

CONFLICT AND CONFLICT RESOLUTION IN GHANA:

THE CASE OF THE DAGBON CONFLICT

BY

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DECLARATION

This is to certify that this thesis is the result of research undertaken by **AHIAVE EDWIN CARSCIOUS** under the supervision of **DR KUMI ANSAH-KOI** and **DR ALIDU SEIDU** towards the award of the Master of Philosophy in Political Science in the Department of Political Science, University of Ghana, Legon.

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ABSTRACT

The African continent has witnessed a number of bloody conflicts since the end of the cold war leading to serious consequences including political, social, economic and humanitarian problems. Although Ghana enjoys considerable peace compared to Cote d'Ivoire, Liberia, Sierra Leone and others, it is vulnerable to intermittent communal violence as well as ethnic and chieftaincy conflicts. The Northern Region, in particular has witnessed protracted conflicts over chieftaincy such as the succession dispute between the Abudu and Andani Royal Families of the Dagbon Kingdom.

Analysing data from both primary and secondary sources, the study found that although unemployment, particularly among the youth, has caused social upheavals, the conflict in Dagbon is directly linked to chieftaincy. The two Royal gates, Abudus and Andanis have failed to abide by the laid down framework on succession to the skin. These have evoked tension, mistrust and suspicion among the two families thereby slowing development programmes in the area.

Given the dynamics of the conflict, only an independent body particularly, non-state actors such as Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) have the wherewithal to instigate a peaceful solution to the conflict.

DEDICATION

To the memory of my late father, Ahiave David. Gone too soon to see the exploits of your son. And my daughter, Makafui, be challenged to achieve greater heights.



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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AFRC	Armed Forces Revolutionary Council
BNI	Bureau of National Investigations
CDRs	Committees for the Defence of the Revolution
CI	Constitutional Instrument
CID	Criminal Investigation Department
CLIP	Community Life Improvement Programme
CPP	Convention People's Party
CSOs	Civil Society Organisations
DCC	Dagbon Chieftaincy Conflict
DISEC	District Security Committee
DSC	Dagbon State Council
EI	Executive Instruments
FOMWAG	Federation of Moslem Women Association of Ghana
GA	Great Alliance
GDCA	Ghana Danish Community Association
GNA	Ghana News Agency
LI	Legislative Instruments
MMDAs	Metropolitan, Municipal and Districts Assemblies

MP	Member of Parliament
NAL	National Alliance of Liberals
NDC	National Democratic Congress
NGOs	Non-Governmental Organisations
NHC	National House of Chiefs
NLC	National Liberation Council
NLCD	National Liberation Council Decree
NPI	Nairobi Peace Initiative
NPP	New Patriotic Party
NRC	National Redemption Council
NRCD	National Redemption Council Decree
NSU	Northern Students' Union
PNDC	Provisional National Defence Council
PNDCL	Provisional National Defence Council Law
PNP	People's National Party
PP	Progress Party
PPNT	Permanent Peace Negotiation Team
REGSEC	Regional Security Committee
RHCs	Regional Houses of Chiefs

SMC	Supreme Military Council
UN	United Nations
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UP	Unite Party
YMA	Yendi Municipal Assembly
YPC	Yendi Peace Centre

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background to the Study

The African continent has witnessed a number of bloody conflicts since the end of the Cold War, leaving in their tracks serious consequences including political, social, economic and humanitarian problems. One can cite examples from Nigeria (1967-1970), Liberia (1989-1997, 2000-2003), Sierra Leone (1992-2002) Côte d'Ivoire (2002-2010), Uganda (1979), Somalia (since 1991), Rwanda (1994), and Kenya (2007) among others. (McGowan, 2005). While few of these conflicts have been inter-states, majority of them have been intra-state conflicts. From independence through 2004, the sixteen West African states have experienced forty-four successful military-led coups; forty-three often bloody failed coups; at least eighty-two coup plots; seven civil wars and many other forms of political conflict (McGowan, 2005). The results of these conflicts are loss of lives, failed states, hunger and poverty. Many people, displaced as a result of these conflicts, become refugees in other countries. Some scholars have cited scarcity of resources, the fragility of the African states, bad governance, ethnicity, and colonialism, among others, as the root causes of these conflicts.

Ghana, in this turbulent region, has to a large extent, been spared violent conflict at the national level. However, she has witnessed four successful coup d'états and countless coup attempts since attaining independence from British colonial rule in 1957. Apart from these coups, the country has experienced numerous inter-ethnic and intra-ethnic conflicts, chieftaincy conflicts and land related conflicts. Notable among them are the prolonged conflicts between Peki and Tsito; Nkunya and Alavanyo in the Volta Region (Gati, 2008); Mamprusi and Kusasi in Bawku, in the Upper East Region; as well as Konkomba and Nanumba; and the Abudu and Andani in Dagbon, (Mahama, 2002) in the Northern Region of

the country, among others. The causes of these conflicts are embedded in historical, socio-economic and political conditions, which motivate the protagonists in the early phases and in later conflict escalation. Additionally, ethnicity plays a considerable role and sometimes becomes a dominant factor in these internecine conflicts (Gati, 2008).

The chieftaincy institution is a very important establishment in the Ghanaian society. Before the advent of colonial rule, governance was organised around this institution. In the traditional Ghanaian society, chiefs performed and continue to perform a number of roles such as being military leaders and defenders of their people; as chief priests who perform religious roles within their jurisdictions; as symbols of identity; as sources of honour; and as sole custodians of stool lands and unifiers. Indeed, it must be indicated that chiefs played an important role in the struggle against colonial rule (Prah & Yeboah, 2011). It is therefore not surprising that in postcolonial Ghana, successive governments have been working closely with chiefs. It is in light of this that the 1992 Constitution devotes a whole chapter to chieftaincy. The Constitution states in Article 270(1) that “the institution of chieftaincy, together with its traditional councils as established by customary law and usage, is here by guaranteed.” It goes further to create National and Regional Houses of Chiefs in Article 271 and 274 respectively (Republic of Ghana, 1992).

However the chieftaincy institution in Ghana has been bedevilled with numerous conflicts. According to Prah and Yeboah, these conflicts are not recent developments and neither are they restricted to only one traditional area - almost every traditional area has encountered a chieftaincy dispute in one way or the other. Some of such conflicts recorded in recent times include the Ga Mantse succession dispute, the Anlo chieftaincy conflict, the Adoagyiri crisis, Princess and Aketekyi towns' troubles, the eruption of the Tuobodom chieftaincy conflict

(Prah & Yeboah, 2011) among many others. Whereas some of these conflicts have been successfully resolved, others tend to be protracted.

While admitting that chieftaincy and ethnic conflicts are not restricted to only one part of the country, the three northern regions¹ of the country have undoubtedly witnessed the majority of these conflicts. To quote Mr Issahaku Ibrahim, a former president of the Northern Students' Union (NSU), addressing a news conference in Accra in the aftermath of 2002 Dagbon clashes; "ethnic and factional conflicts have become monthly occurrence in the North." He cited conflicts in Bawku, Bunkurugu and Yendi, among others, as examples (*Daily Graphic*, 2002). Similarly, Awedoba observes that the number of chieftaincy disputes in the Upper West Region is equal to the number of paramountcies in the region. He writes: "...there are seventeen (17) paramountcies in the Upper West Region and there are seventeen (17) chieftaincy disputes pending before the Judicial Committee of the Upper West Regional House of chiefs." Of the Upper East Region, he notes: "This region ... is now experiencing several chieftaincy and land problems – small and large." For the Northern Region, he remarks: "this region has experienced a number of conflicts, new and old, small and large. These conflicts include religious, chieftaincy and land conflicts. These are both intra-ethnic and inter-ethnic conflicts" (Awedoba, 2009).

In the year 2002, an aged long chieftaincy conflict between the two ruling gates of Dagbon, the Abudu and the Andani, led to violent clashes resulting in the death of the overlord of the area, Ya-Na Yakubu Andani II and several others. The events leading to this conflict and the successes or failures of conflict resolution mechanisms put in place to resolve it form the subject matter of this study.

¹ Ghana has been divided into ten regions. These are Ashanti, Brong Ahafo, Central, Eastern, Greater Accra, Northern, Upper East, Upper West, Volta and Western. The three northern regions refer to the Northern, Upper East and Upper West Regions.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

The news of Ya-Na's assassination was widely reported in the Ghanaian media. Reporting under the caption 'YA-NA KILLED', both *The Daily Graphic* and *The Ghanaian Times* reported on Thursday 28 March 2002 that Ya-Na Yakubu Andani II, King of Dagbon, had been reportedly killed in renewed clashes between the factions in the Dagbon chieftaincy dispute on Tuesday night. Whereas *The Daily Graphic* reported that twenty-four (24) others were killed with him, *The Ghanaian Times* put the figure at twenty-five (25) (Daily Graphic, 2002; *Ghanaian Times*, 2002)

Earlier, on Tuesday 26 March 2002, both papers² reported that a dusk to dawn curfew had been imposed on Yendi and its environs on Monday for the fear that the celebration of the annual Bungum (Fire) Festival at Yendi could lead to clashes between members and supporters of the chieftaincy divide. Citing a police source, the report indicated that as the time approached for the celebration of the Bungum Festival at Yendi, the seat of the Dagbon kingship, Ya-Na and his elders received threats from unidentified groups of people to the effect that they (the unidentifiable group) were planning to disrupt the festival scheduled for Monday night. As a result of this, tension started mounting in the Yendi Township thereby prompting the Yendi District Security Committee (DISEC) to hold an emergency meeting at which it was decided to impose a curfew to avert any unrest.

However, following a meeting between the Ya-Na and the Regional Minister, Prince Imoro Andani, at Yendi on Sunday, the Regional Security Committee (REGSEC) allegedly revoked the curfew. According to *The Ghanaian Times*, on Monday morning, one of the factions allegedly attacked a young man from the rival camp and destroyed his bicycle. This resulted in exchange of gunfire leaving two people injured and admitted at the Yendi Government

² The Daily Graphic and the Ghanaian Times are state owned news papers and are the largest circulated news papers in Ghana.

Hospital. The Northern Regional Security Council deployed armed soldiers and police to the area and banned the celebration of the Bungum (Fire) Festival at Yendi, which was expected to come off on Monday night. The presence of the security agencies notwithstanding, there was violent clashes resulting in the demise of the King and his elders. Since then the murderers have not been found neither could the conflict be resolved.

When conflict breaks out, there must be a resolution but the Dagbon conflict seems to have defied every attempt to resolve it. The conflict between the two Gates³ dates back to pre-independence era and virtually every post independence government had been drawn into it either to solve the problem or take political capital out of it. The first Republic of Dr Kwame Nkrumah passed the Legislative Instrument 59 in a bid to resolve the problem, however, the law was repealed shortly after his overthrow, and since then several committees formed by various governments to resolve the problem have not been successful. In 1978, the Supreme Court gave a ruling on the issue by which the two gates have been following until recently when the pressure started (Yakubu, 2005), (Ghanaian Times, 2002) and eventually resulted in the violent clashes that saw the death of Ya-Na Yakubu Andani and several others. That the conflict could not be resolved and the 2002 violence could not be averted remains a mystery that needs to be unravelled. The question to ask is why did the conflict between the two Gates escalate in 2002 and became so protracted in spite of the efforts made to resolve it? This question among other things is what this study seeks to find answers to.

1.3 Research Questions

The research is premised on the following questions:

³ Members or supporters of the two royal families between whom the Ya-Na kingship rotates in Dagbon. They also referred to as Abudu Yali or Andani Yali.

1. What factors accounted for the emergence, escalation and protracted nature of the dispute between the Abudu and the Andani Gates of the Ya-Na skin of Dagbon?
2. What efforts have been made to resolve the conflict and how have they been implemented?
3. Why does the conflict remain intractable notwithstanding attempts made to resolve it?
4. How can the conflict be settled?

1.4 Research Objectives

The general aim of the study is to find out why the Dagbon conflict seems to be intractable.

The specific objectives are to:

1. investigate the causes of the conflict;
2. assess the various conflict resolution mechanisms adopted to bring the conflict to an end;
3. examine why the conflict remains unresolved despite the various efforts made to resolve it; and
4. make recommendations for resolving the conflict.

1.5 Theoretical Framework

To be able to understand why certain phenomena occur and the environment in which they exist, social scientists use tools such as theories, models and concepts. Silverman, (2005) differentiates theory from other research terms like model, concept and methodology and defines it as ‘a set of concepts used to define and/or explain some phenomenon’. This section discusses the theoretical perspectives within which the data for the study will be analyzed. The study draws inspiration from two theories, namely: General Theory of Conflict and the Relative Deprivation Theory as to explain the cause of the conflict and adopts the anthropological approaches of Emic and Etic to account for its intractability.

1.5.1 *General Theory of Conflict*

In this section, the focus is on some general definitions and explanations for the existence of conflicts in human societies. Conflict occurs in human societies when different social groups are rivals or when they are in competition with each other (Barash & Webel, 2002, p. 26). Lewis Coser defines conflict as a struggle over values or claims to status, power and scarce resources in which the aims of the conflicting parties are not only to gain the desired value but also to neutralize, injure or eliminate their rivals (Frempong, 1999). To Frempong, this definition emphasizes the destructive nature of conflict as parties try not only to neutralize, but also to injure and even eliminate opponents. Citing Gurr, Brecher notes that conflict phenomena are the overt, coercive interactions of contending groups (Brecher, 1993). This means that conflict is characterised by incompatibility of purposes as well as by parties engaged in mutually hostile actions and the use of coercion to injure or control opponents.

Some psychologists and philosophers explain conflict as an inherent nature of man. The psychoanalyst, Sigmund Freud, believes that the genetic material that codes the chromosomes of human beings makes them prone to conflict. So he writes “there is no likelihood of our being able to suppress humanity’s aggressive tendencies” (Bloomfield & Moulton, 1997). Similarly in his “Leviathan”, Thomas Hobbes argues that man by nature is violent, seeking power upon power. He notes:

So that in the nature of man, we find three principal causes of quarrel. First, competition; secondly, diffidence; thirdly, glory. The first maketh men invade for gain; the second, for safety; and the third, for reputation. The first use violence, to make themselves masters of other men’s persons, wives, children, and cattle; the second, to defend them; the third, for trifles, as a word, a smile, a different opinion, and any other sign of undervalue, either direct in their persons or by reflection in

their kindred, their friends, their nation, their profession, or their name (Hobbes, 1651).

Writing on man in his natural unrestrained environment without any authority to make and enforce rules, he states:

Whatsoever therefore is consequent to a time of war, where every man is enemy to every man, the same consequent to the time wherein men live without other security than what their own strength and their own invention shall furnish them withal. ...and which is worst of all, continual fear, and danger of violent death; and the life of man, solitary, poor, nasty, brutish, and short (Hobbes, Leviathan, 1651).

Sigmund and Hobbes as well as many others seem to conclude that conflict is simply built into the DNA of man. However this perception of man fails to take into account environmental and other factors that can influence man to act violently. This is therefore a major weakness of the General Conflict Theory. Consequently, there is the need for a more specific theory to analyse the emergence and escalation of communal conflicts such as the Dagbon chieftaincy conflict.

1.5.2 Relative Deprivation Theory⁴

Karl Max once wrote: “A house may be large or small; as long as the neighbouring houses are likewise small, it satisfies all social requirements for a residence. But let there arise next to the little house a palace, and the little house shrinks to a hut. The little house now makes it clear that its inmate has no social position at all to maintain, or but a very insignificant one; and however high it may shoot up in the course of civilization, if the neighbouring palace rises in equal or even in greater measure, the occupant of the relatively little house will always find himself more uncomfortable, more dissatisfied, more cramped within his four walls” (Walker & Smith, 2001).

⁴ Retrieved from http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Relative_Deprivation.

Relative deprivation is the experience of being deprived of something to which one believes oneself to be entitled to have (Walker & Smith, 2001). It refers to the discontent people feel when they compare their positions to others and realise that they have less than them (Bayertz, 1999). Schaefer defines it as “the conscious experience of a negative discrepancy between legitimate expectations and present actualities” (Schaefer, 2008). It is a term used in social sciences to describe feelings or measures of economic, political or social deprivation that are relative rather than absolute.

In one of the first formal definitions of the relative deprivation, Walta Runciman notes that there are four preconditions of relative deprivation:

1. Person A does not have X
2. Person A knows of other persons that have X
3. Person A wants to have X
4. Person A believes obtaining X is realistic (Runciman, 1966).

The concept of relative deprivation has important consequences for both behaviour and attitudes; including feeling of stress, political attitude and participation in collective action. Therefore, when expectations do not meet attainment, there is a high tendency for people to confront those, who they hold responsible for depriving them of their ambition.

It is relevant to researchers studying multiple fields in social sciences. Social scientists, particularly political scientists and sociologists, have cited ‘relative deprivation’ (especially temporal relative deprivation) as a potential cause of social movements and deviance, leading in extreme situations, to political violence such as rioting, terrorism, civil wars and other instances of social deviance such as crime (Merton, 1938), (Gurr, 1970). For example, some scholars of social movements explain their rise by citing grievances of people who feel

deprived of what they perceive as being entitled to (Rose, 1982). Similarly, individuals engage in deviant behaviours when their means do not match their goals (Merton, 1938). In the political realm, the lack of the right to vote or to be voted for is more likely to be felt as a deprivation by people who had it once than by the people who never had the opportunity to vote or be voted for. Taking the Dagbon chieftaincy conflict into account, using the Relative Deprivation Theory, it could be argued that the conflict erupts when one faction feels deprived of the skin.

1.5.3 Emic and Etic Approaches

Broadly speaking, there have been two main ways of conceptualizing an approach to culture that has relevance for conflict and conflict resolution. These strategies correspond generally to a distinction between emic and etic approaches to socio-cultural phenomena. Emic and etic are terms used by anthropologists and by others in the social and behavioural sciences to refer to two kinds of data concerning human behaviour. In particular, they are used in cultural anthropology to refer to kinds of fieldwork done and viewpoints obtained (Avuruch, 1998).

The emic approach investigates how local people think - how they perceive and categorize the world; their rules for behaviour; what has meaning for them; and how they imagine and explain things (Kottak, 2006). A feature of the emic approach is the identification and use of native terms or institutions as the key organizing concept for description and analysis. The major advantage of the emic approach is that it roots the analyst more or less deeply in the relevant cultural context. It brings with it all the strengths of ethnography - the attention to context and detail and nuanced translation (Avuruch, 1998).

By contrast, the etic approach shifts the focus from the native's observations, categories, explanations, and interpretations to those of the analyst's. In etic theorising, native categories or thinking are collected as data and analysed but are not treated as ends in themselves as in emic studies (Avuruch, 1998). The etic approach realises that members of a cultural domain are often too involved in what they are doing to interpret their cultures impartially. When using the etic approach, the researcher emphasises what he or she considers important (Kottak, 2006).

The aim of an etic analysis is to systematise data from different emic domains in order to construct or discover categories that work trans-emically (trans-culturally). The underlying characteristic of the etic approach is the identification of underlying, structurally deep, and trans-cultural forms, expressed in terms of certain descriptors that are putatively capable of characterising domains across all cultures. The advantage of the etic approach is that it permits comparison across cases and thus the possibility for building theory (Avuruch, 1998).

Jingfeng, (2013) argues that, although emic and etic are sometimes regarded as inherently in conflict and one can be preferred to the exclusion of the other, the complementarity of emic and etic approaches to social research has been widely recognized, especially in the areas of interest concerning the characteristics of human nature as well as the form and function of human socio-cultural systems.

