Competing for Water research programme. The inventory included detailed information on water competition situations and associated events (Ravnborg et al, 2008; Djiré et al, 2010).

2.1 Definitions

Competition for water is a social situation in which two or more parties have competing interests in the same water resource. Competition for water takes place within particular competitive situations, which are understood here as social situations where two or more parties have competing interests in the same water resource.

The actual social process of competition takes place through specific conflictive or cooperative events. A conflict or cooperation event is an action (or set of actions) that seek to secure a party’s water access by either challenging the access of other parties, or by collaborating with other parties to secure shared water access.

Finally, water conflict and cooperation take place within a particular national and local context, including the physical and hydrological regime, the socio-economic, cultural and political setting etc. The nested relationship between context, situation and event is illustrated in the figure below. For a more detailed description of these definitions see Ravnborg et al (2008).
The nested relationship between context, water situation and water event

2.2 Case selection and supporting data

In the Malian inventory a total of 39 situations encompassing 195 conflictive and cooperative events were identified for Douentza District (see Djiré et al, 2010). The case examined here constitutes one of these situations, selected for in-depth study together with two other cases described in separate papers. Selection of cases was based on the criterion that they provided a particularly rich insight into the issues we wished to explore, i.e. that they were of a certain duration and that they allowed us to explore the actions of the poorest in some detail (for a discussion of such rich or ‘dense’ cases, see Flyvbjerg, 2006).

The case studies were supported by baseline information on livelihoods, water access and water ownership provided by a separate questionnaire survey of 200 households in the area. The survey allowed for stratification of results, using a well-being index developed as part of the programme (see Ravnborg et al, 1999 for the methodology applied). Additional supporting information came from the inventory and other information gathered during the fieldwork carried out under the research programme.
2.3 Studying local water governance

Like all social situations, water competition is not static but evolves over short or long periods of time. This implies a perspective that recognizes water competition as a dynamic social process in which conflictive and cooperative events take place in succession of each other, or simultaneously (Zeitoun & Mirumachi 2008, Ravnborg et al 2008). The development of each case was therefore traced over time, charting the actions and interactions of the various actors involved. This was done using stratified semi-structured interviewing and techniques such as timelines to aid memory. The actions traced included physical actions, speech-actions as well as “non-actions” (e.g. deliberate withdrawal as an act in itself), with due regard to agency that might divert from the narratives imposed by other actors (or ourselves) on the conflict and cooperation events.

In order to explore the role of users who are known to be frequently marginalized in water access, the case studies also examined the role of the poorest and women. Attention was paid to the particular risk of missing out on the “invisible” actions and non-actions of these actors, and interviews were thus kept relatively open and free of the particular timelines established by the researchers or other actors. A balanced approach was sought which on the one hand departed from notions of the poor as passive victims, while on the other hand recognizing the structural limitations they face (de Haahn & Zoomers 2005; Franks & Cleaver 2007, Nygren 2009).

In order to structure the analysis, information obtained from the interviews was subsequently condensed and sorted into matrices. This included:

(i) Overall timeline matrices on the major events of the situations studied;
(ii) Overall actor matrices providing details on the major actors and their interests, actions and assets in the situations studied;
(iii) Expanded timelines charting the actions of the poorest and women specifically; and
(iv) Specific actor matrices for the poorest households and women specifically, charting their particular actions, assets, outcomes etc.

Some of the resulting matrices have been annexed.

3. Context

The emergence of Lake Agofou
Lake Agofou is situated in the intersection between two neighbouring rural Communes in central eastern Mali. 30 km from Lake Agofou lies Hombori1. Hombori is principal town in the rural Commune of the same name in the Douentza Cercle within the Mopti

---

1 Hombori is limited by the Communes of Gossi to the east, Haire to the west, Inadia-Tafane (Gourma Rharousse) to the north and Mondoro to the south (for more information see case study report theme A).
region. Gossi\(^2\) is principal town in the rural Commune of the same name lies 55 km north of the lake in the Cercle Gourma Rharousse within the Tombouctou region.

The region has a typical Sahelian-Saharan climate, with one rainy season with an annual average rainfall of 300-400mm characterized by inter- and intra annual fluctuations (Diarra, 2008)\(^1\). Surface water resources dry out in the dry season where water is only available at dispersed wells in the area. However due to the Sahelian Hydrological Paradox the former temporary pond Agofou has become permanent (now Lake Agofou) after a year of heavy rains in 1991. The paradox explains that although rainfall is decreasing\(^4\), due to drought-caused loss in vegetation and increased run off, ground water raises, while small ponds occur in low-lying areas (l'Hote et al., 2003; Leblanc et al, 2008; Benjaminsen 1993).