Since the Dagbon conflict is a chieftaincy one and all chieftaincy conflicts have culture underpinnings that are peculiar to the conflicting parties, neglecting these cultural elements in fashioning out resolution has serious implication for resolving the conflict. The emic and etic approaches thus provide the researcher the opportunity to appreciate the difficulty and tension in the numerous attempt to resolve the conflict.

1.5 The Study Site - Dagbon

Dagbon is a 'Kingdom' found in the Northern Region of the Republic of Ghana. The people are called Dagomba, an English corrupted word for Dagbamba. The Dagombas speak Dagbani, which belongs to the Mole-Dagbani sub-group of Gur languages. The overlord of the 'Kingdom' is called Ya-Na. Yendi, the scene of the current conflict is the seat of the 'Kingdom'. It lies between latitudes 9 and 10 north; and have a land size of about 9,611square miles (Ibrahim, 2009). It is arguably the largest Kingdom in the Northern Region with have twelve (12) out of the twenty-six (26) administrative Metropolitan, Municipal and Districts Assemblies (MMDAs) in the region. These are the Chereponi, Gushiegu, Karaga, Kumbungu, Mion, Saboba, Savelugu/Nanton, Tatale/Sangule, Tolon and Zabzugu District Assemblies; Yendi Municipal and Tamale Metropolitan Assemblies (ghanadistricts.com).

Even though chieftaincy is a male dominated institution among the Dagbon people, females are the recognized chiefs in three towns and when she (chief) dies, customarily, another female is confined to succeed to the skin. The chiefs of Kukulogu, Kpatuya and Gundogu are all females. The Gundo-Na (Chief of Gundogu) is the senior amongst them. All the female chiefs in the three towns happen to be the daughters of the Ya-Na, the overlord of Dagbon (Boafo-Arthur, 2003).

Apart from the Dagomba, there are also other tribes like the Kokomba, Anufo, Basari, Bimoba, Zantasi, Kotokoli, Kabre and Gonja (Mahama, 2009). The 2010 Population and Housing Census estimated the population of Dagbon at 1,254,476 out of the total population of 2,479,461 in the Northern Region; representing 50.59% of total population of the Northern Region (G.S.S., 2010).

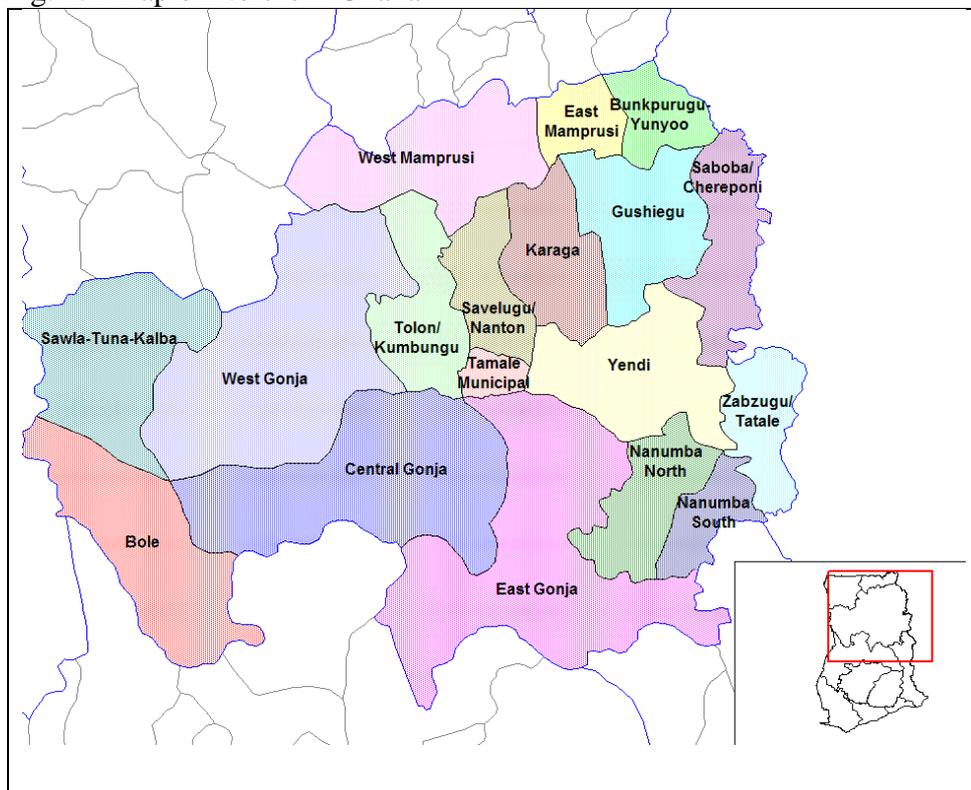
The Economy of the people is largely subsistence with Agriculture being their main occupation. Over 80% of the people depend on Agriculture for their livelihood. They are involved in the cultivation of cereals, tubers and rearing of animals. The major crops cultivated include maize, rice, sorghum, millet, cowpea, groundnuts, soya bean, yam and cassava. Animals reared include cattle, sheep, goats, pigs and poultry birds for domestic and commercial purposes. Other economic activities include weaving, agro-processing (shea butter extraction), meat processing, fish mongering, wholesale and retail of general goods, transport and many others. A good number of the populace are engaged in small to medium scale manufacturing business. They include smock weavers, blacksmiths, bakers, mechanics, shea butter extraction and groundnut oil extraction (ghanadistricts.com).

Before the advent of both Western and Eastern Religions, the Dagombas were mostly atheists. Their culture was deeply enshrined in their customs and beliefs. This is still manifested in the numerous traditional festivals still practised in the area. The first foreign religion to reach Dagbon was Islam, brought to the region by Arab traders from the North, between the 12th and 15th centuries. As a result, Dagomba culture is heavily influenced by Islam. It is therefore not surprising that almost 90% of ethnic Dagombas are Muslims. Christianity, on the other hand, arrived later from the South and is mostly practised by non-Dagomba ethnic groups. Important festivals include the Damba, Bugum (Fire festival) and the Islamic Eid-ul-Adha and Eid-dul-Fitr Festivals (Wikipedia/ghanadistricts.com).

Inheritance in Dagbon, like in many parts of Ghana, is patrilineal. It is common, but not restricted, of the Dagomba people to have large families. This practice until recently was to get more 'hands' to help on family farms. It is considered a great pride among the Dagombas to marry more than one wife. The number of children one had was one of the indicators for

measuring one's wealth (Wikipedia). The practice certainly has serious repercussion for the conflict in the area as we shall see in the subsequent chapters of this study.

Fig. 1.1 Map of Northern Ghana



Source: www.ghanadistricts.com

1.7 Operational Definition of Concepts

Concepts, according to the (Microsoft) Encarta Dictionary (2009), are broad abstract ideas or general guiding principles or the most basic understanding of something. They have the tendency to be understood and employed in various domains. Consequently, there is the need to elucidate and operationalise the concepts used in this study so as to avoid ambiguity.

1.7.1 Conflict/Crisis

Experts in conflict studies have the propensity to differentiate between conflict and crisis. According to Frempong (1999), Zartman used conflict to describe the underlying issues in a dispute and crisis to refer to the outbreak of armed hostilities. To Frempong therefore, crisis

is the violent expression of conflict. In this study however, both terms, conflict and crisis, are used interchangeably to describe the open hostility between the Abudu and Andani Gates of Dagbon.

1.7.2 Violence

Violence connotes the use of force to effect decision against the will or desires of others. It constitutes a violation of the basic human rights of the person through physical actions like beating, burning of property, rioting, shooting and evening killing. In brief, it is physical attack on another person. It is employed with the intent of injuring, damaging or destroying opponents (Marck & Snyder, 2009). It is the manifestation of conflict or conflict behaviour at the highest point. In this study, violence is used to qualify all acts that resulted in physical injury, destruction of property, loss of lives and any other form of human sufferings.

1.7.3 Ethnicity

Ethnicity comes from the word ethnic, meaning a person or a large group of people who share a national, racial, linguistic, or religious heritage, whether or not they reside in their countries of origin (Encarta Dictionaries, 2009). Almost all African states are made up of multiple ethnic groups. Ethnicity, in this study, is used to refer to the various heritage and linguistic groupings in Ghana.

1.7.4 Chieftaincy

Article 277 of the 1992 Fourth Republican constitution of Ghana defines a chief as a person, who, hailing from the appropriate family and lineage, has been validly nominated, elected or selected and enstooled, enskined or installed as a chief or queenmother in accordance with the relevant customary law and usage. According to (Awedoba, nd), the term chieftaincy

derives from the word chief and refers to the office and the institution of which the chief is the principal operator and stakeholder. Chieftaincy may comprise among other things: the personnel holding offices such as chiefs, queenmothers, counsellors and staff; rituals, symbol and other paraphernalia. Chieftaincy, in this study, is used to mean the law, custom, practice and process of electing or selecting and installing chiefs in Ghana as well as the legitimacy and exercise of power of the chief so installed.

1.7.5 Conflict resolution

Conflict resolution in this work essentially refers to a set of mechanisms adopted to bring the conflict situation in Dagbon to an end. These range from such peaceful means as negotiation, mediation, arbitration, adjudication or litigation, to violent confrontation –war. In the context of this study, conflict resolution refers to all the efforts made and the actions taken to resolve the Dagbon conflict.

1.8 Significance of the Study

Though a lot of work has been done on international conflicts and their resolution, little attention has been paid to local conflicts. Scholarly work on internal conflicts tends to concentrate on those conflicts that involve the state and a sub-group(s). In the specific case of the Dagbon conflict, much scholarly work has not been done on the intractability of the conflict. Meanwhile, “in recent decades, ethno-political conflicts have been at the forefront of international security agenda and the desire to understand and contain ethno-political violence has been a priority for academics, policy-makers, and peace practitioners. These conflicts typically transcend state-centric issues, yet have the capacity to internationalise and thereby affect regional as well as national stability” (Kaye & Béland, 2009).

The findings of this study will therefore provide input to systematic studies of intra-ethnic conflicts, and important lessons for the policy community advising on how to deal with internal rivalry in order to avoid bloodshed.

1.9 Scope and Limitation of the Study

The objective of this study is to find out why the conflict between the Abudus and Andanis of the Ya-Na skin in Dagbon remains intractable in spite of the efforts made to resolve it. Admittedly, a study of this nature cannot be conducted without reference to historical facts. This study therefore made reference to historical facts relating to the causes of the conflict and its resolution. However, in view of the sensitive nature of the issues involved and the stretch of time it has travelled, this study might raise more questions than it can answer.

1.10 Organization of the Study

In terms of structure, this study is divided into five chapters. Chapter One, which is the introductory chapter, sets out the background of the study, the statement of the problem, the research objective, research questions and theoretical framework for the study. It also indicates the study site, the significance of the study, scope and limitation of the study and finally presents the organization of the study. Chapter Two operationalises key concepts and discusses relevant literature. Literature is reviewed on ethnic conflicts, conflicts in Northern Ghana, chieftaincy conflicts and literature on the Dagbon conflict. There has also been Literature review on conflict resolution mechanisms in Ghana.

In Chapter Three, the methodological framework within which the study is carried out is presented. The chapter focuses on the types of data collected for the study, methods and procedures used in the data collection and steps taken in processing the data. It also discusses the sources from which data are collected.

Chapter Four analyses the causes and dynamics of the conflict. It explores the efforts made to resolve the conflict. It takes a look at initiatives taken before and after the 2002 violent clashes between the two sides. An analysis of those conflict resolution mechanisms employed in a bid to end the conflict is also carried out in this chapter. The discussions are based on the empirical facts gathered from the various sources of data. Finally, Chapter Five summarises the principal findings from the empirical analysis, provides some policy recommendations, and conclusion for the study.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 Introduction

Although hailed as a haven of peace and a beacon of democracy within Africa, Ghana remains vulnerable to intermittent communal violence and inter-ethnic conflicts that harm its governance and security structures. These conflicts arise from—and, in turn, exacerbate—the state’s inability to control elements normally perceived as falling within its remit. While the whole of Ghana is susceptible to civil strife, the northern half of the country has been the main hotbed of conflicts that often pivot around land ownership, chieftaincy, religious intolerance, and ethnocentrism. Finding a lasting solution to the conflicts in Northern Ghana has proven largely futile (Ahorsu & Gebe, 2011). This chapter reviews literature on ethnic conflicts, conflicts in Northern Ghana, chieftaincy conflicts in Ghana and literature on the Dagbon conflict.

2.1 Ethnic Conflicts

The literature available shows that ethnic conflict is not a recent phenomenon. It however gained prominence in social science literature in the 1960s and 1970s. As observed by Tambiah, it seems that the sudden resurgence of the term ethnicity in the social science literature of the 1960s and early 1970s took place not only to describe certain manifestations in the third world, but also in reaction to the emergence of ethnic movements in the industrialized and affluent world; especially in the United States, Canada, and Western Europe (Tambiah, 1989, p. 336). Before we proceed, it is important to take a brief look at the terms ethnic (group) and conflict.

The term “ethnic” can be interpreted in two different ways. In the narrower understanding of the term, “ethnic” groups mean “racial” or “linguistic” groups. This is the sense in which the term is widely understood in popular discourse, in Africa and elsewhere. In India for example, scholars, bureaucrats, and politicians since the time of the British have used the term “communal,” not “ethnic,” reserving the latter term primarily for linguistically or racially distinct groups (Varshney, 2001). There is, however, a second, broader definition. Citing Horowitz, Varshney argues that all conflicts based on ascriptive group identities - race, language, religion, tribe, or caste - can be called ethnic.

Similarly, referring to Horowitz and Kaufman, (Sambanis, 2001, p. 6) notes that ethnicity “is close to Max Weber’s conception of a ‘subjective belief’ in ‘common descent’... ethnicity embraces groups differentiated by colour, language, and religion; it covers tribes, races, nationalities, and castes. Ethnic identity connects individuals through perceived common past experiences and expectations of shared future ones (Ross, 2001, p. 157). Ghana, like many other African countries, is made up of people from many tribes, who speak many languages and adhere to several religious practices. This seems to have made the country prone to ethnic conflicts, especially in the North.

Conflict on its part, depicts a situation in which two or more parties pursue incompatible, but from their individual perspectives, entirely just goals (Wolff, 2006, p. 2). Wolff asserts that ethnic conflicts are those in which the goals of at least one of the parties are defined in absolutely ethnic terms, and in which the primary fault line of confrontation is one of ethnic distinctions. Whatever the concrete issues over which conflict erupts, at least one of the conflict parties will explain its dissatisfaction in ethnic terms—that is, one party to the conflict will claim that its distinct ethnic identity is the reason why its members cannot realise their interests; why they do not have the same rights; or why their claims are not satisfied.

Thus, ethnic conflicts are a form of group conflict in which at least one of the parties involved interprets the conflict, its causes, and potential remedies along an actually existing or perceived discriminating ethnic divide (Wolff, 2006, p. 2).

Drawing on Horowitz's and Kaufman's definition of ethnicity, (Sambanis, 2001, p. 6) emphasizes that ethnic wars are wars among communities (ethnicities) who are in conflict over the power relationship that exists between those communities and the state. Furthermore, he argues that opposing communities in ethnic conflicts hold irreconcilable visions of the identity, borders, and citizenship of the state. According to (Varshney, 2001), in this broad usage, ethnic conflicts range from the Protestant-Catholic conflict in Northern Ireland and the Hindu-Muslim conflict in India; to black-white conflict in the United States and South Africa; the Tamil-Sinhala conflict in Sri Lanka; and Shia-Sunni troubles in Pakistan.

Ethnocentric conflict is therefore identity based conflict. Identity is concerned with group judgments and judgments about groups and their motives. Ethnic conflict is often bitter and prolonged (Ross, 2001, p. 157). Though not all these elements are present in ethnic conflicts in Ghana, these conflicts are caused and fuelled by religious fanaticism, tribalism, competition for power (chieftaincy), boundary disputes, among others and often protracted. The Dagbon chieftaincy dispute for instance has prolonged and travelled over centuries (Ahorsu & Gebe, 2011).

The bigger question for analysis is the motivation for groups to engage in violent ethnic conflict. It is important to bear in mind that ethnic conflicts do not just exist or come into being. They are the product of deliberate choices of people to pursue certain goals with violent means. Neither ethnicity nor nationalism in itself causes ethnic conflict. Rather, the stakes in ethnic conflicts are extremely diverse, ranging from legitimate political, social, cultural, and economic grievances of disadvantaged ethnic groups to predatory agendas of

states and small cartels of elites, to so-called national security interests, to name but a few. As organized ethnic groups confront each other, minorities and majorities alike, with and without the backing of state institutions, an important question is to what extent ethnic conflicts are actually about ethnicity and to what extent ethnicity is merely a convenient common denominator to organize conflict groups in the struggle over resources, land, or power (Wolff, 2006).

There are several theoretical perspectives on the causes of ethnic violence. Primordialists view ethnicity as an exceptionally strong affiliation that charges interethnic interactions with the potential for violence. Believers in ancient group hatred argue that ethnic conflict is rooted in old sources of enmity and memories of past atrocities that make violence hard to avoid. Proponents of primordial sociality theory argue that the strength of kinship ties promotes altruism in favour of the genetic evolution of the group (Sambanis, 2001). Citing the clash of cultures (or civilizations) theory Sambanis suggests that irreconcilable differences due to cultural gaps cause fear and conflict that beget violence. He further notes that fear is also at the heart of the theory of the ethnic security dilemma, which suggests that territorial intermingling and mutual vulnerability exacerbate assurance problems that may lead to preventive wars by ethnic minorities who want to secede to increase their security.

Modernization may also cause conflict as economic and social changes can accelerate and intensify group competition for scarce resources. This explanation may be particularly relevant where class cleavages and ethnic cleavages overlap. Finally, ethnic conflict may be the result of mobilization of ethnic groups by ethnic entrepreneurs or elites pursuing private interests and capitalizing on the availability of ethnic networks –i.e. ethnically defined groups that reduce transaction costs and uncertainty with respect to the enforcement of contracts. Elites may also socially construct ethnic identities or reinforce racial, religious, or linguistic

cleavages in such a way as to produce new sources of friction and conflict. Sambanis (2001) concludes that while none of these perspectives can fully explain the causes of every ethnic war, each of them can help shed light on one or more wars. Together, they all share a conviction that ethnicity is a critical variable in explaining civil violence.

The nature of contemporary violent ethnic conflict is increasingly dirty. From Algeria, Sri Lanka, to Rwanda, the principal weapon of war is terror. Not only do warriors target civilians, and especially children, systematically, but they employ control through the creation and manipulation of fear. Their strategies include scorched earth tactics to starve populations and destroy infrastructures; sexual torture and mass rape, ethnic and social cleansing, and even genocide. Once violence becomes fuelled by hyper-politicized identity, an insidious logic kicks in. This raises the stakes beyond the more negotiable issues such as territorial control or the redistribution of political and material resources. In identity-based conflicts, the very existence of a community is thought to be under threat. An opposing identity group is labelled as the source of the threat and the battlefield expands to include homes. An individual comes to be targeted because of his or her membership in a particular community. The physical, psychological and moral violence inflicted on individuals is meant to affect the community as a whole – specifically, the identity group of which that individual is a member (Bush & Saltarelli, 2000).

As groups are mobilized on the basis of identity, such traits as ethnicity, religion, language and caste become organizational resources in the political and economic arenas (Bush & Saltarelli, 2000). Bush and Saltarelli note that this process of mobilisation is facilitated by the permeative character of ethnic identity, which is described by the foremost scholar of ethnic politics, Donald Horowitz, as having a tendency to ‘seepage’. The ethnicization of social, political and economic life coincides with the politicization of ethnicity, which together serve

to crank up the tensions between identity and conflict, and raise the stakes sharply in all confrontations. It adds volatility to every social, political and economic interaction across identity boundaries.

One may therefore ask whether identity politics is the key to deciphering disorder in Africa. In some cases, it is clearly central, as in Rwanda, Burundi, and Sudan, where there is an underlying war of visions pitting sharply different imaginings of the virtuous polity against one another. Even in the many cases where ethnicity or religion is not per se the precipitant of disorder, violence inevitably incorporates discourses of difference. Ethnicity armed escalates mutual fears, anxieties, and insecurities; communally targeted violence inscribes memories of ineffable loss of kin and fellow ethnics, and inspires dreams of vengeance. Thus the dangers of protracted disorder should not be underestimated (Young, 2002, p. 556). This study focuses on the cause(s) of the Dagbon chieftaincy conflict (as an ethnic conflict) and examines why it has been so protracted. The discussion above, vis-à-vis the issues and nature of the Dagbon conflict, provides a fertile ground for understanding the cause(s) and the protracted nature of the conflict.

2.2 Chieftaincy Conflicts

Chieftaincy could be defined as the office and the institution of which the chief is the principal operator and stakeholder. It may comprise among other things: the personnel holding offices such as chiefs, queenmothers, counsellors and staff; rituals, symbol and other paraphernalia (Awedoba, nd). The 1992 constitution of Ghana defines a chief as a person, who, hailing from the appropriate family and lineage, has been validly nominated, elected or selected and enstooled, enskined or installed as a chief or queenmother in accordance with the relevant customary law and usage.

Chieftaincy is the oldest political system in African. Dankwa (2004) argues that “chieftaincy institution in Ghana emerged from the social fabric of the land... it is nobody’s creation and cannot be easily destroyed.” The institution has played and continues to play significant roles in the governance system in Ghana. However, it is bedevilled with myriad of conflicts. To be able to understand and appreciate the sources of these chieftaincy conflicts, it is important to take a brief look at the history of chieftaincy in Ghana from the pre-colonial period through the colonial to the post-independence eras.

Before the advent of colonialism in Africa, the chief was the political, social, economic, legal and military head of the traditional state. As political head, he was responsible for the maintenance of good order in his state. He was the guardian of the fundamental values of his people and mediated between them and the spiritual forces. He administered tributes, court fines, market tolls, and other revenues. He was also the final arbiter in the administration of justice. It can thus be seen that in the pre-colonial era chiefs commanded a great deal of autonomy. However, the chief ruled with the advice of a council that has been variously termed an Inner or Privy Council. Where the system functioned well, these institutional checks as well as the queenmother safeguarded against dictatorial tendencies. The chief had to keep strictly the injunction that he was to act only on the advice of his elders. He ruled by consensus and, indeed, he could be destooled or dethroned for violating the trust, sanctions or taboos of the state as well as for incompetence (Boafo-Arthur, 2003), (Prah & Yeboah, 2011).

Adjaye & Misawa, (2006) espouse that in the process of instituting the British colonial administration, chiefs and their councils, especially in southern Ghana and Northern Nigeria, came to dominate local administration. The colonialists strengthened the powers of some chiefs they chose and created new chiefs where none existed. Once put into practice, the policy of indirect rule led to the entrenchment of the powers of indigenous rulers and their

growth beyond the limits traditionally assigned to them. They note, however, that the autonomy of action referred to here was only in serving the colonial masters and circumventing tradition, and not in relation to the pre-colonial status of chiefs. As a result, chiefs were branded as imperialist collaborators. As I shall demonstrate later, this policy is a major cause of chieftaincy dispute in Ghana and other countries in Africa.

The roles some chiefs played in the entrenchment of colonial administration, where some gave undiluted support to the colonialists and were enlisted as implementers of colonial policies, convinced modernization theorists that chieftaincy structures would wither away with time (Boafo-Arthur, 2003). Even though the institution has survived contrary to this prediction, the numerous problems - including conflicts - that have plagued it could be attributed largely to the colonial association with chieftaincy.

Boafo-Arthur considers efforts to curb the powers of chiefs, especially in the immediate post-independence period could be seen as a way of revenge for the solid defence of the colonial system by chiefs. To him, it was a way of ensuring that no pockets of political power centres capable of rivalling the authority of the post-colonial state existed. The power of the post-colonial state must be absolute so the autonomy of chiefs should be subverted and thereby reduce their influence on the politics of the period. Their integration in colonial governance during the time of indirect rule, either by omission or commission, set them on a collision course with nationalist leaders even though some chiefs were highly supportive of the struggle for colonial emancipation. The Convention People's Party (CPP) government never completely forgave the chieftaincy institution for hobnobbing with the colonialists. He presumes that Nkrumah's position with regards to the chiefs could be explained by these factors. Nkrumah is on record to have stated: "Those of our chiefs who are with us ... we do honour ... those ... who join forces with the [British] imperialists ... there shall come a time

when they will run away fast and leave their sandals behind them” (Quoted in Boafo-Arthur, 2003).

According to (Boafo-Arthur, 2003) the major challenges of the chieftaincy institution over the years have been attempts by the central government to erode the seemingly powerful position of chiefs in the country. From 1951-1966, it was up to Kwame Nkrumah to call the tune. Contrary to his initial belief in the continuity between African ‘communalism’ and modern ‘communism’, he eventually changed the whole structure of chieftaincy by making sure that virtually all paramount chiefs in Ghana were party stalwarts (Knierzinger, 2011). Measures to facilitate the absolute dominance of the post-colonial state over the chiefs were completed with the enactment of the Chiefs (Recognition) Act of 1959 that gave power to the government to accord recognition to, or withdraw same, from any chief (Boafo-Arthur, 2003).

The manipulation and curtailment of chiefly authority by central government has continued in the post-Nkrumah era in Ghana. NLC Decree 112, for instance, reversed chiefs who had held their positions thanks to the CPP (Adjaye & Misawa, 2006). The following regimes with K.A. Busia and Edward Akufo- Addo as the leading proponents of the chiefly elite again started a sweeping programme of conversion. In spite of the descent of these leaders, the way they instrumentalised chiefly power remained the same (Boafo-Arthur, 2003).

The PNDC initially perceived chiefs as elitists who should not be allowed to play any significant role in the 31st December 1981 revolution. The class connotations of the revolutionary principles meant the conscious or unconscious nurturing of conflictual relations between chiefs and the revolutionaries, especially the so-called revolutionaries at the grassroots — the Committees for the Defence of the Revolution (CDRs). There were several

clashes between chiefs and the revolutionaries across the length and breadth of the nation. Whereas the chiefs regarded the revolutionaries as mere upstarts, the revolutionaries perceived the chiefs as the embodiment of the arrogance associated with traditional power (Boafo-Arthur, 2003).

As a result of central government's interference in chieftaincy, some chiefs were actually removed and new ones, who might not necessarily be royals, installed following the passage of these acts and decrees. However, following "the removal of the right that the government had reserved for itself in recognizing or derecognizing newly appointed chiefs, following the promulgation of the 1992 Constitution" (Adjaye & Misawa, 2006), some of those chiefs who were removed by the central government, or their lineage, now context their removal and the customary appropriateness of their successors who they regarded as intruders and rivals. Indeed, some of the current chieftaincy conflicts could be traced to the situation described above. There are several documentations about government interference in the conflict that is the case study of this work – the Dagbon chieftaincy conflict – since colonial period to date.

It must be stressed that within the institution itself, there have been succession disputes following the death of an incumbent chief, some of which defied solution and lingered on in various forms to date (Awedoba, 2009; Boafo-Arthur, 2003).

Similarly, Larbi, (2009) identifies four sources of chieftaincy conflicts. He opines that chieftaincy is associated with political power, which also translates into the control of economic wealth in the form of stool properties such as land, mineral deposits, regalia and servants who work for the chief. The pomp and pageantry that accompany the position of the chief make the institution so attractive that, both royals and non-royals desire to use every means to ascend to the throne, thus leading to conflict. He also cites misappropriation of

communal resources, such as royalties paid to the royal house, by incumbents as a cause of these chieftaincy disputes.

The third source of chieftaincy conflict adduced by Larbi is that most of the disputes in chieftaincy occur in Ghana due to lack of documentation on the mode of selection of chiefs. He argues that the wealth and dignity that go with the chieftaincy institution in Ghana has attracted many young aspirants to contest the stool/skin. On the demise, abdication or destoolment of the incumbent, there emerge various competing groups with their candidates for the stool (Larbi, 2009). Ironically there appears to be enough documentation on chieftaincy in Dagbon, especially succession to Yani, yet the conflict which, according to the literature is primarily succession conflict, is the most protracted in the North, if not in the whole country.

Finally, Larbi, (2009) contends that the appointment of non-royals to stools/skins in the country provide the grounds of chieftaincy conflicts. He observes that some of these people are foreigners who are recognised as a result of their immense contribution to the state in terms of infrastructural development. In the past, slave who rendered dedicated services to their masters were sometimes incorporated into the family. Some of them were rewarded with women in the community with whom they had children. The descendants of these slaves who are now part of the royal lineage could one day emerge as at the forefront to contest the vacant position of the stool. Problems occur when some members of the royal family try to discriminate against this crop of people, sometimes referring to them as ‘intruders’ or ‘foreigners’.

Boafo-Arthur, (2003) indicates that new forms of succession challenges have also emerged. He points to the growing tendency towards direct and indirect encouragement of absentee chiefs as another challenge that has cropped up as a result of the high education of chiefs and the varied expertise they possess which make it impossible for them to stay in their palaces in their areas of jurisdiction. Thus chiefs with expertise of any form practise their professions in the cities and this implies leaving their palaces for long periods. In effect, they become absentee chiefs and the problems inherent in this practice is quite enormous even though the practice cannot be halted given the demands of modern development and sound educational background required of aspirants to chieftaincy status. The most pronounced response of chiefs in this category is reliance on stool fathers or council of elders to take charge in their absence (Boafo-Arthur, 2003). The result is that the absentee chief is sometimes seen as ineffective and this creates the opportunity for others to usurp his authority and thus creating conflict situation.

2.3 Conflicts in Northern Ghana

Northern Ghana refers to the three northernmost administrative regions of the country. It comprises the Northern Region, the Upper East Region and the Upper West Region. Northern Ghana shares international boundaries with Burkina Faso to the North, Togo to the east and Cote d'Ivoire to the southwest. To the south, Northern Ghana shares regional boundaries with the Brong Ahafo and the Volta Regions. During the colonial era, it was administered as one administrative region of the Gold Coast with its headquarters in Tamale and was called the Northern Territories. Upon independence, the upper region was carved out of the Northern Region with Bolgatanga as its regional capital. The Upper Region was subsequently divided into Upper East and Upper West. While the former retained Bolgatanga as its capital, the latter is headquartered in Wa (Awedoba, 2006).

The three regions of the North cover a land size approximately 97702 kilometre square or 60721 square miles. The 2010 population and housing census estimate the population of the three northern regions at four million, two hundred and twenty-eight thousand, one hundred and sixteen (2,228,116) (GSS, 2010).

The three northern regions are unified by shared history, culture and language; ecology and geography and are the least developed of the regions in Ghana, even if they are not the least endowed. Much of the area which is drained by the Volta River and its tributaries is dry savannah; rainfall is erratic, and without irrigation facilities, the traditional grains and some tuber crops could only be cultivated seasonally. Fertile and arable land is not evenly distributed in the North and in some parts the topography is rocky and the soil is lateritic. This arguably explains the perennial conflicts in that part of the country since conflict arguably stems from competition over scarce but valuable resources (Awedoba, 2009).

A disturbing phenomenon in the political landscape of Northern Ghana during the last several decades has been the intermittent eruption of either intra- ethnic or inter-ethnic conflicts. Indeed, there have been twenty-two such conflicts between 1980 and 2002. Within the period under review, Gonja attacked and destroyed a Battor village at Kafaba in 1980 and again destroyed Tuna in that same year. Gonja was involved in wars with the Nawuris and Nchumurus in 1991, 1992 and 1994. Gonjas fought among themselves at Yapei and Kusawgu in 1992 and at Daboya in 1994. Nanumbas fought against Konkombas in 1980, 1994 and 1995. In 1991, Dagombas fought among themselves at Voggu and Zabzugu and fought Konkombas in 1995. Between 1980 and 1986 Mamprusis and Kusasis fought three times in the Bawku area. In 1988 and 1994 the Bimoba also went to war with the Kombas. Between 1999 and 2001, the Kombas fought twice among themselves. In March 2002, Dagombas

fought among themselves at Yendi during which Ya-Na Yakubu Andani II, the overlord of Dagbon, together with some 40 others, lost his life. (Brukum, 2006).

Table 2.1: Conflicts in Northern Ghana between 1980 and 2002.

Ethnic Groups Fighting Another			Battle field	Year
Gonja	Against	Battor	Kafaba	1980
Gonja	Against	Tuna	Tuna	1980
Gonja	Against	Nawuri, Nchumuru		1991 – 1994
Gonja	Against	Gonja	Yapei, Kusawgu	1992
			Daboya	1994
Nanumba	Against	Konkomba		1980,1994,1995
Dagomba	Against	Dagomba	Voggu, Zabzugu	1991
Dagomba	Against	Konkomba		1995
Mamprusi	Against	Kusasi	Bawku	1980 – 1986
Bimoba	Against	Konkomba		1988, 1994
Konkomba	Against	Konkomba		1999, 2001
Dagomba (Abudu)	Against	Dagomba (Andani)	Yendi	2002

Source: Adapted from Brukum, 2006

Even though the immediate causes of these conflicts differ, the remote ones are similar if not the same. (Brukum, 2006) remarks that they stem from several decades of relegation of certain ethnic groups, so called “minority groups” to second rate citizens in the traditional and political administration of the Region or attempts to by-pass some “gates” in the system of rotation to the chiefship.

As stated earlier, the three northern regions are the least developed of the regions in Ghana, even if they are not the least endowed. Awedoba observes that poverty and economic and social deprivation engender despondency and desperation and invariably call for coping and survival strategies of various kinds, including those that are questionable. It makes the poor resentful of the property owning sectors, while at the same time, paradoxically subject to the control of the wealthy. Thus for a pittance, youth and others in not too favourable circumstances can be induced to break custom and law rather than listen to reason. They may

indulge in behaviour risky to themselves and their neighbours because with very limited prospects, there is not much to live for anyway. The result may be real, such as death, injury, poisoned social relations, increased poverty and the like; or perceived such as spiritual mishaps. Whichever is the issue, the deprived arguably feel they have nothing to lose (after all, life is like been dead and death cannot be worse than living) and sanction, whether secular or spiritual, could not perceivably be worse than one's current unhappy existence. Thus people who are not oblivious to the fact that their claims fly in the face of traditional norms and the canons of justice have nevertheless had no fear of consequences of their unjustified or even sacrilegious behaviours or actions, so long as there is an immediate benefit, however minute, in sight (Awedoba, 2009).

Chieftaincy conflicts have been one of the main sources of communal conflicts in northern Ghana. These conflicts have been characterised by the wanton destruction of life and property, development reversals, serious abuse of human rights, suffering, especially among the vulnerable, and the relentless internal migration to the periurban periphery of Southern Ghana (Ahorsu & Gebe, 2011). These disputes arise over succession to a chieftaincy office as a result of the death of an incumbent chief, pitting contending royal families or lineages against each other. Sometimes too, the right of the sitting chief to continue holding himself out as the legitimate traditional ruler comes under question either due to circumstances surrounding his accession to the throne, his relationship with his people or, as stated above, due to political interference (Awedoba, 2009).

Furthermore, Awedoba (2009) points out that land and boundary disputes are other common source of conflict in the northern part of Ghana. They occur over the right of ownership to land on which a communal resource stands or is to be sited. Citing as an example, he recounts that the conflict between Kandig and Nirigu in the Navrongo District was fought over what

name the health centre sited in the area should be called. He stressed that traditional leaders may be deemed to have known their boundaries but difficulties crop up when that knowledge is put to the test by the application of modern scientific measures and devices.

Apart from chieftaincy and land, Awedoba, (2009) identifies religious differences, partisan politics and disagreement between communities about 'Order of Precedence' and abuse or over use of communal resources as conflict triggers in the North. He notes that conflicts have erupted between people holding different political views, especially during electioneering. It may begin with youths from opposing political faction or womenfolk, and then spread to others. He argues that partisan politics have usually exploited local differences, as some politicians use whatever means to achieve their objectives. On the religious front, Awedoba observes that conflict erupts between worshipers of different faiths and denominations. Each group may be persuaded that it is on the right religious path while the others are lost souls in the wilderness. He cited the conflict between the 'Orthodox and Ahmaddist sects in Wa and its environs; the Mpaha-Kpabuso inter religious conflict among Gonjas of Kpabuso (between Al-suna and Tijjaniya Islamic sects); and the Pentecostal churches and adherents of traditional religion in some parts of the North.

The tolls in terms of lives lost, injuries to residents, destruction of property including the loss of critical social and economic infrastructure that the conflicts have caused has been staggering. What is more, scarce national resources have been used to maintain peace. For instance in 1994 alone, the government of Ghana claims to have spent six billion cedis (C 6,000,000,000) or six hundred thousand Ghana cedis (600,000) in maintaining peace when the most devastating of the conflicts broke out (Brukum, 2006). Although much has been said about ethnic conflict in the North, little has been done to bring about lasting peace and security to that part of the country.

2.4 The Dagbon Conflict

To be able to understand the cause(s) of the Dagbon chieftaincy conflict, it must be situated within historical milieu of accession to Yani (the Ya-Na skin), specially from the period 1824 when Ya Na Yakubu I became Ya-Na, and in the context of political history of Ghana.

2.4.1 *Succession to Yani*

The Dagbon Chieftaincy Conflict (DCC) predates modern Ghana and its current political institutions. The conflict revolves around the two royal family lines, or ‘gates’, to the kingship: the Abudu and Andani families, which have pitched children from the same royal ancestry against each other in an internecine conflict for well over one hundred (100) years (Ahorsu & Gebe, 2011).

Until the period 1824–1849, succession to the Ya-Na Skin was primogenital tradition of unilateral family. This however changed to an alternation of succession between the Abudu and Andani families (gates). This was done to incorporate the male descendants of Ya-Na Yakubu I’s two wives as a result of the following reason. When Ya-Na Yakubu I promoted his younger brother to the Karaga skin, a position which might enable him (his younger brother) to succeed him, his two sons, Abudulai and Andani, rebelled against their father. The princes prevailed in the war but spared the life of their father and allowed him to remain Ya-Na until his death. Princes Abudulia and Andani upon their victory seized and ascended the royal skin or kingship, of Mion and Savulgu skins, respectively and appointed their cousin, Kari Naa Adams, to the Karaga skin. After the death of Ya-Na Yakubu I, Mion Lana, Abudulia, became Ya-Na from 1849–1876 and was succeeded by his brother, Savulgu Naa, Andani from 1876–1899. Thus succession to the throne was limited to the Abudu (offspring of Naa Abudulai) and Andani (progenies of Naa Andani) families, otherwise known as Yani

gates, between whose descendant's kingship has been rotated since the death of Ya-Na Andani in 1899. The emergence of these gates marked a pivotal era in the history of Dagbon. It is the beginning and the birthplace of the current crisis and Yani struggles in Dagbon (Mahama, 2009), (Ahorsu & Gebe, 2011).