Since the late 1990s, a small community has developed next to the lake. The national road runs through Lake Agofou. On the shores of the lake people cultivate gardens, and small shops are emerging next to the road. Agofou is thus considered a village, although it has not yet been officially recognized as such. The presence of the lake and pastures of Agofou valley has attracted people from many different places. With the arrival of the Communes in 1999, Lake Agofou has become a point of conflict between the Communes of Hombori and Gossi, who each want to obtain the revenues of the new opportunities provided by the lake such as fishing, planting of the sea grown fodder plant (bourgou), gardening and local trade. Because Agofou used to be a pastoral site where people did not settle permanently, the origin of Agofou is difficult to define and thus narratives of belonging have become strategic means in the conflict over the valuable territory.

The population living in Agofou consists of around 150 households who live there more or less permanently throughout the year. The area has a complex ethnic composition due to the different periods of settlement during the big Sahelian drought of the 1970s and 1980s. In the rainy season large herds migrate from the Inner Niger Delta to graze their animals at Agofou, but in some years the absence or limited availability of pastures forces the herders to go elsewhere. On a more permanent basis Songhay farmers live in proximity to Fulbe and Kel Tamashek groups that used to be nomadic herders but recently are becoming more sedentary, although herding is still their main activity. Furthermore many refugees have settled in the aftermath of the Kel Tamashek rebellion in Mali towards the end of the 1990s.\(^5\) Each tribe has its own relationship of belonging

---

\(^2\) Gossi is limited by Hombori to the south east, Inadia-Tafane to the east, O uinderden to the North, and south west of Gao. It lies on the Mare de Gossi and is surrounded by nature reserves in which a large herd of elephants live. The town is the site of a large cattle market. As of 1998 the Commune had a population of 12,173.

\(^3\) The 1950s were unusually good years in terms of rainfall. The years 1973 and 1984 were extremely dry years and had a strong negative impact on the area's ecology and population, which suffered from insufficient pastures and crop failure (Pedersen, 1995). The years of 1988-1991 have been relatively good years in terms of rainfall (Benjaminsen, 1993; Diarra, 2008).

\(^4\) Yearly rainfall measurement from the Sahel shows that since 1896 the total amount of rainfall has severely dropped since 1970. From the 1990s there is a slight increase in rainfall, but the total amount is still remarkably lower than before 1970 (l'Hote et al., 2003).

\(^5\) The rebellion is one in a series of Kel Tamashek revolts in the colonial and post-colonial history in which the Kel Tamashek claim that successive Malian governments have all largely ignored their interests, both in terms of access to development aid, economic development, and violations of human rights (Seely, 2001).
according to historical, social, and political conditions: some tribes administratively belong to the Commune of Hombori other belongs to the Commune of Gossi.

![Sketch-map of Lake Agofou, straddling the road between Gossi and Hombori](image)

The population use water for drinking, cooking and cleaning as well as economic activities including livestock, horticulture and fishing. In addition to investments in fish farms, a government funded project has financed the planting of the sea grown fodder plant, the bourgou, inside the lake to provide fodder in the dry season.\(^6\)

Two wells have been created in Agofou with little success. The first well in Agofou was created in 1936 during the colonial occupation. Although not functioning, this well serves as a strategic reference point in the conflicts over Agofou.

After Lake Agofou became permanent most households have used the lake as a primary water source. The water from the lake is of poor quality and some households use filters and local products to purify water. In 2008 the area was therefore provided with a manual groundwater pump with assistance from a French research team.\(^7\) Despite the pump, some people still prefer water from the Lake, since it is easier to cool down in the hot season and many people think it tastes better and that access is easy (Household survey, 2009).

---

\(^6\) The bourgou is one of the most prized resources in the, see Cotula, 2006.

\(^7\) The financing and date of drilling of this pump was not possible to decide (personal information, 2008).
Institutions relevant to the case

An overview of the different political administrative levels in Mali has been annexed. Decentralized units in Mali are called collectivités territoriales and are defined on four different levels: the district of Bamako, regions, Cercle (district) and Communes (Hetland 2007: 12). For the elected organs a state appointee represents national interests and controls the application of government laws at the decentralized level. At the Commune level, the sub-Prefect is the state representative whose role has been redefined to one of assistance. However, the sub-Prefect also has the duty to report back on irregularities, which might lead to suspension of the council in case of mismanagement of funds (Hetland, 2007: 12-14).

The Communes are the base level of the decentralization and villages do not as such constitute decentralized units; however the rural Communes which replace the former arrondissement, are composed of villages. Although the villages are not autonomous entities they participate in decision-making particularly in relation to natural resources. At the institutional level the village councils and the village Chiefs (for sedentary population) and tribal Chiefs (for the pastoral population) are maintained and represent an administrative authority (Diallo, 1996). The village and tribal councils are elected and propose the Chief to be nominated by the state representative. However, although the Chiefs are sometimes elected they have most often acquired their position by inheritance (Hetland, 2007; Gaasholt, 2009). The councils also give their point of view when it is required by the law and the administrative authorities. They are obligatorily consulted in agricultural, pastoral, forestry activities as well as in issues related to natural resource management and land ownership (Diallo, 1996). The Chiefs are technically an extension of the state administration and are responsible for censuses, tax collection and are consulted in important municipal affairs.

The three customary Chiefs of the Idrafanes (Tamashek), the Imakalkallem (Tamashek), and the Songhay Gallou (Songhay) are usually consulted by local water users on local water use and access. As a basic principle, water from the lake itself is regarded as God’s property which everybody can use. Only large livestock herds are limited in accessing the lake due to fear of contamination from sick animals and over grazing. However access rights to high valuable plots on the shores of the lake and access rights to fish are strictly controlled by the most powerful actors. Disagreements between the different groups regarding the different productive activities is a constant threat to the cohabitation among the inhabitants, but usually happens on a more individual level like when livestock breaks the fences of the gardens or transgress the plots on their way to the Lake (these events will not be treated here).

4. Narrative description of the case

In the history of the region there have been various conflicts and alliances between the different ethnic groups over access to the scarce water and grazing resources of the area. The grazing areas and the vegetation cover in Agofou is decreasing and the migrant

---

8 This table is based upon Hetland 2007, pp.12-14
Fulbe\(^9\) herders who come in the rainy season are struggling to get access Lake Agofou, an access which has become difficult to obtain with the strengthening of community-based natural resource management (\textit{gestion de terroir}). Apart from this, a conflict has escalated over the administrative and territorial control of Lake Agofou, which is the subject of this case study.

Lake Agofou has been the subject of a struggle between the Communes of Hombori (Douentza Cercle) and the Commune of Gossi (Gourma Rharous Cercle) since the establishment of the municipalities in 1999. Hombori Commune claims administrative control of the lake in virtue of a decree established in 1939 which defines the territorial grazing rights between the pastoral tribes of Hombori and the Tamashek tribe Kel Gossi during the colonial occupation of Mali. The Gossi Commune claims their rights on the basis of a geographical map from 1959.

In October 1999, one of the tribal Chiefs of the \textit{Idrafanes} living in Agofou (and belonging to the Commune of Gossi) starts selling plots for horticulture on the shores of Lake Agofou (see drawing below)\(^10\).

On January 26, 2000 the Mayor of Hombori writes an official letter to the Mayor of Gossi to draw his attention to this, and claims that it is a problem as the lake belongs to Hombori.

The Mayor of Gossi writes a letter in reply, pointing out that one of Hombori’s own administrative staff - the community leader of Songhay Gallou - is assisting in the allocation and delimitation of plots around the lake, and that the tribal Chiefs living there (belonging to Gossi) have opposed this practice. In the letter, the Mayor of Gossi goes on to state that the community leader belonging to Hombori is deliberately trying to create a territorial conflict between the two communities. This issue becomes a recurring source of disagreement between the two Mayors, with similar mail exchanges taking place in October 2002 and in 2003.

In September 2000, the Mayor of Hombori authorizes a group of herders to settle in Agofou despite the animals belonging to the herders being infected by a disease. The Commune of Gossi takes action to indicate a place where the infected animals can stay in quarantine, where the other animals don’t go.

In 2002, the Mayor of Hombori gives a group of fishermen from the Mopti Cercle permission to fish in Lake Agofou (later on, the Songhai Gallou community members take over this permission, but still pay to the Hombori Commune). The Mayor of Gossi refuses to accept this, and forbids the fishermen access to the lake.