2.4.2 Colonial Politics

According to writers like Yakubu, (2005), Ibrahim, (2009), Awedoba, (2009), Ahorsu and Gebe (2011) and others, government interference in the Dagbon conflict started right from the first year of colonisation to date. In 1930, the British colonial government convened a conference in a bid to document Dagbon history and customary rules, particularly with respect to succession to the throne in Dagbon, and to stem the recurrent Ya-Na succession conflict. In Dagbon custom and tradition, the selection of a new Ya-Na was the responsibility of a committee of kingmakers made up of Zohe-Naa, Kuga Naa, Tugri Nam, and Gagbindana. The kingmakers consulted oracles and soothsayers to determine which of the eligible candidates' (occupants of Yani gate skins) reign as Ya-Na would bring peace and prosperity to Dagbon.

However in 1948, a Select Committee of eleven chiefs was established, as replacement for the previous tradition of four kingmakers, with the influence of the colonial authorities, after they had tried various ways of getting literate princes to succeed deceased chief without success. The Selection Committee was made up of seven divisional chiefs in addition to the four kingmakers. These were Gushie Naa, Yelzoli Lana, Nanton Naa, Gulkpe Naa, Sunson Naa, Tolon Naa, and Kumbun Naa. In spite of the changes, the two royal families alternated the succession until 1954 when the Gbonlana (regent) Abudulai, a member of Abudu family, was selected by the committee to succeed his father Ya-Na Mahama III. Under the Selection

Committee the old system that limited candidates to the occupants of the three-gate skins of Kraga, Savelagu and Mion was abolished (Ahorsu & Gebe, 2011), (Yakubu, 2005).

2.4.3 *From Independence to 1993*

The conflict between the two Gates dates back to pre-independence era and had drawn virtually every government, since the colonisation of Dagbon, into it either to attempt to solve the problem or take political capital out of it. Following the installation of Ya-Na Abudulai III, the Andani family felt marginalised by the Selection Committee scheme and sought redress at the Dagbon State Council to no avail. After independence, the Andani family - a traditional ally of the ruling Convention People's Party (CPP) government - petitioned against the perceived injustices by the Abudu family. The Andani family, under the House of Chiefs Act 1958, filed an appeal against the ruling of the Dagbon State Council (DSC). They called for the deskinment of Ya Na Abudulai III for not being properly enskined according to Dagbon traditions (Ahorsu & Gebe, 2011). The CPP set up the Justice Opoku-Afari Commission to investigate the crisis. The Commission upheld the submission of the Andani gate and advised that Na Abudulai III be deskined but, upon further consultations and for political expediency, the government rather passed, in 1960, the Legislative Instrument No. 59 (1960 LI 59) that, among other things, restored the Abudu–Andani rotational succession system. It also recommended that in addition to the chieftaincy rotating to the Andani on the death of Na Abudulai III, the Andani should have two successive chieftaincy terms to rectify past irregularities in the rotations that favoured the Abudu Gate (Yakubu, 2005), (Mahama, 2009).

The LI stated that:

“...it is hereby directed with immediate effect from the date hereof that:

1: Succession to the Yendi skin shall be in rotation among the Abudulai and the Andani ruling families.

2: Persons who are eligible to occupy the Skin shall be the sons of the deceased or former Ya-Nas and who occupy one of the Skins of the towns of Mion, Savelugu, and Karaga; and accordingly sons of deceased or former Ya-Nas occupying skins other than those specified in this paragraph shall not be eligible for appointment to the Yendi Skin.

3: Whenever the present occupant of the Yendi Skin ceases to occupy the skin by reason of his death or any other customary cause, the person holding the title of Mion Lana at the date of this Order and who hails from the Andani family shall be the next Ya-Na. In the event of the present Mion Lana predeceasing the present Ya-Na, the next Mion Lana who shall be from the Andani family shall occupy the Ya-Na Skin.

4: Whenever the present Mion Lana dies his sons shall be regarded as the sons of a former Ya-Na and thereby qualified for the Ya-Na Skin in the terms of paragraph(2) herein irrespective of whether or not he occupied the Ya-Na Skin before his death.

5: Candidates from the Abudulai family having twice in succession occupied the Ya-Na Skin, candidate from the Andani family shall occupy the skin twice in succession beginning with the death of Ya-Na Abudulai III and thenceforth the customary law of succession by rotation shall proceed in the normal way: that is to say from the Abudulai family and thence from the Andani family.

6: In order to facilitate the application of the rule of the alternation between the two ruling families of the Abudulai and Andani, there shall at any one time be at least one member from either family on one or other of the three skins of Mion, Savelugu and Karaga.

Whenever two candidates from either family become eligible simultaneously for appointment to the Yendi Skin, the senior one (i.e. the one who first occupied the skin of a 'Gate') shall be nominated for the skin.' (Quoted from Yakubu, 2005)

Unfortunately, the CPP government of Dr. Kwame Nkrumah was deposed in a military coup d'état on February 24, 1966 by the National Liberation Council (NLC). In November 1968, the Mion Lana Andani was reported unanimously selected by the Selection Committee to be enskinned as Ya-Na Andani III following death of Ya-Na Abudulai III in September 1967. It appeared that the rotational succession system had been upheld and that the crisis was finally resolved. However, fourteen chiefs of the Dagbon State Council (DSC) later countered that they had actually chosen the Abudu Gbonlana as king. Nevertheless, Ya-Na Andani III was enskinned. A petition was presented to the NLC on behalf of the DSC for the revocation of L.I. 59. It is suggested that after two successive Abudu Kings with the advantage of appointing chiefs, it appeared the DSC was dominated by pro-Abudu chiefs. The NLC set aside the LI 59 and commissioned the Mate-Kole Committee to inquire into the crisis (Yakubu, 2005; Mahama, 2009; Ahorsu & Gebe, 2011).

Ya-Na Andani III died in March 1969. Under LI 59, he would have been succeeded by an Andani, but instead the matter was to be resolved pending the completion of the Mate-Kole Committee's enquiry. The Mate-Kole Committee's report which was made public on 4th September 1969 a day after the Progress Party (PP) government assumed power, and following from the report, reversed the LI 59 of 1960 and declared the enskinment of Na Mahama Andani null and void. The Mate-Kole Report resulted in fighting between the two families. On 9th September 1969, the Abudu family, aided a heavily armed police and military contingent, forcibly ejected the Andani family members, who were in the Gbewaa Palace to perform the funeral rites of Ya-Na Andani III. According to the records, over twenty-three (23) members of the Andani family were killed. This was followed by the enskinment of a member of the Abudu gate, Mahamadu Abudulai, as Ya-Na Mahamadu Abudulai IV (Yakubu, 2005).

The National Redemption Council (NRC) overthrew the PP government in 1972. The new military government, after receiving petitions from the Andani Gate, instituted the 1972 Ollenu Committee to probe the Dagbon chieftaincy dispute and determine the legitimacy of the enskinment of both Ya-Na Andani III and Ya-Na Mahamadu Abudulai IV. The 1974 Ollenu Committee's report called for the recognition of (the deceased) Andani III as the rightfully enskined Ya-Na and the deskinment of Mahamadu Abudulai IV. The committee's report supported the rotational procedure of succession. The NRC government later passed a decree, NRCD 299 that prohibited all courts from adjudicating issues pertaining to the Dagbon Chieftaincy, especially the deskinment of Mahamadu Abudulai IV. The decree appeared to have laid the Dagbon Crisis to rest by gagging the Ghanaian public (Ahorsu & Gebe, 2011).

Following a palace coup that brought Supreme Military Council (SMC) II to power in 1978, Abudu Yili presented a petition to the government in May, 1979. The government granted them the right to appeal the findings of the Ollenu Committee of Inquiry. However, on June 4th, 1979, the SMC II of Lieutenant General F. W. K. Akuffo was toppled by the Armed Forces Revolutionary Council (AFRC) led by Flight Lieutenant J. J. Rawlings. On September 24th, 1979 the AFRC handed over to the People's National Party (PNP) led by Dr. Hilla Limann during which time (in 1981), the Abudu Yili won the right to appeal the findings of the Ollenu Committee and subsequently won the appeal in the Appeals Court of Ghana. The PNP government was ousted in a coup d'état on December 31st, 1981 by the Provisional National Defence Council (PNDC) led by J.J. Rawlings. The court case on the Yendi Skin Dispute, however, continued in the courts.

The Appeals Court found that the selection of Ya- Na Mahamadu Abudulai IV by the selection committee was valid and legitimate according to the constitution and tradition of

Dagbon; and that the findings of the Ollennu Committee of enquiry which recommended the deskinment of Ya-Na Mahamadu Abudulai IV be abrogated. Andani Yili then, appealed the decision of the Appeals Court in the Supreme Court of Ghana. The Supreme Court ruled, in 1986 by a vote of six to one, in favour of Andani Yili setting aside the ruling of the Court of Appeal. The PNDC then repealed NRCDC 299 and set up a tripartite committee made up of representatives of the two families and the government. The ruling of the Supreme Court of Ghana brought the twists and turns involving the Yendi Skins to an end at least, during the revolutionary period of the 1980s (Wikipedia, 2013).

2.4.4 *The Fourth Republic*

The Abudus and Andanis are believed to be close allies of either of the pre-independence political traditions in Ghana - Nkrumaist tradition represented by the CPP and the Danquah/Busia tradition represented by the UP. While the Abudus have been traditionally associated with the UP, the Andanis are pro-CPP. It is alleged that anytime either of the traditions is in power⁵, each of the gates finds reasons to be apprehensive or to advance their cause. However, the relative long period of the PNDC regime, the apparent melange of both traditions in the regime and the position adopted by the regime on the Dagbon issue left either gate no clear opportunity to openly agitate.

When the ban on partisan politics was lifted in 1992, the Danquah/Busia club of the UP tradition formed the New Patriotic Party (NPP) while Eagle Club of the PNDC transformed itself into the National Democratic Congress (NDC). Unlike the NPP, the NDC had no pre-independence political root and therefore had to draw support from the two main traditions, thus had their followers from both the Abudus and Adanis. This obvious break in the Abudu

⁵ Though military regimes do not openly declare the alliance or membership to/or of any of these political traditions, their perceived or real alliance with either of the traditions is seen in the tradition they overthrow or the tradition which their civilian members belong.

and Andani fronts by the NDC helped to smother the chieftaincy crisis for a while. The NDC therefore had no party position on the Dagbon chieftaincy and this attitude effectively contained the crisis during the first two terms of their rule in the Fourth Republic (Yakubu, 2005).

The NPP on the other hand, had the main Abudu faction who were already with the Danquah/Busia club in their folks and, as was in the 1979 elections, picked Mr R. Alhassan (an Abudu) as their presidential running mate. This, according to Yakubu (2005) gave tacit recognition to the Abudus (or better still Dagombas) as the second force in the party after Ashantis or Akans. All this while, the Dagbon chieftaincy crisis was relegated to the background and most people thought it was forgotten (Yakubu, 2005).

As a result of the Great Alliance (GA) the NPP formed with other opposition parties including CPP and NCP (National Convention Party). The NCP leader Mr. K. N. Arkaah was chosen to partner their presidential candidate. However, in the 2000 elections, there was no alliance and the NPP return to the practice of choosing an Abudu as their running mate. The ‘ax’ fell on Alhaji Aliu Mahama. During the presidential run-off between the NDC and NPP that year, the CPP in Dagbon, led by Alhaji Ibrahim Mahama (an Andani) threw their weight behind the NPP. In fact, it was reported that Alhaji Ibrahim and Alhaji Aliu Mahama were together on Savanna FM encouraging Dagombas to vote for the NPP. Everybody at this point thought chieftaincy was a thing of the past in Dagbon, except of course, one young NDC supporter who continued to warn that “every vote cast for the NPP amounted to a bullet short at the Ya-Na” (Yakubu, 2005).

The Abudu family became a different group of people when their traditional political allies, the Danquah/Busia tradition, represented by the NPP came to power. Nonetheless, the Vice

President, Alhaji Aliu Mahama, kept his word and brought both the Abudus and Andans very close to himself. It was rumoured that some of his close Abudu associates were not very comfortable with the way he was so close to the Andanis, some of whom were always found in his entourage at functions. In the one year that the NPP was in power before the violence at Yendi, they had managed to get the Andanis to feel very much at home in the NPP government. Most of the prominent Andanis in the CPP actually applied for NPP founding members' card (Yakubu, 2005), (Mahama, 2009).

However some cracks started to appear when the Bolinlan, the Regent of the deceased former Ya –Na Mahamadu Abudulai IV, decided to celebrate the Eid-ul-Adha festival in Yendi for the first time since he became the Regent after the death of his father in 1988. Ya-Na Yakubu II was taken aback by this development and resolved to resist any such challenge to his authority in the future. Around that same time the issue about the funeral of the Bolin Lana's father also began to emerge (Yakubu, 2005). Tension therefore started to brew between the two families and resulted in violent clashes that culminated into the murder of the Ya-Na and forty others. Since then the Dagbon Chieftaincy Conflict has become a topical issue in the Ghanaian politics with both the NDC and the NPP making political capital out of it.

The measures taken to resolve the conflict and how they tend out are the subject matter of chapter four of this study.

2.5 Conflict Resolution Mechanisms in Ghana

In his analysis of theoretical perspective on conflict transformation, Reimann, (nd) identifies three distinctive but interrelated approaches to conflict management: conflict settlement, conflict resolution and conflict transformation. He argues that for a proper understanding of these three approaches, it is crucial to realise that they should not be viewed as distinct, single

and all-comprehensive theoretical systems. He wonders whether such isolated systems would even be attainable given the multidisciplinary and heterogeneous underpinning of all three approaches. Rather, they are more fruitfully understood as interrelated.

Reimann defines conflict settlement as outcome oriented strategies for achieving sustainable win-win solutions and/or putting an end to direct violence, without necessarily addressing the underlying conflict causes. Although violent fighting is suppressed, the underlying causes of the violence remain largely unaddressed. Moreover, conflict settlement approaches typically focus on mediations between 'top-level' leaders, such as political or military figures and high-profile representatives of the warring factions. By assuming that peace occurs when top leaders can negotiate an agreement that will 'trickle-down' to the warring population, conflict settlement approaches engage in 'top-level' peacebuilding strategies (Lederach 1997). To reach settlement, mediated agreements are achieved by employing problem-solving techniques that range from coercive measures, such as arbitration, sanctions, and power mediation, to non-coercive measures, such as negotiation, facilitation, and mediation (Kaye & Béland, 2009).

Based on the 'ideology of management', most research in the sense of conflict settlement defines conflict as a problem of political order and of the status quo: violent protracted conflict is thus deemed the result of incompatible interests and/or competition for scarce resources. While such a definition indeed implies that conflict is a zero-sum game, conflict settlement need not necessarily follow this same line of thinking. Depending on the particular interests of the actors involved and the stage of escalation, conflict settlement may easily transcend the zero-sum game, and lead instead to a non zero-sum if not to a positive-sum outcome (Reimann, nd).

Conflict resolution, according to Reimann, (nd) refers to all process oriented activities that aim to address the underlying causes of direct, cultural and structural violence. Structural violence defines the social, political and economic structure of a conflict situation when unequal power, domination and dependency are perpetuated, while cultural violence refers to the social and cultural legitimisation of direct and structural violence. Drawing on John Burton's influential 'human needs theory' (Kaye & Béland, 2009) emphasises that conflict resolution seeks first to identify the needs of each conflicting party, and then transform the destructive potential of these needs into constructive non-violent interests and requests. Thus, strategies for peace typically include non-coercive measures, such as consultation and facilitation. In addition, numerous actors are involved in the conflict resolution process, be they individual actors, professionals, academics, civil society, or NGOs.

Conflict transformation to Reimann, refers to outcome, process and structure oriented long-term peacebuilding efforts, which aim to truly overcome revealed forms of direct, cultural and structural violence. Citing Burton and Dukes, Reimann opines that conflict transformation moves beyond the aims of both the previous approaches, while at the same time taking up many of the ideas of conflict resolution, and particularly of John Burton's notion of 'conflict prevention'. "Conflict prevention means deducing from an adequate explanation of the phenomenon of conflict, including its human dimensions, not merely the conditions that create an environment of conflict and the structural changes required to remove it, but more importantly, the promotion of conditions that create cooperative relationships" (Reimann, nd).

Based on the discussion above, (Kaye & Béland, 2009) assess state initiative vis-à-vis the role of Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) in resolving the Konkomba-Nanomba inter-ethnic conflict in the Northern Region of Ghana. They point out that once state troops

had suppressed the initial violence, the local government set up camps for displaced persons in the region. Meanwhile, the Military Task Force collaborated with NGOs to facilitate the distribution of relief items. In particular, the Task Force provided security, information and escorts into volatile areas.

Besides, Kaye & Béland, (2009) note that in addition to its peacekeeping initiatives and relief efforts, the State also sought to engage in further peacebuilding activities. In April 1994, the Ghanaian government formed a Permanent Peace Negotiation Team (PPNT) whose mandate was ‘to delve into the root causes’ of the conflict and make recommendations to the government. Situating government efforts in resolving the 1994 Konkomba-Nanumba conflict in the normative theories of conflict management (that is, conflict settlement, resolution, and transformation), they argue that state-initiated peacebuilding efforts reflect conflict-settlement strategies. State strategies focused on the suppression of violence, targeted a limited number of actors, and sought to achieve a cease-fire agreement. However, state peacebuilding efforts, particularly the PPNT, adopted a top-down approach and thereby focused their initiatives on high-profile leaders in the region hence could not resolve the conflict.

Contrary to the State’s approach, NGOs, caught up in the Konkomba-Nanumba inter-ethnic conflict, employed ‘extraordinary measures to deal with the extraordinary circumstances’ and formed the Inter-NGO Consortium. The consortium emerged as a loose network of NGOs that pooled resources, collectively requested funding assistance, oversaw the coordination of NGO relief efforts, and ultimately facilitated the mediation of a peace accord between the warring factions. By identifying ‘ethnic-moderates’, individual NGO representatives paved the way for the formal peacebuilding process that would take place under the guidance of the Kenya-based Nairobi Peace Initiative (NPI), an organisation committed to the principles of

conflict transformation and reconciliation in Africa. As a result, NGO peacebuilding initiatives surpassed settlement approaches and resembled conflict resolution and transformation strategies which seek to identify and address the underlying grievances of conflict communities in order to provide a catalyst for social change (Kaye & Béland, 2009).

Awedoba, on his part, notes that there exist several conflict resolution mechanisms in Ghana. He opines that even though cultural values and nature of the conflict dictate which mechanism will best deal with each conflict, there are resemblances and that lessons learnt from one context might provide education on good practices and suggest strategies for dealing with conflicts in the three regions of the North. His work covers state security agencies and services; traditional institutions that are incorporated into the state governance system; the legal system and civil society organisations.

State security agencies and services such as the Criminal Investigation Department (CID) and Bureau of National Investigations (BNI) gather intelligence on (chieftaincy) disputes that are likely to degenerate into violent conflicts. The police and the military have more often been used in conflict management and settlement in Ghana. They are deployed to protect lives and property whenever conflicts explode or threaten to explode over entrenched positions or disputes over valuable but scarce resources. Their presence often bring temporary end to violence in conflict areas. There are also Regional and District Security Committees that focus on security matters that have the potential to disturb the peace and security within their jurisdictions. He however cautions that potential local mechanisms that could be put in place to contain the conflicts and secure peace should not be ignored (Awedoba, 2009).