In 2003, the Mayor of Hombori promotes fish farming in Lake Agofou, and clearly signals to the people from Gossi living in Agofou that the lake belongs to Hombori. The

\(^9\)Fulbe is a collective term for a large group of people who are culturally, linguistically and politically related. The Fulbe are spread all over West Africa mainly in the Sahel and Sudan zone (see de Bruijn and van Dijk, 2003).  
\(^10\)Before the Timbadjouan pastoral site where the Idrafane Chief lives belonged to Hombori, but after 1999 and the arrival local politics, their Chief has subscribed to Gossi.
Mayor of Gossi then writes an official letter to the Prefect of Douentza, where he regrets that the Mayor of Hombori has developed fisheries in Agofou, and claims that his Commune has released fish in the lake four years ago. He also claims that the lake and its resources and population belongs to Gossi, with reference to the national map of 1959.

Following this, the Mayor of Hombori writes a letter in response, where he claims that:

- Agofou has always belonged to Hombori
- Agofou used to be a deserted place where only the Foulankriabés of Wami (Hombori) camped during certain seasons
- The authorities from Hombori and Douentza dug a modern well in 1936 in Agofou
- According to a decree from 1939, Agofou belongs to Hombori
- The map from 1959 is based on a mistake and that the carte cannot dismiss the decree from 1939.
- The Mayor of Gossi has not released fish in the lake
- Agofou has attracted a group of Tamashek from Kidal who have settled between 1996 and 1998, whose Chief now declares himself Chief of Agofou although it is not yet an official village and despite the people from Hombori and the Foulankriabé already living there.

The letter also contains a description of the history of Agofou, which according to the Mayor of Hombori further verifies his claim.

In June 2003, the Ministry of Territorial Administration and the local collectives (decentralized units) want to indicate the border between the Region of Mopti and the Region of Tombouctou by constructing a portal at Agofou. The Ministry assigns a building company to start the construction of the portal. However, the local authorities from Hombori (the Commune and the Prefect) and a group of young men protest against the construction of the portal, since it suggests that Agofou belongs to Gossi.

In November 2003, the Mayor of Hombori writes to the Ministry of Territorial Administration on the delimitation of the borders between the regions (and Cercles), reclaiming that lake Agofou belongs to Hombori and asking them not to place the portal at Agofou.

In the aftermath of this event, in the cold season in 2004, the two Governors from Tombouctou and Mopti respectively authorizes the Prefects of Cercle de Douentza and Cercle de Gourma Rharous to form a delegation and meet at Agofou. Accordingly, a meeting between the Prefects, the two sub Prefects, the two Mayors (Communes of Hombori and of Gossi), the village Chiefs from Hombori and Gossi and key persons from both sides is organized to find a solution to the conflict. The Prefects from the two Cercles propose a joined management scheme for the lake, but the Communes do not agree and the issue is not resolved.
In May 2007 the sub-Prefect of Gossi writes to the sub-Prefect of Hombori to prevent him from establishing a polling station at Agofou, and requiring that the sub-Prefect of Hombori confirms that Agofou belongs to Hombori. This does not happen.

At the time of writing, the conflict is still not solved. However, although not recognized by Hombori, Gossi currently has the upper hand due to a number of investments in public services provided by the Commune of Gossi at Agofou.

5. Roles of selected actors

5.1 Key institutional actors and interests

Key institutions in the conflict are the Prefects and sub-Prefects at Cercle level, as well as the Communes and the tribal Chiefs (customary Chiefs).

The Prefects and sub-Prefects

In the present conflict the role of the Prefects has mostly been to assure a joint management of the lake, but because of the delicacy of the situation, which - according to some voices - is linked to the government of Mali’s reluctance to touch upon issues that could be related to the Tamashek rebellion and the troubles in the north.

In the case of Lake Agofou, the Prefects have received letters and participated in the large meeting on the ground where they have tried to opt for a concerted management of the lake. However the Prefect of Douentza thinks that it was the former Mayor who initiated the conflict because he wouldn’t let the Gossi authorities claim taxes for the exploitation of Lake Agofou. On a day to day basis the sub-Prefect has surveyed the situation and report back he the Prefect if the situation deteriorates. The attempts by the Prefects to resolve the conflict have largely failed and their influence upon the situation is limited.

The Communes

The main actors in this conflict are the Communes, or more particularly the Mayors of Hombori and Gossi. Both Mayors want to have Agofou within their territory, to exploit the lake its potential, but also to gain the potential votes from the riverside population. Both Mayors recognize that given the favorable setting of the lake, next to the national road Agofou is becoming a valuable territory to control. Furthermore the Communes can also gain taxes from the shops emerging next to the road and fees for vaccinating the large herds of animals seeking water and pastures at Agofou.

Each of the Mayors have been writing letters to each other, the Prefects, and the territorial administration to justify their control of Agofou. Gossi has put up a vaccination park, a community school and attracted investment in the sea fodder plant Bourgou. Gossi Commune has also provisioned a water infrastructure programme in Agofou. Before the arrival of the municipalities the Norwegian Church Aid based in Gossi have carried out development activities such as a grain bank, reforestation and well project.
Hombori Commune has negotiated the fish agreements and controls the permission to fish in Agofou, but other than that they mostly make their claims on basis of historical events. Each Communes also compete to vaccinate the animals and give out fines for cutting trees in the area.

The Mayor of Gossi has asked that farmers belonging to Hombori who live close to the lake move their houses, because he claims they occupy the space intended for the school building. But the Mayor of Hombori have asked them to stay that is how the population get stuck between the two.

The outcome has been that Gossi’s strategy of investing in physical infrastructure has gained territory. Hombori presence in Agofou is more of symbolic and historical importance. By supporting the customary Chiefs and the population on each side in their activities the Commune gain legitimacy as authority.

The customary Chiefs

The customary Chiefs are also competing for controlling their parts of Agofou and defend their particular interests. They also use the Communes strategically to obtain their interests and objectives. In the competition for controlling Agofou, by calling upon to the contesting authorities the customary Chiefs are at the same time legitimizing the power of the Communes by recognizing their authority.

Agofou has not yet been officially recognized as a village, with a village council with a president (chef de village) according to the Malian law of creation and administration of villages, tribes and neighborhoods article 29 of law n°06-023/AN-RM 28 June 2006 (see also case study report theme D pp. 17). According to the law the village or tribe Chief plays a role in conflict management. Among other things the pastoral charter states that conflict regarding the exploitation of pastoral resources should be regulated by legal inquiry. This being said the situation on the ground is more in flux, and no decision has been taken regarding the question of who functions as customary Chief. De facto there are three customary Chiefs who each rule a neighborhood of Agofou. Two of them are recognized tribal Chiefs (chef de fraction) of two different Tamashek tribes who are administered by the Commune of Gossi. Idrafane tribe is one of the largest in the Commune of Gossi, and thus have an important influence on politics, and constitute a considerable source of tax income. In particular The Idrafane Chief has indirectly played a large role in the conflict, because he claims to be first comer and land owner. The Commune of Gossi have tried to make The Idrafane Chief’s camp move closer to the border of lake Agofou, to occupy the territory but they have refused, because of their livestock herding they prefer to live more isolated away from the other settlements. This tribe in general has a good cohabitation with the other groups.

The other Tamashek Chief of the Imakalkallem 2 has almost monopolized one of the river banks, where he refuses to let the seasonal migrating Fulbe herders access the lake (situation 37). He also claims to be Chief of Agofou and owns many of the shops along the road. The Imakalkallem has many cohabitation issues with the other groups (particularly in regards to animals damaging crops and gardens). Many people fear their Chief who has a nervous temper, which might been caused by traumatic personal experiences during the Tamashek rebellions attack on Gossi.
The third Chief is the leader of the Songhay Gallou, who are sedentary farmers. The leader also present himself as Chief and founder of Agofou. Many of the farmers from his neighborhood originated from Wami and administratively belongs to Hombori. The leader was trained as nurse by the Norwegian church aid and now has a practice of his own. This way he has gained legitimacy in the population because he provides a much needed health care in Agofou. He tries to keep up good relationship with both Communes. At some point the Mayor of Gossi complained that Hama was giving out plots at Agofou and that he was provoking the territorial conflict between the municipalities. Furthermore the leader has been initiator of the fish farms in Agofou and have negotiated the agreement with the Hombori fish association, which also a point of contention in the conflict over Agofou.