Another set of conflict resolution mechanisms put forward by Awedoba are African (Ghanaian) traditional institutions and practices that serve as conflict resolution procedure in

the North and other parts of Ghana. These institutions have been integrated into the state governance system. He cites Traditional Councils which have the mandate under section 12 of the chieftaincy Act 1971, Act 370 to settle chieftaincy disputes ranging from the position of headman to divisional chief. Beyond the Traditional Councils, Awedoba highlights the place of Regional Houses of Chiefs (RHCs) in resolving conflict in the North and in Ghana as a whole. Like all other regions in Ghana, the RHCs in the three Northern Regions are composed of paramount chiefs. The houses elect presidents from among their members and are assisted by registrars in running their businesses. A number of chieftaincy disputes have been sent to the RHCs for redress. While some have been settled, others are still pending. Since the RHCs of the North are relatively close to the chiefdoms they serve, they are better placed in handling chieftaincy disputes in the North. Their decision may carry much weight and enjoy considerable respect. However he observes that given the proximity, traditional and historical ties of the chiefdoms not all cases of the Houses are acceptable to the contestants. Consequently some cases sent to the RHCs have had to travel all the way to the National House of Chiefs and, or the superior courts of Ghana.

At the apex of state-tradition institutions in Ghana is the National House of Chiefs (NHC) which is charged to manage chieftaincy issues – including the resolution of disputes in the institution itself and in allied domains. The NHC is composed of five (paramount) chiefs⁶ each elected from all the RHCs. The NHC's judicial committee, comprising five members appointed by the House from among its members, exercises appellate jurisdiction over matters determined by an RHC. (Republic of Ghana, 1992). The constituent chiefs are often experienced persons who have track record of managing disputes in their various chiefdoms and traditional areas. They are reputable and often beyond partisan considerations. Their

⁶ According to Art. 271, 1(3) where there less than five paramount chiefs in a region, the RHC shall elect such number of divisional chiefs to make up the required representation for the region.

mediation is therefore likely to be accepted by parties to disputes (Awedoba, 2009). Though Awedoba perceives the diverse ethnic composition of the NHC as a problem to its effective functioning as conflict resolution institution, this researcher is of the view that members of the NHC are mostly enlightened personalities who are or should be conversant with norms and procedures in other chiefdoms other than theirs.

Apart from the traditional institutions stated above, Awedoba also alludes to traditional practices that play significant role in conflict resolution in Ghana. He asserts that in many traditional areas in the North, it is customary to put a disputed issue to the test by making contesting parties submit to supernatural arbitration through oracles, sworn statement and oaths. The fear for the sanction that comes from the oracles and the oaths deters disputants who know their claim is unjust and thus abandon their assertions. Traditional festivals also provide the avenue for reconciliation among members of communities engaged in a feud.

In addition, Awedoba pinpoints Ghana's legal system as an important mechanism for conflict resolution in the country. He stresses that in times of conflict, government uses Executive/Legislative Instruments, Acts or Decrees to limit the movement of contestants through the imposition of curfew. In the past, the government had given recognition to, or withdraw same from, some chiefs in the bid to restore order and sanity (Awedoba, 2009). This confirms Yakubu, (2005) assertion that CPP's LI 59 of 1960 reduced tensions among claimers to the Ya-Na skin. Similarly, he notes that the NRC made the Yendi Skin Decree 1974, NRDC 299 in November 1974 to consolidate the power of the new king, Naa Mahamadu Abudulai IV. Yakubu also observes that more and more chieftaincy disputes are been sent to the courts. Nonetheless he is of the view that the litigants and their community's lack of understanding of the legal principles accounts for unwillingness to accept court rulings. This he attributes to the perceived foreign principles that apply at the law courts;

unfamiliarity of customary laws of the various communities by court officials; lack of interest or bias on the part of some court officials; the frequent and long adjournments; fear and anxiety on the part of illiterate witnesses among others (Awedoba, 2009). This confirms emic theorists point of view that neglecting cultural categories of a people presents difficulty in resolving cultural based conflicts. Despite the setbacks mentioned above, Awedoba contends that the courts still retain a role in the management of chieftaincy disputes in Ghana.

Another legal means of conflict resolution in Ghana are committees and commissions of inquiries set up by government to take evidence and make recommendations for resolving a conflict. Awedoba argues that these committees/commissions are post-dated in the sense that it is after the conflict has taken place and the damage has been caused that they are set up to do a post-mortem. They rarely find the solutions to the problem; some never come out with any report and if they do their report is never made public (Awedoba, 2009). It must be added that sometimes too the government chooses which recommendation(s) to accept or implement. In the case of the Dagbon conflict, a number of committees and commissions have been set up since independence with the most recent been the Wuaku commission. The findings of these committees have not resolved the conflict.

Awedoba discusses other conflict resolution mechanisms in Ghana such as associations, the role of prominent personalities and formal (jogging) relationships, among others. These mechanisms have been applied to conflicts in the North, including the Dagbon conflict, but there are a number of conflicts still pending in the area and in Ghana as a whole. In the particular instance of the Dagbon chieftaincy conflict, there seem to be no end in sight. The gap in his work, which this study seeks to fill, is whether it is the case that the committees do not do their work well or that the parties do not want to end the conflict or the authorities are

failing to do what is right? Nonetheless, his work becomes very useful to this present study as it offers a very good source of academic material and reference.

2.7 Conclusion

This chapter has discussed literature on conflict and conflict resolution in Ghana. It has been argued that though Ghana, unlike her peers on the African continent, has to a large extent, been spared violent conflict at the national level. She has nonetheless, experienced a lot of communal conflicts in various parts of the country since independence. The underlying causes of these conflicts are mostly chieftaincy and land disputes; political and religious fanaticism; and ethnocentrism.

It has been argued that although Ghana as a whole is disposed to communal conflicts, the northern part of the country has been the battleground for most of these conflicts. Finding a lasting solution to the conflicts through security interventions, the legal system and state-traditional institutions has proven largely futile. Certainly, the information gathered from this chapter provides an invaluable source of data to this study.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

3.0 Introduction

This chapter deals with the methodology underlying this study is conceptualized. It focuses on explanation of research methods and procedures used in the data collection. This study sought to identify and analyse factors that account for the emergence and escalation of chieftaincy conflicts in Ghana, as well as the conflict resolution mechanisms adopted towards resolving them; using the Dagbon conflict as case study. The chapter explains the general research method that underlies the study. Steps followed in processing the data collected and the analysis is also presented. Finally, the chapter shares experiences and lessons learnt from the field.

3.1.0 Research Method

Research methods are of importance in a research process. They describe the various steps to be adopted in solving a research problem, such as the manner in which the problem is formulated; the definition of terms; the choice of subject for investigation; the validation of data gathering tool; the collection, analysis and interpretation of data and the processes of inference and generalisation (Lokesh, 2009). Harwell (2011) characterises a research methodology as qualitative, quantitative, or as involving both qualitative and quantitative methods, in which case it is typically referred to as mixed method. This study relied primarily on qualitative method of analysis but due to the inherent weakness of this method, I also drew on the quantitative method thereby using what has become known as the mixed method.

3.1.1 *Qualitative Research Method*

Qualitative research has travelled through many movements or paradigms (eg. Foundationalism, Positivism, Post-Foundationalism, Post-Positivism, Postmodernism etc) and means different things for each of these movements (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000). Denzin and Lincoln however define qualitative research as:

a situated activity that locates the observer in the world. It consists of a set of interpretive, material practices that makes the world visible. These practices ... turn the world into a series of representations including field notes, interviews, conversations, photographs, recordings and memos to the self. At this level, qualitative research involves an interpretive, naturalistic approach to the world. This means that qualitative researchers study things in their natural settings, attempting to make sense of, or to interpret, phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them.

Strauss & Corbin (1998) on their part point out that the term Qualitative Research is confusing because it can mean different thing to different people. They note: “By the term ‘qualitative research’ we mean any type of research that produces findings not arrived at by statistical procedures or other means of quantification.” They insist that even though some researchers quantify data collected through techniques such as interviews, observations and the like, that are normally associated with qualitative method, qualitative analysis refers not to quantifying of qualitative data but rather to a non mathematical process of interpretation, carried out for the purpose of discovering concepts and relationship in raw data and then organising these into a theoretical explanatory scheme.

Qualitative research seeks to understand a given research problem or topic from the perspectives of the local population it involves. Qualitative research is especially effective in

obtaining culturally specific information about the values, opinions, behaviours, and social contexts of particular populations. In addition, with qualitative methods, the relationship between the researcher and the participant (respondent) is often less formal than in quantitative research. Participants have the opportunity to respond more elaborately and in greater detail than is typically the case with quantitative methods. Researchers in turn, have the opportunity to respond immediately to what participants say by tailoring subsequent questions to information the participant has provided (Mack & et al, 2005). Qualitative approach can also be used to obtain the intricate details about phenomena such as feelings, thought processes, and emotions that are difficult to extract or learn about through more conventional methods (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). This makes it more appropriate to be used in a study such as the Dagbon conflict which involves competition, sentiment, and opinion.

The choice of qualitative method for this study was informed by the limited time at my disposal and inadequate financial resources available to collect the data. Besides, the qualitative method has the ability to provide complex textual descriptions of how people experience a given research issue. It provides information about the ‘human’ side of an issue – that is, the often contradictory behaviours, beliefs, opinions, emotions and relationships of individuals. Qualitative methods are also effective in identifying intangible factors, such as social norms, socioeconomic status, gender roles, ethnicity and religion, whose role in the research issue may not be readily apparent (Mack & et, 2005).

The Dagbon conflict has been a long standing one which appears to have defied efforts to resolve it. To understand its causes, protracted nature and how it can be resolved, it is important to subject it to qualitative method, which is concerned with finding answers to questions which begin with: ‘why’, ‘how’ or ‘in what way’; rather than quantitative method which is more concerned with questions about: ‘how much’, ‘how many’, ‘how often’ or ‘to

what extent'. In addition, the issues involved in the conflict, the assessment of the conflict resolution mechanisms put in place and how the conflict could be resolved require targeting specific groups and experts. This kind of sample can mostly be obtained through purposive sampling technique that qualitative methods provide.

However, Lokesh (2009) criticises the purposive sampling as a limitation of the qualitative research method. He argues that the findings of qualitative research lack generalisation because of the nature and size of samples used for data collection. To him the samples are small in size and mostly purposive. Pure subjectivity in the selection of such samples undermines their credibility. In order to address the subjectivity problem associated with qualitative research, I drew on some aspects of quantitative research.

3.1.2 *Quantitative Research Methods*

Quantitative research is the numerical representation and manipulation of observations for the purpose of describing and explaining the phenomena that those observations reflect (Wikipedia Encyclopedia, 2013). Creswell (1994) defines quantitative research as a type of research that is 'explaining phenomena by collecting numerical data that are analyzed using mathematically based methods (in particular statistics)'.

Quantitative research relies primarily on the collection of quantitative data. Quantitative research methods attempt to maximize objectivity, explicability, and generalizability of findings, and are typically interested in prediction. Integral to this approach is the expectation that a researcher will set aside his or her experiences, perceptions, and biases to ensure objectivity in the conduct of the study and the conclusions that are drawn. Key features of many quantitative studies are the use of instruments such as tests or surveys to collect data, and reliance on probability theory to test statistical hypotheses that correspond to research

questions of interest. Quantitative methods are frequently described as deductive in nature, in the sense that inferences from tests of statistical hypotheses lead to general inferences about characteristics of a population (Harwell M. R., 2011).

The advantage of quantitative research over qualitative research is in their output. First of all, quantitative research mostly uses statistical methods in drawing comparison between concepts, ideas, products, packages, etc. This makes the results statistically reliable. Secondly the result of quantitative research can be generalised. The findings can be projected to the whole population. Thirdly, the use of multivariate methods and analysis is helpful in measuring and controlling the variable or variables which intervene between the independent and dependent variables (Koul, 2009).

Despite the above advantages of the quantitative research, there are also many disadvantages. Koul enumerates some of these shortcomings. Quantitative research uses quantitative data which are close-ended and hence do not provide depth and details. Furthermore, advance formulation of specific hypotheses is an important requirement of quantitative research. In certain research contexts, especially in the field of education, it is not always possible to formulate specific hypothetical generalisation.

In addition, Koul argues that the occurrence of an event is both quantitative and qualitative. Hence, its measurement on the basis of selective observation and selective recording of information may involve research 'biases'. Moreover, the primary disadvantage of quantitative research is that issues are only measured if they are known prior to the beginning of the study especially in the survey research. Finally, quantitative research is neither appropriate nor cost effective for studying why people act or think as they do. In such cases it is difficult to quantify the action or thinking of people. The selection and use of large samples

for drawing reliable statistics also involve lot of efforts in terms of money, time and manpower. Due to the challenges associated with the qualitative and quantitative methods, the mix method is most appropriate method for this study.

3.1.3 *Mixed Research Methods*

Mixed research is a general type of research (it's one of the three paradigms) in which quantitative and qualitative methods, techniques, or other paradigm characteristics are mixed in one overall study. The two major types of mixed research distinguished by Harwell (2011) are mixed method and mixed model research.

The mixed method research, in the words of Harwell (2011), is a research in which the researcher uses the qualitative research paradigm for one phase of a research study and the quantitative research paradigm for another phase of the study. For example, a researcher might conduct an experiment (quantitative) and after the experiment conduct an interview study with the participants (qualitative) to see how they viewed the experiment and to see if they agreed with the results. Mixed method research is like conducting two mini-studies within one overall research study.

Mixed model research according to Harwell (2011) is a research in which the researcher mixes both qualitative and quantitative research approaches within a stage of the study or across two of the stages of the research process. For example, a researcher might conduct a survey and use a questionnaire that is composed of multiple closed-ended or quantitative type items as well as several open-ended or qualitative type items. In another example, a researcher might collect qualitative data and then try to quantify the data. This study use both approaches of the mixed research as described above.

3.2. Data collection

Even if it were possible, it is not necessary to collect data from everyone in a community in order to get valid findings. In qualitative research, only a sample (that is, a subset) of a population is selected for any given study. This section discusses the sampling framework within which the data was collected.

Data for this study was obtained from both primary and secondary sources. For the primary source respondents were purposively selected and interviewed. They included members of both Abudu and Andani gates as well as identifiable individuals and organisations involved in bringing peace to Dagbon. A total of twenty-six (26) respondents out of the initial target of twenty-nine (29) were interviewed in Tamale and Yendi using semi-structured interview guide. The choice of these communities was informed by the fact that Tamale is the regional capital and cosmopolitan. Its population would obviously reflect a representation of different communities and segments of the Dagbon people as well as non-Dagbonbas in the region. Yandi on its part is the seat of Dagbon and the scene of the conflict. The inhabitants of the two towns were eye witnesses, combatants and victims of the conflict.

The respondents were made up of chiefs, opinion leaders and commoners from both the Abudu and Andani gates; representatives of civil organisation societies, the Northern Regional Coordinating Council, Yendi Municipal Assembly, the Yendi Divisional Command of the Ghana Police Service, and non-Dagombas residents of the two communities. Unpublished materials such as documentary, legislative and executive instruments, reports and government white papers on commissions of inquiry into the conflict, seminal and workshop presentations on the Dagbon conflict were also used.

The use of interviews as a qualitative research technique was necessitated by the need to elicit detailed response from the respondents about their perception of the causes of the conflict, their assessment of the conflict resolution mechanisms adopted; and their expectations for resolving of the conflict. A flexible semi-structured interview guide would better help capture these perceptions, emotional feelings and expectations than a structured questionnaire. Furthermore, the semi-structured interview guide preferable instead of structured questionnaire because not all the respondents were literates. Table 3.1 shows the breakdown of respondents.

Table 3.1: Interviews

Gate	Status of respondent	Are you a Dagomba?		Total
		Yes	No	
Abudu	Chief	2		2
	Opinion Leader	2		2
	Commoner	3		3
	Total	7		7
Andani	Chief	2		2
	Opinion Leader	2		2
	Commoner	3		3
	Total	7		7
Both	C.S.O Rep.	1		1
	NRCC	1		1
	YMA	1		1
	Total	3		3
None	Chief	1	0	1
	Opinion Leader	1	1	2
	Commoner	1	1	2
	Security Officer	0	2	2
	C.S.O. Rep.	1	1	2
	Total	4	5	9
Grand Total		21	5	26

Source: Author

Secondary data for the study was collected from such secondary sources as books, journals articles, and news paper publications on Dagbon and the Dagbon conflict, conflict in general, ethnic conflicts, conflicts in Northern Ghana, and conflict resolution mechanisms in Ghana. Electronic sources such as Google Scholar, JSTOR, Sage publications and other website

materials were exploited. These materials were gathered during library research from the Balm library as well as the libraries of the Political Science Department and the Institute of African Studies all of the University of Ghana.

3.3 Data Analysis

Data collected from the primary and secondary source were subjected to critical contextual analysis and scrutiny. Qualitative data in the form of field notes through interviews were coded and analyzed using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) software. The final output was presented in the form of texts and direct quotes from key respondents. The application of this method of analysis in the study was based on the fact that, the original views of respondents would be demonstrated without any biased interferences with the view of the researcher. Besides, this technique gives a complete and detailed description of phenomena under study and also allows for fine distinctions to be drawn. In addition, ambiguities which are inherent in human behaviour were recognised and addressed in the analysis of the qualitative data.

To help focus the interviews in terms of reflecting the main objectives of this study and simplify the analysis of the qualitative data, the interviews were structured according to themes. These themes reflected the overall aim – why the conflict remains unresolved – and objectives in this study: causes of the conflict; identification and assessment of the conflict resolution mechanisms adopted; examine why the conflict remains unresolved despite the various efforts made to resolve it; and the way forward. Each themed group of questions was then compared and contrasted with respondents' answers. However, respondents' answers to different questions were also cross-referenced in order to build up a fuller picture of what the data is telling us.

Conclusion

This chapter basically explained the methodological framework and methods that underpins the study. The primary data were mainly generated by in-depth interviews with the help of a well-designed semi-structured interview guide as a tool. The respondents were selected through purposive sampling techniques. In-depth interviews were carried out with twenty-six informants made up of opinion leaders, chiefs and commoners of both Abudu and Andani gates; as well as opinion leaders, security officers, Civil Society Organisations, The Northern Regional Coordinating Council and The Yendi Municipal Assembly. Books, journals articles, and news paper publications on the Dagbon conflict constitute the source of secondary data.

CHAPTER FOUR

ANALYSES OF THE DAGBON CONFLICT AND THE CONFLICT RESOLUTION MECHANISMS

4.0 Introduction

This chapter aims at identifying and analysing the causes and escalation of the conflict between the Abudu and Andani Gates of Dagbon; the dynamics of the conflict resolution mechanisms adopted towards resolving the conflict and why the conflict remains intractable. The analysis was based on information gathered from the literature reviewed and in-depth interviews conducted. With the help of the theoretical framework presented in Chapter One, an attempt is made to develop some theoretical arguments on the causes of the antipathy between the two royal families as well as factors militating against its resolution. The entire analysis and discussions are guided by the objectives being addressed by as recalled as follows:

- investigate the causes of the conflict
- assess the various conflict resolution mechanisms adopted to bring the conflict to an end
- examine why the conflict remains unresolved despite the various efforts made to resolve it
- Make recommendations for resolving the conflict.

4.1 Emergence and Escalation of the Conflict

In conflict analysis, conflict theorists point out that there are objective reasons that usually serve as a motivation for two or more groups to get locked up in contention. As discussed earlier in Chapter One, social scientists have cited the relative deprivation theory as a potential cause of social movement and deviance leading to political violence such as rioting,

terrorism and civil wars. In this study, the researcher exploited the extent to which the feeling of deprivation led to the conflict in Dagbon.

Result from the data collected through the interviews indicates eighteen (18), out of the twenty-six (26), representing sixty-nine percent (69%) of the respondents alluded to chieftaincy as the main cause of the conflict. But if chieftaincy in itself is a cause of conflict then every chiefdom would have been in conflict. The issue of chieftaincy as the cause of the conflict in Dagbon could thus be understood in the context of relative deprivation theory. The important question to ask is “how did relative deprivation manifest in the Dagbon conflict?” The answer to this question can be seen in the succession to Yani (Ya-Na skin).

4.1.1 *Interruption of Succession to Yani*

From the literature and the interviews, succession to the Ya-Na skin undoubtedly rotated between the progenies of two sons of Naa Yakubu I – Abudulai and Andani – from 1849 until 1954 when the rotation system was interrupted by the installation of Gbonlana (Regent) Abudulai, a member of Abudu family, to succeed his father, Ya-Na Mahama III. The Andani Royal Family, naturally felt deprived of their rightful entitlement to ascend to the skin, agitated culminating in the CPP government promulgating what became known as the Legislative Instrument 59 (LI 59). This LI allowed Ya-Na Abudulai III to rule and also made provision for the Andani Family to occupy the throne in two successions after the demise of Naa Abudulai III (Ahorsu & Gebe, 2011).

Following the death of Naa Abudulai III, the Mion Lana Andani was enskinned as Ya-Na Andani III. It appeared that the rotational succession system had been upheld and that the crisis was finally resolved. However, while under LI 59 he would have been succeeded by an Andani, the NLC/PP government set aside the LI 59 upon the recommendations of the Mate-Kole Committee that was constituted following a petition from the Abudu family. This was

followed by the enskinment of a member of the Abudu gate, Mahamadu Abudulai, as Ya-Na Mahamadu Abudulai IV (Yakubu, 2005).

Since then, ascension to Yani has been characterised by agitations and counter agitations; promulgation and reversal of Legislative/ Executive Instruments and Decrees; commissioning of committees and commissions of inquiry as well as upholding and suspension of their reports; court rulings and reversal of same; and enskinment and disenskinment of Ya-Nas upon protest from either of the royal families until 2002 when the then Ya-Na, Naa Yakubu Andani II was assassinated together with some forty (40) of his elders in an exchange of gun fire that lasted for three consecutive days. Within the content of Relative Deprivation Theory, it could be argued that the conflict erupted when one faction felt deprived of the skin. This view was expressed by eleven (11) or forty-two percent (42%) as cheating or greed on the part of their opponents.

4.1.2 *Politicisation of the conflict*

Politicians and their activities also came up, from both the secondary and the primary data, as responsible for the conflict. On a scale of measure, the element of politics in the conflict is as almost significant as that of chieftaincy. When asked what was fuelling/sustaining the conflict, eighteen (18), being sixty-one percent (69%), of the respondents blamed politicisation of the issue as number one factor. As pointed out by a respondent, “the conflict became politicised when the Abudus, led by B.A. Yakubu, aligned themselves with the Progress Party (PP) forcing the Andanis to align themselves with the National Alliance of Liberals (NAL)”. Though this respondent may not be accurate in terms of the exact time of the beginning of politicisation of the Dagbon chieftaincy and the personalities involved, it shows his awareness, and that of many others, of political influence in the conflict.

In another development, the Asantehene, Otumfuo Osei Tutu II, blamed the two biggest political parties — NDC and NPP — for the difficulty in resolving the Dagbon crisis. He said while the Committee of Eminent Chiefs, which he chaired, spent time and energy working to help bring peace to Dagbon, politicians from the two parties continuously stoked the fires for political gains (Asare-Boadu, 2011).

To ascertain the level of political influence in the conflict, the researcher asked “How did partisan politics, in the Forth Republic, contribute to the escalation of the conflict in 2002?” Majority of the informants, thirty-five percent (35%), said the two main political parties (NDC and NPP) having taken side in the Dagbon chieftaincy crisis, support and incite one gate against the other and shield perpetrators of crime in their camps. This was followed by thirty-one percent (31%) who were categorical in blaming the NPP. To them, NPP fuelled the conflict by promising the Abudus that they would help them perform the funeral of the late Naa Mahamadu IV. The NPP’s ascension to power thus emboldened the Abudus who thought they could get the support of the government to further their cause.

Other instances of political influence in the conflict were that the main political parties manipulate the people and ride on their support to power. Apart from the case of the NPP cited above, the NDC in the 2004 and 2008 electioneering campaigns promised to find and punish the killers of Naa Yakubu II should they (NDC) win power (Respondent 2013). This heightens the expectation of the people to have their side in the chieftaincy dispute favoured. It has also been alleged that politicians have taken over tradition and custom of the people and are dictating to them how traditional and customary issues should be handled (Respondent, 2013). Furthermore the main opposition party campaigned against incumbent governments along chieftaincy line and promise their allies of helping them to ascend to the throne should they (opposition political parties) come to power. Members of the two main

political parties consequently use their power to sideline opponents from the other side of the chieftaincy divide.

4.1.3 *Evil Work for Idle Hands*

It is said that “the devil finds work for the idle hands.” The protracted Dagbon conflict and other persistent conflicts in the North could be understood against the backdrop of the socio-economic development of the area. The three northern regions are the least developed of the regions in Ghana. For instance, in a Regional Analysis of Poverty Incidence survey conducted in Ghana in 2005/2006, the three regions of the North recorded the highest incidence of poverty (GSS, April 2007). This explains the volatility of the North in terms of conflict. Poverty received the third highest endorsement (23%) as a cause and a sustaining element of the Dagbon conflict.

Among the socio-economic reasons given was that most of the youth were unemployed with its associated poverty. Economic and social deprivation and poverty engender despondency and desperation and invariably call for coping and survival strategies of various kinds, including those that are questionable. Thus for a pittance, youth and others in the not too favourable circumstances are induced to break custom and law rather than listen to reason. Consequently, they indulge in behaviour risky to themselves and their neighbours because with very limited prospects, there is not much to live for anyway. The results are death, injury, poisoned social relations and increased poverty; or perceived spiritual mishaps (Awedoba, 2009).

4.2 Conflict Resolution Mechanisms and Their Implementation

For the analysis of the conflict resolution mechanisms and how they have been implemented, the researcher, first of all, attempted to understand the traditional conflict resolution mechanisms in Dagbon. As put forward by emic and etic theorists, culture is relevant to

conflict resolution. Emic approach in particular emphasises the use of relevant native terms and institutions. To this end, the researcher probed the extent to which traditional conflict resolution mechanisms were applied in the Dagbon conflict. He then examined the various conflict resolution mechanisms employed in a bid to resolve the conflict, focusing on their successes and failures.

4.2.1 *Traditional Conflict Resolution Mechanisms in Dagbon*

In November 1999 Lanek presented a paper on indigenous approaches of conflict resolution and reconciliation to the All-Africa Conference on African Principles of Conflict Resolution and Reconciliation in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. He entitled the paper: “Mato Oput⁷, the drinking of the Bitter Herb”. He asserted that the Acholi, a Luo speaking tribe of northern Uganda, for generations had used Mato Oput as a means of reconciliation within the context of their tradition. The Acholi believed in leadership through consensus, allowing everyone in their localised clans to have a voice while the traditional head of each clan ruled by consent. A major function of the traditional chiefs was to act as arbitrators and reconcilers when disputes occur in order to restore peace and maintain harmonious relations between families and clans. The reconciliation process he described was called the “Mato Oput” because it ends in a significant ceremony of “Mato Oput”, the traditional drinking of a bitter herb of the Oput tree. The process involves: the guilty acknowledging responsibility, the guilty repenting, the guilty asking for forgiveness, the guilty paying compensation and the guilty being reconciled with the victim’s family through sharing of the bitter drink - Mato Oput. This symbolised the psychological bitterness that prevailed in the minds of the parties in conflict situation. The Mato Oput process covers offences across the board (Lanek, 1999).

⁷ Mato Oput - an Acholi vernacular meaning drinking the herb of the Oput tree.

This traditional approach to conflict resolution among the Acholi is similar to the traditional approach of resolving conflict in Dagbon. When asked what the conflict resolution mechanisms are in Dagbon tradition, twenty-two (22), representing (85%) of interviewees mentioned mediation and arbitration by the chiefs and their elders as well as religious leaders. Every community has a chief who settles minor disputes between citizens. The highest level of conflict resolution, however, is the Ya-Na's palace. A principle that applied was the notion that the 'elder is never wrong'. In line with this principle, the younger party in a dispute must apologise. Even between communities, the community whose chief is lower in rank must apologise even if they were provoked. The decisions of the chiefs were binding and may include imposition of light to severe sanctions, including banishment, on offenders.

In the case of disputes arising from chieftaincy, especially over the Yani (Ya-Na's skin), Kuga-Naa, the supreme father of both the Abudu and Andani gates, mediates between the factions. His decision or plea to the Ya-Na or his regent cannot be ignored. In extreme cases, the issue was referred to Nayiri⁸, the king of Mampurugu, who mediates and resolve the dispute. For example in the 17th century, following the death of Naa Gungobli, the Nayiri mediated a succession dispute among nine contestants for the skins of Yani. This was reaffirmed by the British colonial government in 1930. In addition, candidates for the Ya-Na skin were selected by the traditional selection committee through soothsaying and divination. (Yakubu, 2005) (Ahorsu & Gebe, 2011) (Wikipedia, 2013).. "This practice helped to avoid dispute which might lead to violent conflict and bloodshed such as the one we saw in 2002" (Respondent, 2013).

There is however tension between the tradition approach to conflict resolution and modern Western approaches. Some of the traditional mechanisms like banishment, consultation of

⁸ Nayiri is the king of Mampurugu. The Mamprusis, and the Dagombas consider each other as brothers because they share the same ancestry in Naa Gbewaah, the common ancestor of the Mole-Dagbani group.

oracles, sacrificing to the gods have no place in constitutions and modern practices and are frowned upon or even prohibited by national constitutions as well as international treaties and conventions. Moreover, whereas traditional conflict resolution mechanisms tend to be pacifist, Western approaches, more often than not, are adversarial.

So, as to whether this traditional approach has been applied in the current conflict 57.7% said it had not while 30.8% claimed it had been used and 11.5% said they did not know. A valid percentage of fifty percent (50%) of those who felt it had been employed pointed out to the mediation by the Committee of Eminent Chiefs. Thirty-seven point five (37.5%) indicated the intervention of religious bodies while twelve point five percent (12.5%) said it was through durbars and fora.

Out of those who thought that the Dagbon customary approach to conflict resolution had not been applied, thirty-three percent (33%) believed that it was because the Abudus had refused to approach the Kuga-Na, admit their guilt and apologise through him. When asked why they thought the Abudus refused to avail themselves to this opportunity, most of them suspected the Abudus to be embittered by the then Kuga's refusal to allow them to bury Naa Mahamadu Abudulai IV in the Gbewaa Palace. They (Abudus) also accused the Kuga-Na, of wanting to ignore and obliterate the legacy and memory of the former Ya-Na Mahamadu Abudulai IV by endorsing the decision of the Andanis to install the regent of Naa Yakubu Andani II in contravention to the roadmap (Abudu-Royal-Family, 2008). More than a quarter of the respondents (26.7%) believed that the people are divided along party lines and would not accept the resolution of a chief who belongs to another party. A fifth (20%) felt that the approach could not be applied because of the intransigence of the people another twenty percent (20 %) alleged that the chiefs and religious leaders are themselves part of the conflict and could have been mediators.

4.2.2 *Managing the Conflict before the 2002 Violence*

The focus of this section was essentially to identify the conflict resolution mechanisms adopted to resolve the dispute before the outbreak of violence in 2002. For that purpose, the researcher sought to discover how the conflict was managed before the violence erupted in 2002. To this question, forty-two percent (42%) of the respondents said it was managed through the legal system where the Abudu gate took the case to the Appeals Court⁹. After the court ruling, the Andani gate, not satisfied with the ruling, appealed the decision of the Appeals Court's verdict at the Supreme Court.

Twenty-six percent (26%) stated that commissions/committees of inquiry were set up by various regimes and their reports were implemented by the governments that constituted them up. However, the commissions/committees reports and their implementation were mostly contested by one or the other faction. Twenty-three percent (23%) stated that the security agents, especially the military and the police were used to quell any threat to the peace and security of the area. As was the case in 1968 when there was enough evidence of an impending confusion in the run up to the funeral of Naa Abbulai III, following the decision of the two gates to install the next Ya-Na, the Yendi Security Committee put armed security at all the vantage points. The presence of the security thwarted attempts by the two sides to send their candidates into the Katindoo¹⁰ (Yakubu, 2005).

The rest, eight percent (8%) of the interviewee claimed the relatively long period of the PNDC/NDC regimes help stabilised the situation as they fostered unity among members of the two gates through their policy of neutrality and non-interference. This last assertion seems

⁹ See section 2.4.3 'From Independence to 1993'

¹⁰ A sacred room in the Gbewa Palace where the customary rites are performed for the installation of a Ya-Na. It also called Katini.

to confirm what Yakubu said: “This obvious break in the Abudu and Andani fronts by the NDC helped to smother the chieftaincy crisis for a while. The NDC therefore had no party position on the Dagbon chieftaincy and this attitude effectively contained the crisis during the first two terms of their rule in the Fourth Republic” (Yakubu, 2005). This assertion puts the NDC in a better position to resolve the conflict but unfortunately the party seemed to have taken side when in the 2004 and 2008 electioneering campaign, it made a manifesto pledge that should the party come to power, it would bring the perpetrators of the Ya-Na’s murder to book. The party thus won the majority of Dagbon votes, including the Yendi seat which had remained a safe seat for the NPP, and the Andanis wasted no time in reminding the government of their promise. When the NDC government decided to open the matter, it hit the rocks because its actions were perceived to be political witch-hunt.

On this same variable, twenty-three (23) being eighty-nine percent (89%) of the interviewees claimed they were aware of at least one or all of the Legislative Instruments (LIs), Decrees and court rulings on the conflict. A follow up question was asked as to which of the various LIs, Decrees or court rulings could have resolved the conflict, eleven (11) respondents, representing forty-two percent (42%) thought the Supreme Court ruling of 1986 was a panacea to the conflict. Thirty-one percent (31%) that is (8) respondents felt the LI 59 of 1960 provided the best opportunity for ending the conflict at the earliest stage and averting all the dilemmas that the people of Dagbon have had to endure if the factions had stuck to it. For the rest, twelve percent (12%) and four percent (4%) cited the NRC 299 of 1974 and NLCD 296 of 1968 respectively as the frameworks which should have resolve the conflict. Unfortunately, these measures could not help resolve the dispute and in March 2002, violent clashes erupted resulting in the regicide of the overlord, Ya-Na Yakubu Andani II and forty others.

4.2.3 *Measures Adopted to Resolve the Conflict Since 2002*

Since the outbreak of the 2002 violent conflict in Dagbon, a number of measures have been initiated in a bid to resolve the conflict. This section discussed the major interventions and their impact on the peace process.

4.2.3.1 *Military/Police Intervention*

The police and the military have been used in conflict management and resolution efforts over the years in Ghana. They are deployed to protect lives and property whenever conflicts explode or threaten to explode over entrenched positions or disputes over valuable but scarce resources. Following the exchange of gunfire in Yendi that lasted for three days (25th to 27th March 2002) resulting in the death of Ya-Na Yakubu Andani II, a military/police contingent was deployed to re-enforce the existing detachment on the grounds. Their duty as usual was to protect life and property as well as to monitor and enforce the state of emergency that was imposed on Yendi, Tamale and their catchment areas. Out of the number interviewed, fifteen percent (15%) believed that their presence did bring an end to the initial violence but could not resolve the fundamental issues in the conflict.

This confirms Reimann's concept of conflict settlement where the aim is to put an end to direct violence, without necessarily addressing the underlying conflict causes. Although violent fighting is suppressed, the underlying causes of the violence remain largely unaddressed.

4.2.3.2 *Wuaku Commission of Inquiry*

Following the events of 25th to 27th March 2002 in which the Ya-Na and forty others lost their lives, both the Abudus and Andanis as well as other individuals, institutions and groups – including opposition political parties – called on the government to institute an impartial

and independent commission to investigate the conflict. His Excellency President John Agyekum Kufuor, on 25th April, 2002, by Constitutional Instrument, 2002 (C.I.36), appointed a three member Commission of Inquiry, chaired by Justice I.N.K. Wuaku, to investigate the Yendi disturbances. Other members of the commission were Professor Kwesi Yanka and Mrs. Florence Brew, both educationists (Wuaku-Commission, 2002).

The commission was to make a full, faithful and impartial inquiry into the circumstances of and establish the facts leading to the events and the resultant deaths and injuries in Yendi between 25th and 27th March 2002. It was also to identify those responsible for the event and resultant deaths and injuries and recommend appropriate sanctions or actions against any person found to have caused, been responsible for or been involved in the violence and resultant deaths and injuries. Furthermore, the commission was to inquire into any matter which the commission considered incidental or reasonably related to the events and resultant deaths and injuries. Finally it was expected to submit within one month, its report to the president giving reasons for its findings and recommendation. (Wuaku-Commission, 2002)

After an initial familiarisation tour to the scene of events and the burial grounds at Yendi, the Commission sat in Sunyani, where it took evidence from witnesses such as members and representatives of Abudu and Andani gates, the police, military, public officials and institutions. The commission started its sitting on 29th May 2002 and presented its report to the president on 6th November 2002. During this period, both the Abudu and Andani families boycotted the proceedings at one point or the other for various reasons that are discussed under the section, 'success or failure of the conflict resolution mechanisms'. Nonetheless, the commission did its work and submitted a report on its findings and recommendations to the government.

On its first stated term of reference, that is, to establish the facts leading to the events, the commission identified four basic factors as the causes of the violence in Yendi from the 25th to 27th of March 2002. These were the non-performance of the funeral rites of the late deposed Ya-Na Mahamadu Abudulai IV; the circumstances surrounding the celebration of the Eid-ul-Adha festival; the lifting of the ban on the Bugum/curfew imposed on Yendi and an attack on Ziblim, an Andani youth, by youths from the Abudu gate.

The Commission also “noted with regret, the relative indifference and inaction of key state and government agents and functionaries during the crisis”. The Commission observed, with particular reference, that the Interior Minister, Alhaji Malik Yakubu Alhassan, Regional Minister, Prince Imoru Andani, and his Deputy, Issah Ketekewu were not at post or claimed they were indisposed during the climax of the conflict. The security agencies (the police and the military) equally proved inefficient partly due to lack of personnel or logistical support and professional negligence. Even though the Ya-Na made frantic requests for security intervention, they were not promptly honoured. What was more, the Ghana Telecom lines which were down from the onset of the crisis on the 25th and 26th March was mysteriously restored on the 27th after the carnage had end. Another observation of the commission was that declaration of state of emergency, instead of the restoration of the dawn to dusk curfew would have contained the situation.

Based on the findings of the Commission and in reference to its second mandate, certain recommendations were made. A number of individuals, who in the opinion of the commission committed various crimes, were recommended to be charged with a variety of offences under the criminal code of Ghana. The charges included murder, conspiracy to murder, attempted murder, causing unlawful damage, assault, arson, illegal possession of firearms and unlawful military training.

It however exonerated the then Minister for the Interior, Hon. Alhaji Malik Yakubu Alhassan, the then National Security Advisor, Lt.-Gen. Joshua Mahamadu Hamidu, Major (Rtd.) Sulemana Abubakar and Alhaji Mohammed Aminu Amadu and the Bolin Lana, Mahamadu Abudulai, the head of the Abudus in Yendi from any complicity in the disturbances and killing of the Ya-Na. The Regional Minister, Prince Imoru Andani, on the other hand was to be charged with criminal negligence (Wuaku-Commission, 2002).