Finally, several smaller pastoral tribes from both Hombori and Gossi live near Agofou, whose Chief is a administratively recognized tribal Chief. In the case of Lake Agofou, the involved Chiefs have distributed plots, which has provoked the Communes on both sides. Others have negotiated fishing agreement with the Communes.

5.2 Role of women and the poorest

The poorest village members in Agofou have generally participated (unless they for various reasons have been absent) in the meetings concerning the lake, and have thus interacted with the different administrative authorities engaged in the conflict. Nevertheless they have never taken initiative to contact these institutions to defend their particular interests. They usually have the same right to speak during the meetings as everyone else. What matters however is which tribe or group you belong to and what your relationship is to the influential people in Agofou. In this way the poor are not unlike the women excluded from the forums the way the women are.

Of course we are touched by the situation, because we have our people in Hombori and in Gossi, and there should not be such a problem between us. There are two Communes that pull at Agofou and we are in the middle thus we are between the devil and the deep blue sea yet we are administered by Hombori. I don’t know whether the problems has been solved or not.. the situation is mute

Woman from poorest household category, Agofou

Although the women also feel affected by the conflict, they have generally not participated in the meetings, nor in the village activities. Among the women the Songhay are the most organized and do meet between themselves and the social bonds in terms of assisting marriages and baptisms are important forums for the women to meet. They have not participated or expressed themselves in regard to the conflict and never contacted the administrative authorities.

We are only women, where our husbands stands we stand on his side...we talk about it between ourselves but the men always have the last saying... the men
don’t listen to the women and we have never tried to discuss such issue with the men. A woman cannot go into an issue that is beyond her, it is only the men who can talk about things like that. We cannot force men to listen to us or make us participate in their meetings.

Woman from poorest household category, Agofou

In relation to other issues, more progressive women can take initiative to collect money to purify the water, but will usually take action through their husbands or the customary Chiefs. During an interview, a widow said that she was the first one to release fish in Lake Agofou for breeding, but that she has now been completely excluded by the men from such activities.
References


## Annex 1: Overall Timeline

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Event 1</th>
<th>Event 2</th>
<th>Event 4</th>
<th>Event 6</th>
<th>Event 8</th>
<th>Event 2</th>
<th>Event 11</th>
<th>Event 13</th>
<th>Event 14</th>
<th>Event 15</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>In October 1999, the tribal Chief of the Idrafanes starts selling plots for horticulture on the shores of Agofou.</td>
<td>The Mayor of Gossi writes a letter to the Mayor of Hombori to prevent the Idrafanes Chief to sell plots.</td>
<td>The Mayor of Gossi authorises a group of herders to settle in Agofou, despite that the animals are infected.</td>
<td>The Mayor of Hombori gives permission to fish to a group of fishermen from Mopti.</td>
<td>The Mayor of Hombori starts to practice fish farms in Agofou.</td>
<td>Repetition of former event.</td>
<td>The Ministry of territorial administration initiates the constructing a portal at Agofou, indicating that Agofou belongs to Gossi.</td>
<td>The Mayor of Hombori writes to the Ministry of territorial administration to ask them to remove the portal claiming that Agofou belongs to Hombori.</td>
<td>A meeting between the two Prefects, the two sub Prefects, the two Mayors, the village Chiefs from Hombori and Gossi and key persons from both sides was organized.</td>
<td>The sub-Prefect of Gossi writes to the sub-Prefect of Hombori to prevent him from putting down his polling station at Agofou.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Event 3</td>
<td>Event 5</td>
<td>Event 7</td>
<td>Event 9</td>
<td>Event 10</td>
<td>Event 12</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Mayor of Gossi replies that a leader at Agofou is also selling plots and is provoking a territorial conflict between the two Communes.</td>
<td>The Mayor of Gossi imposes a quarantine upon the herders.</td>
<td>The Mayor of Gossi forbids the fishermen to access the lake.</td>
<td>The Mayor of Gossi writes to the Prefect of Douentza, claiming that Gossi have already out fish in Agofou and that the lake belongs to Gossi.</td>
<td>The Mayor of Hombori writes to the Prefect of Douentza contradiction the Mayor of Gossi, while claiming that Agofou belongs to Hombori.</td>
<td>The local authorities and a group of young men from Hombori protest in Agofou against the construction of the portal.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Annex 2: Overall Actor Matrix