Government, in a White Paper issued, indicated its acceptance of the general findings and recommendations of the Commission and many of its specific findings and recommendations. The following are excerpt from the government white paper. It stated that the principal recommendation that Yidana Sugri and Iddrisu Gyamfo, who were seen on 27th March holding severed parts of the late Ya-Na, Yakubu Andani II, soon after his killing and “who should be presumed to have killed the Ya-Na,” be prosecuted for murder had already been acted upon. It however directed the police to conduct further investigation into the other specific recommendation on conspiracy to murder.

Government also accepted the Commission’s finding that there is no evidence implicating any of the senior members of Government who were wildly accused of complicity in these unhappy events. Ironically it disagreed with the Commission’s recommendation that the former Regional Minister, Prince Imoru Andani, who lifted the curfew and the ban on the celebration of the Bugum Festival, and thus set the scene for the carnage, should be charged with “criminal negligence” on the grounds that there was no evidence that his conduct was motivated by ill-will or any sinister design. In addition, the offence of “criminal negligence” is unknown to our laws. Consequently, the commission’s report could not resolve the conflict but rather generated mistrust (Government White Paper, 2002).

The findings and recommendations of the commission as well as the government's position in the white paper were confirmed during the interviews. This formed the basis of heightened suspicion of many, especially the Andani royal family and their sympathisers, that the then NPP administration had hands in the conflict.

4.2.3.3 *Third Party Mediation by the Committee of Eminent Chiefs*

The chieftaincy institution plays an important role in adjudication and conflict resolution in Ghana. Indeed, before the advent of colonialism in Africa, the chief was the political, social, economic, legal and military head of the traditional state. As political head, he was responsible for the maintenance of good order in his state. He was the guardian of the fundamental values of his people and mediated between them and the spiritual forces. He administered tributes, court fines, market tolls, and other revenues. He was also the final arbiter in the administration of justice (Boafo-Arthur, 2003). Even though the emergence of western political systems had eroded the powers of the chief, the institution is still held high above politics in Ghana. Accordingly, the 1992 constitution devotes a whole chapter to chieftaincy and recognises its role in conflict resolution. The constitution goes further to create National and Regional Houses of Chiefs and other substructures for this purpose.

In recognition of the role of the chiefs in handling traditional matters, and what could be considered as emic and etic approaches, the government appointed a committee of three eminent chiefs made up of the Asantehene, Otumfuo Osei Tutu II; the Yagbonwura, Bawa Doshie and the Nayiri, Mahami Abdulai Naa Bohagu in 2003 to look into the traditional issues relating to the conflict and to help find customary and traditional solutions to them in order to resolve the conflict.

In about three years of deliberations and negotiations, representatives of the two feuding gates in Dagbon signed a “Roadmap to Peace” on 30th March, 2006 at the Manhyia Palace in Kumasi. The “Roadmap to Peace” spelt out five major benchmarks in the conflict resolution and peace building process. These comprised the burial of the late Ya-Na Yakubu Andani II; the installation of the regent of the late king; the performance of the funeral of the deposed Ya-Na, Mahamadu Abudulai IV; the performance of the funeral of Ya Na Yakubu Andani II; and finally, the selection and enskinment of a new Ya-Na for Dagbon (Graphic, 2007), (Alhassan, 2007).

Taking cognisance of the fact that there was a supposed regent for Na Mahamadu Abudulai IV, the roadmap stated “that since Naa Yakubu Andani II died in office his regent would take precedence and that Dagbon custom did not contemplate a situation where there would be two sitting Ya Nas or Regents at the same time”. It went further to declare that “there can only be one palace in Dagbon kingdom. The temporary palace was constructed following the unfortunate incidents of 2002. In this connection the old Gbewaa Palace should remain free of occupation or any activity until a date is set for the performance of the funeral rites of Naa Mahamadu Abudulai IV” (Alhassan, 2007). This clause appears to have suggested that Naa Mahamadu IV’s funeral should be performed in the old Gbewa Palace.

However, sixty-six percent (66.7%) of interviewees alleged that the Abudus insist that the Kampakuya Na (the regent of Ya-Na Yakubu Andani II) and the Andani family vacate the new palace for the funeral to be performed there. Their argument is that the Supreme Court ruling of 1986 demanded that Na Mahamadu IV, on his death, be accorded the privileges of a former Ya-Na. The Andanis on the other hand maintain that the funeral be performed where Naa Mahamadu IV died since he was deposed before his death. Besides, he was not properly enskined according to Dagbon customs and tradition. This disagreement over the venue for

the performance of the deposed Ya-Na's funeral has been the main setback to the roadmap. As a result of this setback, clause 'J' of the roadmap which stated that "since Naa Mahamadu Abudulai IV died before Na Yakubu Andani II, his funeral should be performed first", could not be implemented (Respondent, 2013). Thus, seven years after the signing of the roadmap only the first two proposals have been implemented with the remaining being put on ice due to continuing disagreement between the two factions.

Following the deadlock over the roadmap, the Committee of Eminent Chiefs met with accredited representatives of the Abudu and Andani families on the 16th and 17th November 2007 to agree on a "Final Peace Agreement" on the Dagbon chieftaincy conflict. After three days of extensive consultation with various strata of the Dagbon society, the Committee of Eminent Chiefs with the concurrence, agreement and acceptance of the representatives of the parties came up with some decisions (Alhassan, 2007) and clarification of the points of disagreement as discussed above.

On the funeral of Naa Mahamadu Abudulai IV, the committee was of the considered opinion that under Dagbon custom, once a Ya-Na dies outside the palace, he is buried where he died and his funeral performed where he died. Naa Mahamadu Abudulai IV died outside the palace and should have been buried where he died. The Supreme Court judgment of 1986 conferred the status of a former Ya-Na on him in recognition of the tradition that desenskinment is unknown in Dagbon custom. Naa Yakubu Andani II appended his signature to the "Reconciliation Agreement" of 1987 which provided that Naa Mahamadu Abudulai IV be accorded the status and entitlements of a Ya-Na at death. They concluded that the Supreme Court decision and Naa Yakubu Andani II's consent under the Reconciliation Agreement were to promote peace and reconciliation in Dagbon. The committee therefore

directed that the funeral should take place at the old Gbewaa Palace under certain conditions specified in the agreement (Alhassan, 2007).

With regards to the regents, the committee pointed out that “under the Roadmap, both parties accepted that there cannot be duality of authority in Dagbon, and that since Naa Yakubu Andani II died in office, his regent should take precedence over the regent of Naa Mahamadu Abudulai IV. In relation to this, the Kampakuya-Na shall remain Regent of the Kingdom until a new Ya-Naa is enskinned. The Bolin-Lana as Regent of his father shall enter the old Gbewaa Palace as regent of his father and not as regent of Dagbon. His stay at the old palace shall commence on 22 December 2007 and terminate on 17 January 2008. During this period he shall perform all ceremonies necessary for the funeral of his father ONLY. He is not authorized and cannot act as regent of Dagbon state and perform any function that a Regent of Dagbon could ordinarily perform” (Alhassan, 2007). Unfortunately, just as the Andanis boycotted the concluding stages of the Wuaku Commission sittings, the Abudus shunned some of the Committee’s meetings and thus did not sign the “Final Peace Plan”.

4.2.3.4 *The Role of Civil Society Organisations*

Civil society organisations (CSOs), including faith-based groups, non-governmental organizations, and specialised UN agencies on their own initiatives and in collaboration with the state have played diverse but important roles in mitigating the adverse effects of the Dagbon crisis (Ahorsu & Gebe, 2011). For instance, Ghana News Agency (GNA) reported on 3rd November 2003 that a six-member delegation from the United Nations (UN) had paid a two-day visit to the Dagbon traditional area to interact with the Andani and Abudu Gates to find a lasting solution to the chieftaincy crisis in the area (Ghanaweb, 2003).

Apart from providing relief services to the displaced during the crisis, they also organise sensitisation programmes aimed at educating the people on the effects of the conflict. Some

of them even engage in direct or indirect negotiation. One of such CSOs that came up during the interviews was the Yendi Peace Centre (YPC), a faith based organisation run by the Catholic Dioceses of Yendi. As at time of the interview – May 2013 – the Centre had organized over 90 meetings, workshops, seminars among others that brought both Abudu and Andani royals, youths and women groups together with the aim of involving all peace loving people in the peace process in Yendi as well as Dagbon for the swift development of the area. Most of the respondents interviewed in Yendi acknowledged the efforts of the centre and credited it as the first organisation to bring the feuding factions together.

Other CSOs acknowledged were Federation of Moslem Women Association of Ghana (FOMWAG), United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), Community Life Improvement Programme (CLIP) and Ghana Danish Community Association (GDCA) as having engaged the people in activities aimed at improving their socio-economic standards.

4.3 Why the Conflict Remains Unresolved

With regards to the question why the conflict remains unresolved, the data pointed to a myriad of factors which I sum up under four headings relating to justice, mistrust, confidence in the peace process and the role of ‘spoilers’.

4.3.1 *Lack of justice*

The main issue, in the perspectives of both parties in the conflict is justice. Both the Abudu and the Andani Royal Families feel justice has not been served over ascension to Yani. On a scale of measure, this represents forty-two percent (42%) of respondents. However, justice in the view of one of the parties is injustice in the opinion of the other. This epitomises the popular saying that “one man’s meat is another man’s poison.” In 1954 for example, the selection committee chose the then Gbon Lana, Abudulai, (a member of Abudu Yili) over

Mion Lana, Andani (a member of Andani Yili). While Abudu Yili saw it a victory and jubilated, the Andani Yili considered it an act of injustice and put into motion a series of machinations and protests to the ascension of Ya-Na Abudulai III. Felt marginalised by the Selection Committee, Andani Royal Family petitioned against the perceived injustice by the Abudu Royal Family. The LI 59 that was promulgated to cure this ‘injustice’ was equally deemed unjust by the Abudu family on the basis that the LI violated the norms of Dagbon custom that no successor to any Naa should be known or determined during the reign of the incumbent (Yakubu, 2005), (Mahama, 2009).

This phenomenon of justice for one party is equal to injustice to the other run through virtually every measure taken to resolve the conflict since 1954. As far as the current conflict is concerned both members of Abudu and Andani gates interviewed believed strongly that not until justice is done, there would not be peace in Dagbon. Interestingly, whereas finding and punishing the murderers of Ya-Na Yakubu Andani II represented justice to eighty-five percent (85%) of the Andanis interviewed not a single Abudu agreed with this view. To seventy-two percent (72%) of the latter, the implementation of the Supreme Court ruling of 1986, especially the part that stated “that Naa Mahamadu IV be accorded the rights of a former Ya-Na”. Equally important to the Abudus is the aspect of the ruling that stressed “that the rotation system must be scrupulously observed, that is to say that after the incumbent Na Yakubu II of the Andani family, the next occupant should come from the Abudu family in keeping with the rotation system.” Meanwhile, the Andanis counter this argument by saying that would have been the case if Naa Yakubu Andani II had died a natural death. But since he was assassinated by the Abudus, they (the Andanis) should be allowed to install the next king to complete the reign of the late king.

4.3.2 *Mistrust among the Two Gates*

Another impediment to the peace process in Dagbon is the apparent mistrust between the two royal families. It was revealed by the responses of thirty-nine percent (39%) the interviewees that both families do not trust one another to respect the terms of the Roadmap. Soon after the Roadmap was signed, a disagreement ensued over the Andani family's decision to install the regent of the Naa Yakubu Andani II after his burial as custom demands. The Andani Royal Family believes that the burial and the installation of a Regent of Ya-Naa Yakubu II would be a big boost to the restoration of peace and tranquillity in Dagbon. However the Abudu Royal Family, suspecting their cousins to be up to a trick, opposed the plan vehemently. At a press conference addressed by Mion-Lana, Alhassan Abudu Ziblim, the Abudu Family stated emphatically that: "We support the burial of the late King but we will resist any attempt by the Andani Family to highjack or by-pass the peace process and proceed to install a regent after the burial". The Mion-Lana warned that if the Kuga-Na, Abdulai Braimah and the Andani Family chose to ignore the Abudu Family and all those who had invested time and resources into the peace process; they did so to their own detriment and the security of Dagbon (Abudu-Royal-Family, 2008). Whereas the Andanis do not seem to trust the Abudus to abide by the terms of the agreement after the burial of the slain king, the Abudus saw it as a ploy by the Andanis to install the next Ya-Na.

Furthermore, the Final Peace Agreement states in Section 'B' that the funeral of Naa Mahamadu Abdulai IV should take place at the old Gbewaa Palace under certain specified conditions. But the Abudus insist that since there can only be one Gbewaa Palace in Dagbon Kingdom the funeral must be performed in the new palace. This requires that the Kampakuya Na and the Andani family vacate the palace for the funeral to be performed. The Kampakuya Na and his kinsmen would however not budge to this demand.

Again, this is a manifestation of mistrust by both families against one another. The Andanis fear that vacating the palace would deprive them of their right to the throne because once the Abudus enter the palace, they will install a king. Indeed the Andani chiefs interviewed alluded to this fear when they told me that “the Abudus were on record to have indicated that they would not come out of the Gbewaa Palace once given the opportunity to occupy it and that if anybody liked they could bring the army to come and shoot all of them. They were ready to die in palace”. In contrast, the Abudus are apprehensive that if they perform the funeral outside the palace they will lose their bargaining chip (Respondent, 2013).

4.3.3 *Lack of Confidence in the Peace process*

For any peace initiative to be successful, parties in a conflict must have confidence that the process will guarantee their safety and yield results favourable to them. Soon after the 2002 violence, the government instituted processes to address the situation but according to 15% of respondents, these initiatives suffered a lot of setbacks for lack of confidence in the process on the part of the Abudus and the Andanis. The first peace initiative to suffer these setbacks was the Wuaku Commission of Inquiry. Throughout the workings of the Wuaku Commission, both parties boycotted the proceedings at one point or the other. Even before the Commission started its public sittings in Sunyani, the Andani Family raised concern about the venue. In a petition addressed to the President, they expressed concern about their security in Sunyani particularly regarding rumour of an attack. They however proposed alternative venues such as Kumasi, Damongo and Nalerugu where they claimed to be more familiar to them and a considerable number of their kinsmen resided (Wuaku-Commission, 2002).

On the first few days of the Commission’s sitting, both the Abudus and Andanis failed to turn up. Though the Abudus started attending the commission’s sittings from the third day, the

Andanis abstained until the eleventh day. The Andanis further boycotted the public sittings towards the end of the commission's process after which they sent a letter to the commission, and copied the president. The letter, signed/thumbprinted by nine people, made references to 'obstacles to the peaceful solution to the Yendi crisis'. It stated that, "Until we are able to discuss those matters with the president and find a satisfactory solution to them we are of the opinion that it will not serve any useful purpose for the Andani Royal Family to have any dealings with the commission" (Wuaku-Commission, 2002). This latest boycott according to some Andani respondents was necessitated by bias treatment against them by the commission.

It is therefore not surprising that the commission's findings and recommendations suffered rejection from both parties. Interestingly, the NPP government itself, though accepted the general findings of the commission, had problems with some specific recommendations. For instance the commission's recommendation that Yidana Sugri and Iddrisu Gyamfo be held responsible and prosecuted for the murder of the Ya-Na was rejected by both gates. According to the Andani family, "it is indeed strange and incredible that the Wuaku Commission which described the events leading to the murder of the Ya-Na as a 'three-day war' came to a shocking conclusion that 'two people should be presumed the killers of the Ya-Na ... there is no such thing as presumption in the offense of murder. A person can only be charged with the offense of murder if he/she intentionally and unlawfully kills another person.... to charge Yidana Sugri and Iddrisu Gyamfo as the presumed murderers of the Ya-Na will be an exercise in futility. ... after three days of bombardment of the Gbewaa Palace by members and supporters of the Abudu family, it is indeed incredulous for the Commission to say that only two people should be presumed as the persons responsible for the end result" (Mahama, 2009). The charge against the two, in the opinion of key Andanis respondents,

should have been murder and not presumed murder because there was ample evidence that the Ya-Na was intentionally murdered. Besides, the culprits were more than two.

To the Abudus, since the Commission described the incident as ‘war’, it was unfair to recommend the arrest and prosecution of the two individuals. Owing to this disagreement, the suspects were twice arrested and arraigned before the court (by the NPP and the NDC administrations) but were discharged for lack of evidence.

Like the Wuaku Commission, the Committee of Eminent Chiefs also suffered some setbacks. At different stages of the negotiations, the Abudus boycotted the committee’s proceedings for one reason or the other. In one such incidence, particularly when the committee met to deliberate on the “Final Peace Agreement”, the Abudus boycotted the meeting and issued a press statement to that effect.

In a strong worded statement released to the press at a press conference in Yendi, they announced that the Abudu Royal Family had come to the sad conclusion that the pertinent issue central to the realization of sustainable peace in the Dagbon traditional area had not been properly resolve by the Otumfuo Committee of Eminent Chiefs. They therefore declared that the Abudu Royal Family had categorically rejected the final recommendations made by the Eminent Chiefs on the funeral rites of Na Mahamadu Abudulai IV. Furthermore, they alleged that the Eminent Chiefs had demonstrated, by the flip-flop on their position on such a crucial and sensitive issue in the Dagbon conflict, that they had a credibility problem. The Abudu Royal Family no longer believes that the Eminent Chiefs have the moral clarity to be honest brokers in the conflict. They also accused the Eminent Chiefs of having compromised the principles and integrity of their traditional offices for political expediency (Abudu Royal Family, 2008).

Lack of confidence in the committee thus led to the abstention of the Abudu gate and abandoning the peace process. This notwithstanding, many interviewees expressed faith in the Eminent Chiefs, while others are critical and pessimistic that the Roadmap is not comprehensive enough to resolve and transform the Dagbon Chieftaincy crisis.

4.3.4 *The Role of ‘Spoilers’*

One other major obstacle to the peace processes in Dagbon is the activities of ‘spoilers’. (Newman & Richmond, 2006), in “Obstacles to Peace Processes: Understanding Spoiling”, adopt a broad definition of ‘spoiling’ behaviour. At the core of the definition are the activities of actors who are opposed to peaceful settlement for whatever reason, from within or (usually) outside the peace process, and who use violence or other means to disrupt the process in pursuit of their aims. Parties that join a peace process but then withdraw and obstruct, or threaten to obstruct, the process may also be termed ‘spoilers’. Similarly, there are parties that are a part of the peace process but which are not seriously interested in making compromises or committing to a peaceful endgame. They may be using the peace process as a means of gaining recognition and legitimacy, gaining time, gaining material benefit, or avoiding sanctions, and thus can be described as having “devious objectives”. Newman and Richmond conclude that ‘spoiling’ includes actors who are geographically external to the conflict but who support internal ‘spoilers’ and ‘spoiling’ tactics: ethnic or national diaspora groups, states, political allies, multinational corporations, or any others who might benefit from violent conflict or holding out.

The influence of individuals, groups and organisations, described as ‘faceless but powerful’ came up strongly during the interviews. These individuals, groups and organisations (including political parties) are said to be Dagombas and Non-Dagombas based in Accra, Kumasi and other big cities and towns in the South. Some of them are even believed to be

residing out of the borders of the country. An informant described them as “Alotees and Trous”.¹¹ It is claimed that they are the bank rollers of the two gates. Their decisions therefore, carry more weight and often sway the opinions and actions of the real Royals. These ‘spoilers’ are motivated by economic, political and material gains, or as a means of gaining recognition and legitimacy.