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Commune of Hombori</th>
<th>Commune of Gossi</th>
<th>Administrative authorities (Prefects)</th>
<th>The “village” authorities</th>
<th>The men from Hombori</th>
<th>Notes (important issues you want to mention)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. What do the actors want to use the water for?</td>
<td>Fishery, Horticulture (drip irrigation)</td>
<td>Fishery, horticulture, bourgoutière</td>
<td>Facilitate shared access to the Lake</td>
<td>Assure access to water and land for their populations</td>
<td>Gardens and fishery</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. What are the immediate aims of the actor in terms of water access?</td>
<td>To earn income, taxes</td>
<td>Earn income, taxes and attract voters</td>
<td>Make a joint management of the lake</td>
<td>Control the water and land and gain influence (Chieftaincy) in Agofou</td>
<td>To earn an income and have access to water and land in Agofou</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. How do the actors justify their claims in the events?</td>
<td>According a pastoral decree from 1939, investments in public infrastructure, and citizens from their municipality living in Agofou</td>
<td>According to an administrative map from 1959, investments in public infrastructure and citizens from their municipality living in Agofou</td>
<td>The Prefect considers that all users should have the same access to the lake</td>
<td>First comers rights We were the fist to build a house etc. Our fathers been here first etc.</td>
<td>Claiming that Hombori owns Agofou</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. What are the main actions of the actors to achieve their aim in the events?</td>
<td>Writing public letters, Creating fish farms and fishing associations Inspections on the ground</td>
<td>Writing public letters Creating schools, Vaccinations park Investment in bourgoutières, Arrestments</td>
<td>Sent a delegation to Agofou</td>
<td>Selling of land, delimitation of the territory, makes alliances with “their” Communes, engage in fishery, planting of bourgou, tries to control the activities</td>
<td>protest</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. In what forums do their actions take place?</td>
<td>Public and private meetings</td>
<td>Public and private meetings</td>
<td>Public meetings</td>
<td>Private and public meetings</td>
<td>Public meetings</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. What third parties do they try to involve, and how?</td>
<td>The sub-Prefect, the Prefects from both Cercles, the Ministry of territorial administration</td>
<td>The sub-Prefect, the Prefects from both Cercles, the Ministry of territorial administration</td>
<td>No one, they have been sent by the superiors</td>
<td>The Communes</td>
<td>The Communes</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. What main assets have they used in the events?</td>
<td>Personal assets (human capital) power demonstration, Money collected from the Hombori village water infrastructure (financial capital) Personal connection w. the president and important persons in the administration in Bamako (social capital) Knowledge of history, personal background as colonial administrator</td>
<td>Investment in public service delivery (physical capital), power demonstrations Relations with the governor of Toumbouctou, territorial administration for pushing the set up if the portal, relations of trust in the population (social capital)</td>
<td>Human and administrative capital</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. What have they gained in terms of water access from the events?</td>
<td>Control of the area</td>
<td>Not gained peace</td>
<td>Control of some of the activities</td>
<td>Nothing really</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Annex 3: Expanded matrix for the poor and women

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Main issue</th>
<th>Poor</th>
<th>Women</th>
<th>Issues to consider</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. What do they want to use the water for in this situation?</td>
<td>They use water for the limited number of animals they possess, for drinking, for washing clothes, for gardening and</td>
<td>They use water for drinking, cooking, washing of clothes, to prepare macari (for small trade)</td>
<td>Do the poor/women have an interest in the water that the situation is about? What purposes?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Do they have access to the water that the situation is about?</td>
<td>They have access to the water but not the valuable land close by</td>
<td>They have access to the water but not the valuable land, to make irrigated gardens, there are many animals and the women don’t have the means to close of the gardens</td>
<td>Have they had access before but not now? If so, why? Is the situation a threat or an opportunity to their access to water?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. What are the immediate aims of the actor in terms of water access?</td>
<td>The poor don’t have a specific objective in the conflict, the only problem might be that they can be forced to leave the privileged spaces next to the lake and move a little further away</td>
<td>The women don’t have a specific objective in the conflict</td>
<td>Are they trying to defend the access/use they have, or to improve their own access/use?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. How do they relate to the situation we have recorded?</td>
<td>The poor has not participated directly in the conflict.</td>
<td>They do not participate in the meetings, they talk amongst themselves but the men always have the last saying and do not usually listen to the women. They don’t try to discuss with the men. But they claim to be touched by the situation; because they have people (relatives) both in Hombori and in Gossi, and they are in the middle, thus they think they should not have these problems because to them it is the same thing.</td>
<td>Do they undertake no actions related to the events at all? If so then what other water issues matter to them? Do they undertake actions related to the situation, but not to the events we have recorded? Do they take part in some events but not all? Why? What is the difference? Do they engage actively in the events? If so why?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. What are their specific actions within the recorded Events?</td>
<td>They do assist in the meetings, but some of them are not called upon, it depends upon their relation to the rest of the villagers.</td>
<td>The women have not made any specific actions in relation to the conflict</td>
<td>What do they practically do in relation to the Events?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. What are their specific actions in relation to the Situation but “outside” our recorded Events?</td>
<td>The poor have not made any specific actions in relation to the situation. Some of them are customary land owners, but only the ones who have a relationship with the Communes, sell land</td>
<td>The women have not made any specific action in relation to the situation</td>
<td>What do they practically do to secure/improve access to water that is not part of our recorded Events but still has to do with the Situation?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. What role do they play in their actions within the Situation?</td>
<td>The poor confirm that they have just participated in the meetings concerning the conflict without having taken initiatives or being invited in particular but simply because their village is implied</td>
<td>The women have a completely passive role in the conflict</td>
<td>Are they taking the initiative? Are they just participating in what others are leading? Are they opposing someone silently? Are they opposing someone actively?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. How do the actors justify their claims in the event?</td>
<td>Some of them claim to be first comers</td>
<td></td>
<td>Do they refer to certain rules and rights, and if so which ones? Do they refer to basic needs, and if so which ones?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. In what forums do their actions take place?</td>
<td>The same meetings</td>
<td>Private meetings amongst the women, informal talk</td>
<td>Formal forums? Informal/other fora?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. What third parties do they try to involve?</td>
<td>They don’t call upon third parties, maybe they will address one of the customary leaders if they were in trouble</td>
<td>They don’t call upon third parties</td>
<td>Do they involve customary or statutory institutions, or both? And which ones mainly? Do they involve community/district/other levels of institutions, and which ones mainly? Do they involve non-institutional actors as third parties, and which ones?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Question</td>
<td>Response</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. What human assets have they used in the Situation?</td>
<td>None</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>They will talk through their husbands</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. What financial assets have they used in the Situation?</td>
<td>None</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. What social assets have they used in the Situation?</td>
<td>None</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14. What natural or physical assets are employed?</td>
<td>None</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>None</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15. Have they lacked key assets needed in the situation and with what effect?</td>
<td>They need, money, power and influence to take part, only a few key persons are listened to, people often say it is a conflict between the authorities not the people on ground, but it affects them and the cohabitation between the other groups.</td>
<td>The women are in general not considered in regard to these issues.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Are there important assets needed in the Situation that they did not have? If so, what has this meant for their ability to take part?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16. What are the main outcomes of the Situation so far for their water access?</td>
<td>The women and the poor have the same access to water as before, only one group of poor have been pushed further away (because of settlement not because of the conflict), so that access is harder.</td>
<td>The women and the poor have the same access to water as before.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>How has the Situation affected their access to water? Have they had to use less/other water sources?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17. How has the Situation so far affected their wider livelihoods?</td>
<td>The poor often have to collect money if a meetings takes place, the investments in bourgu and other might mean that the poor have more difficulties in gaining access to water and fodder for their animals.</td>
<td>Negatively, the conflict makes them more anxious, some might have gained a livelihood through the fishery, but it depends on the activities.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>How has the Situation affected their productive/domestic use? What has this meant for their livelihood situation and their livelihood strategies?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Annex 4: Overview of political administrative levels in Mali

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Decentralized units (collectivités territoriales)</th>
<th>State administrative system (state appointee)</th>
<th>Function</th>
<th>Elected Organs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>District of Bamako</td>
<td>Ministry of Territorial Administration and Local Collectives (MACTL)</td>
<td>control</td>
<td>National assembly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Region</td>
<td>High Commissioner (former governor)</td>
<td>control</td>
<td>Regional assembly, (president)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cercle (district)</td>
<td>Prefect</td>
<td>support</td>
<td>Cercle council</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Municipality</td>
<td>Sub-Prefect</td>
<td></td>
<td>Municipal council</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Villages/tribes</td>
<td>Village and tribal Chiefs</td>
<td>Administrative authority</td>
<td>Village and tribal councils</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>