It was also alleged by almost a quarter (23%) of the respondents that political parties, using ‘spoiling’ tactics, undermine the peace process in Dagbon. They do this by adopting divide and rule strategy by which they effectively infiltrate the rank and file of the two gates and make them believe that any compromise they make will enhance the political advantage of their opponents. As some of the interviewees put it, “what will be the campaign message for the political parties since the only battle between the people is the chieftaincy conflict?” While the NDC is seen to be pro- Andani, the NPP is said to be sponsoring the Abudus. The evidence is that, in NDC or NPP dominated areas in Tamale and Yendi, as well as the towns and villages along the route between them, one can see sheds painted in NDC or NPP colours with the parties’ flags hoisted on them. By so doing the political parties succeed in getting the votes of the various gates. For example, it is a widely held view that for one to become a Member of Parliament (MP) in Tamale where the Andanis are in the majority, one has to belong to the NDC and must be seen supporting the cause of the Andanis. In Yendi on the other hand where the Abudus dominate, it is the NPP who carry the day. Throughout the interviews, the real royals – Abudu and Andani – appeared to be ready to compromise on certain key areas of the disagreement. Their sympathisers on the other hand seemed to have taken entrenched positions.

¹¹ The Alotees are the trouble makers who influence and incite the Abudu royal family. The Trous are the patrons of the Andani royal family.

4.4 Conclusion

This chapter presented the analysis of the data gathered from the primary and secondary sources. This was done in line with the first three objectives of the study - factors that accounted for the emergence, escalation and protracted nature of the conflict; efforts made to resolve it and how they have been implemented; and why the conflict remained intractable. To this end, data was analysed on the causes of the conflict that has engulfed the Dagbon Kingdom over the past decades. Analysis of the conflict resolution mechanisms adopted and how they have been implemented have also been presented, taking cognisance of traditional approach to conflict resolution in Dagbon; how the conflict was managed before it escalated in 2002; efforts to resolve it since the outbreak of the violence; and the setbacks encountered. The chapter concluded the analysis with why the conflict remains intractable.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSION

5.0 Introduction

The overall aim of this study was to unearth the reasons why the Dagbon conflict remains intractable. The specific objectives were to: investigate the causes of the conflict; assess the various conflict resolution mechanisms adopted to bring the conflict to an end; examine why the conflict remains unresolved despite the various efforts made to resolve it; and make recommendations for resolving the conflict. This section revisits the research objectives above; summarized the findings of the research work; offered recommendations based on the findings and finally drew a conclusion.

5.1. Summary of Findings

To help focus the discussion on reflecting the main objectives of this study, the findings are structured according to themes. These themes reflected the overall aim – why the conflict remains unresolved – and the specific objectives of this study: causes of the conflict; conflict resolution mechanisms adopted; why the conflict remains protracted.

5.1.1 *Causes of the Conflict*

The empirical data gathered from the literature reviewed and the interviews conducted revealed that cultural, political, economic and social dynamics were responsible for the emergence, escalation and intractability of the conflict in the Dagbon Kingdom in the Northern Region of Ghana. Culturally, as in every kingdom, the Dagbon kingdom is headed by a king called the Ya-Na. Accession to the throne of Ya-Na (Yani), which rotates between

the descendants of two sons of Naa Yakubu I (Abudulai and Andani) since 1849, was interrupted in 1954 and has been the main source of dispute since then with a violent clashes in 1969 and 2002 resulting in loss of lives (including the over lord, Ya-Na Yakubu Andani II) and properties. This succession struggle between the two royal families to Yani is underpinned by an anxiety among both gates of being deprived of the kingship.

Intertwined with the accession problem is the issue of political interference in chieftaincy by various political regimes since the colonial era. In Dagbon custom and tradition, the selection of a new Ya-Na was the responsibility of a committee of kingmakers who, as part of the selection process, consulted oracles and soothsayers to determine which of the eligible candidate (princes) was most suitable to be enskined as Ya-Na. The colonial authorities, after they had tried various ways of getting their preferred princes to succeed deceased chiefs without success, influenced the establishment of a Selection Committee of eleven chiefs in 1948, as replacement for the previous tradition of four kingmakers. Following the creation of the Selection Committee the old system that limited candidates to the occupants of the three-gate skins of Kraga, Savelagu and Mion was abolished paving way for the then Gbonlana (regent) Abudulai, a member of Abudu family, to be selected by the committee in 1954 to succeed his father Ya-Na Mahama III, (Yakubu, 2005), (Mahama, 2009) (Ahorsu & Gebe, 2011) in contravention of the rotational principle. This change, and the resultant events of 1954, could be said to be the root cause of the current protracted conflict in Dagbon.

Various post-colonial governments have also been drawn into the conflict to take advantage of it. The two gates are firmly divided between the two dominant political traditions at any given time in the political history of the country. Since post-1945 nationalism, the educated Abudu and Andani elites have aligned themselves with the main opposing United Party (UP) and Convention People's Party (CPP) traditions of Ghanaian politics, respectively (Ahorsu &

Gebe, 2011). In the Fourth Republic, where the CPP was not initially available, the Andanis found it expedient to align themselves with the NDC. The rise to power by any of the political traditions is seen by the 'aligned gate' as an opportunity to consolidate and control traditional power.

Thus based on the promises made to them by the NPP during the 2000 electioneering campaign, the Abudus saw the assumption of power by the party in 2001 as a prospect for them to gain access to Yani which they had been deprived of since the disenskinment of Naa Mahamadu Abudulai IV in 1974. Sensing that there was now a government more sympathetic to their cause, they gradually resuscitated their demand for the performance of the funeral of their deposed king. They also challenged and tried to undermine the authority of the reigning king, Ya Na Yakubu Andani II by organising a parallel celebration of key traditional festivals and ceremonies, particularly the Bugum (fire) and the Eid-ul Adha festivals in 2001 and 2002 and allegedly appointing chiefs to traditional offices without recourse to the Ya-Na (Tonah, 2012).

A third factor that accounted for the emergence and escalation of conflicts in the North and the Dagbon conflict in particular, was economic in nature. The area is part of one of the least developed regions in Ghana. Most of the inhabitants, including the youth, are unemployed with its associated poverty. Economic and social deprivation and poverty engender despondency and desperation and invariably call for coping and survival strategies of various kinds, including those that are questionable. Thus for a pittance, youth and others in the not too favourable circumstances are induced to break custom and law rather than listen to reason. Consequently, they indulge in behaviour risky to themselves and their neighbours because with very limited prospects, there is not much to live for anyway. The results are

death, injury, poisoned social relations and increased poverty; or perceived spiritual mishaps (Awedoba, 2009).

5.1.2 The Conflict Resolution Mechanisms

The Dagomba people, like many other African societies, have their traditional mechanisms for conflict resolution. In Dagbon tradition, conflict is resolved through mediation and arbitration by the chiefs and their elders as well as religious leaders (imams). Community leaders from headsmen to the highest grade of chiefs are instrumental in adjudicating disputes that might lead to full blown violent conflicts. Every community has a chief who settles minor disputes between citizens. The highest level of conflict resolution, however, is the Ya-Na's palace. In the case of disputes arising from chieftaincy, especially over Yani, Kuga-Naa, the supreme father of both the Abudu and Andani gates, mediates between the factions. His decision or plea to the Ya-Na or his regent cannot be ignored. In extreme cases, the issue was referred to Nayiri, the king of Mampurogu, who mediates and resolve the dispute. It is also customary to put a disputed issue to the test by making contesting parties submit to supernatural arbitration through oracles, sworn statement and oaths. The fear for the sanction that comes from the oracles and the oaths deters disputants who know their claim is unjust and thus abandon their assertions.

The study however found out that even though the Dagombas themselves have not applied their tradition means of conflict resolution to the current conflict, the government has exploited part of it through the establishment of a Committee of Eminent Chiefs. The government however ignored the emic approach that would have taken into account the unique cultural practices of the Dagombas and rather employed the etic approach which assumes that the Ghanaian culture in general could deal with the situation. Thus in setting up

the Committee of Eminent Chiefs, the government, even though included northern chiefs, made a southern chief the leader. To some, this undermines the confidence of the people in the committee hence the difficulty of the committee to find amicable solution to the conflict.

The study also found out that the conflict resolution strategies adopted prior to and the aftermath of the 2002 violent clashes have not been too different. A key strategy employed by governments over the years in a bid to resolve the conflict was the setting up of commissions/committees of inquiry which presented reports to the regimes that commissioned them. The regimes, in most cases, enacted legal instruments to give effect to these reports. Awedoba, (2009) argues that these committees/commissions were post-dated in the sense that it is after the conflict has taken place and the damage had been caused that they were set up to do a post-mortem. Besides, the commissions/committees reports and their implementation were mostly contested by one faction or the other. The aggrieved faction in this case, saw in a change of government, an opportunity to have its desire satisfied and wasted no time to petition a new government. This resulted in commissions/committees upon commissions /committees been set up.

A significant departure from the fact finding commissions/committees was the appointment of a Committee of three Eminent Chiefs made up of the Asantehene, Otumfuo Osei Tutu II; the Yagbonwura, Bawa Doshie and the Nayiri, Mahami Abdulai Naa Bohagu in 2003 to look into the traditional issues relating to the conflict and to help find customary and traditional solutions to them in order to resolve conflict. The Committee of Eminent Chiefs had so far presented a “Roadmap to Peace” in March, 2006. The “Roadmap to Peace” spelt out five major benchmarks in the conflict resolution and peace building process. These comprised the burial of the late Ya Na Yakubu Andani II; the installation of the regent of the late king; the performance of the funeral of the deposed ‘foemer Ya-Na’, Mahamadu Abudulai IV; the

performance of the funeral of Ya Na Yakubu Andani II; and finally, the selection and enskinment of a new Ya-Na for Dagbon. Unfortunately, apart from the first two targets the committee's work suffered setbacks due to disagreement between the two gates. The table below shows some of the major committees/commission set up and the legal instruments passed since the beginning of the dispute in 1954.

Table 5.1: committees/commission and legal instruments

Regime	Committee/Commission	Legal instrument	Year
C PP	Afari Committee	EI 122, LI 59	1960
NLC	Siriboe Committee	NLCD 296	1968
NLC/PP	Mate Kole Committee		1968-69
NRC	Ollenu Commission	NRCD299	1974
PNDC	Tripartite committee	PNDC86	1984
NPP	Wuaku Commission	C.I.36	2002
NPP	Committee of Eminent Chiefs		2003

Source: Author

Apart from these commissions/committees, most of the respondents indicated that the legal system was also exploited by parties in the conflict after the PNDC had enacted the Yendi Skin Appeal Law in 1984 (PNDC86) which allowed any party aggrieved by the findings of the Ollenu Committee to appeal to the Appeals Court against such findings. The Abudus, who were obviously affected by the committee's findings, took advantage of the opportunity and filed an appeal at the Appeals Court which ruled in their favour. After the ruling, members the Andani gate who were not satisfied appealed the decision of the Appeals Court at the Supreme Court. The Supreme Court, in a majority decision, ruled in favour of Andani Yili setting aside the verdict of the Court of Appeal (Yakubu, 2005).

However, instead of the Court's ruling settling the conflict once and for all, it added a caveat which stated that, having regard to the Dagbon Constitution that desenskinment is unknown in (Dagbon), all persons who have ever occupied the Nam of Yendi should without regards to how they ceased to be Ya Na be regarded as former Ya Nas. Consequently their sons do qualify for appointment to the gate skins of Savulugu, Karaga and Mion (Ahorsu & Gebe,

2011). It is worth noting that though the Supreme Court recognised that desenskinment was unknown in Dagbon tradition and custom, it failed to realise that ‘former Ya-Naship’ was equally alien to same. The confirmation of a ‘former Ya-Na’ on Naa Mahmadu IV by the Supreme Court has become the basis of the current impasse in Dagbon.

When Naa Mahamadu died in 1988, he was buried in the Gbewaa Palace. According to available literature and respondents, Ya-Na Yakubu Andani II allowed it only after he had been prevailed upon by the Northern Regional Administration and some prominent Dagombas in the PNDC regime. However, the refusal of the Ya-Na, and now his regent, to vacate the palace for the funeral of the late ‘former Ya-Na’ to be preformed was one of the reasons that lead to the violence in 2002 and why it remains intractable.

It has also been found out that the security agents, specially the military and police were used to quell any threat to the peace and security of the area. As was the case in 1968 when there was enough evidence of an impending confusion in the run up to the funeral of Naa Abudulai III, following the decision of the two gates to install the next Ya-Na, the Yendi Security Committee put armed security at all the vantage points. The presence of the security thwarted attempts by the two sides to send their candidates into the Katindoo (Yakubu, 2005).

It has been further found that Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) have played diverse but important roles in mitigating the adverse effects of the Dagbon crisis. Apart from providing relief services to the displaced during the crisis, they also organise sensitisation programmes aimed at educating the people on the effects of the conflict. Some of them even engage in direct or indirect negotiations. One of such CSOs that came up during the interviews was the Yendi Peace Centre (YPC), a faith based organisation run by the Catholic Dioceses of Yendi whose role members of both Gates interviewed acknowledged.

It appears past and present conflict management and resolution strategies adopted in the Dagbon conflict tend to address the symptoms and not the root causes of the conflict. Although numerous conflict resolution and management strategies have been adopted over the years, none of them seem to be sustainable in creating lasting peace and security as well as healthy co-existence between the two royal gates of Dagbon.

5.1.3 *Intractability of the conflict*

On the overall aim of the study, why the conflict remains unresolved despite the various efforts made to resolve it, the study found out that lack of justice in the opinion of both factions in the conflict remained a very important reason for the intractability of the conflict. What constitute justice however continues to be a matter of perspectives. Whereas finding and punishing the murderers of Ya-Na Yakubu Andani II represented justice for the Andanis, the implementation of the Supreme Court ruling of 1986, especially the part that state “that Naa Mhamadu IV be accorded the rights of a former Ya-Na” constitutes justice in the opinion of the Abudus.

It also came up that mistrust among members of the two families was an impediment to the resolution of the conflict. The decision of the late Naa Yakubu Andani II, and now his regent, Kampakuya-Na Andani Yakubu Abudulai not to vacate the palace appeared to have been informed by the mistrust that the Abudus would not vacate the palace after they had performed the funeral of their late deposed ‘former king’ Naa Mahamadu Abudulai IV. This same mistrust made the Abudus initially resisted vehemently the Andanis’ planed installation of a regent just before the burial of Naa Yakubu Andani II.

Furthermore, it had been observed that lack of confidence in the peace process on the part of both the Abudus and the Andanis was an inhibiting factor to the resolution of the conflict. Both families demonstrated their lack of confidence in the peace process by boycotting and rejecting the proposals and recommendations of the commissions/committees instituted by the state. As a result, key road maps that could help resolve the conflict could not be implemented.

One other major obstacle to the peace processes in Dagbon, according to the findings, is the activities of ‘spoilers’ – actors who are opposed to peaceful settlement for whatever reason, from within or (usually) outside the peace process, and who use violence or other means to disrupt the process in pursuit of their aims (Newman & Richmond, 2006). It was observed that influential individuals, groups and organisations (including political parties) described as ‘faceless but powerful’ hold opinions that often sway the decisions and actions of the real Royals. It was also alleged that political parties, particularly the NDC and the NPP, using ‘spoiling’ tactics, undermine the peace process in Dagbon. They do this by adopting divide and rule strategy by which they effectively infiltrate the rank and file of the two gates and made them believe that any compromise they make would inure to the advantage of their opponents.

5.2 Conclusion

Conflicts in Ghana revolve around ethnocentrism, chieftaincy and land disputes. Many of these conflicts have been protracted, spanning across decades or even centuries. They are mostly inflamed and sustained by socio-cultural, political and economic factors. Efforts to resolve these conflicts are equally hampered by ‘spoiling’ activities. However due to the limited time frame within which this study has been carried out, not to mention the financial constraints, the issue of ‘spoilers’ and their activities could not be thoroughly investigated

beyond the interviews conducted so as to make recommendations. It is the hope of this researcher that ‘spoilers’ and the impact of their actions on the Dagbon and other conflicts in Ghana would be further researched into in order to propose appropriate remedies.

5.3 Recommendations

Even though a lot of efforts and energy, both from the state and Civil Society Organisations, have been spent in bringing about a peaceful resolution to the Dagbon conflict, it remains unresolved. This leads to the fourth objective of the study – what is the way forward? From the analysis above, it is evident that both factions are apprehensive of the intentions of either of the current major political parties of bring a lasting solution to the conflict. This makes it difficult, if not impossible, for a government formed by any of these parties to be able to resolve the conflict through direct involvement of the State and its institutions. The only way out then for the state is to facilitate dialogue between the two families.

To be able to do this, government should resource and empower third party mediation efforts by the Committee of Eminent Chiefs to resolve the cultural aspect of the conflict. Civil Society Organisations like the Yendi Peace Centre, whose effort most of the respondents interviewed (including the Abudus and Andanis) in Yendi acknowledged and credited as the first organisation to bring the feuding factions together, should also be assisted to continue its efforts in bringing peace to Dagbon.

It is also important to depoliticise the conflict. To this end, politicians must be mindful of their pronouncements on the conflict as well as the promises they make to the parties in the conflict. Re-echoing the words of Otumfuo Osei Tutu II, “It must be stress that politicians can never resolve this protracted Dagbon chieftaincy conflict and they better stay behind to allow the traditional rulers and the Dagbon people themselves to resolve the matter”. The

security agencies, principally the police and the judiciary, must be given a free hand to prosecute the criminal aspects of the conflict without government or political interference. In addition, political parties should condemn and distance themselves from criminal activities irrespective of the political affiliation of the individual(s) involved.

Government should develop a comprehensive program of reducing unemployment and poverty in Northern Ghana. The Government should vigorously pursue policies that reduce idleness, which triggers despondency and desperation and creates the condition for conflict and violence, and establish an environment for social mobility, employment and wealth generation (Ahorsu & Gebe, 2011). Economic theorists believe that nations that have high economic cooperation among them are unlikely to wage war against one another. The Abudus and the Andanis should be encouraged to jointly invest in economic ventures that will lead to cooperation among them.

For peace to prevail in Dagbon, the Abudus and the Andanis should make concessions. As it stands now, both factions are entrenched in their demands especially with regards to the Namship. Even then, much as the Abudus were unanimous that it was their turn to ascend to Yani, they are divided among themselves as to who should assume this role. Whereas some felt the Mion-Lana Alhassan Abudu Ziblim is the most qualified because he is not only a son of a Ya-Na but also an occupant of a gate skin, the supporters of the Bolin-Lana think the Mion-Lana is too old and that his accession to the throne will lead to the extinction of the Naa Mahamadu IV's stock. This is because in the event that he passes away, the throne will return to the Andanis whose most likely heir apparent, the Kampakuya-Na is relatively young and may outlive the Bolin-Lana. Be that as it may, the Abudu gate should rally behind the Mion-Lana to be installed the next Ya-Na since he is the only qualified candidate to Yani. They should also apologise to their Andani cousins in the interest of peace and unity.

To avoid further complication of the succession problem, all must work together to ensure the performance of the funeral rites of Naa Mahamadu IV and Naa Yakubu II to pave the way for the enskinment of a new Ya-Na in the shortest possible time. To this end, both factions should return to the Committee of Eminent Chiefs and adhere to the road map.

Civil Society Organisation on their part should continue their sensitisation and facilitation programmes. They should however remain neutral and resolute in their negotiating efforts. Besides, they should study the situation well before acting so as to make the right interventions at the right time and place. A common practice of some the CSOs in the area is to lure the disputants with money to honour invitations to their programmes. This practice does not allow those who are genuinely interested in peace to attend such programmes and make their voices heard. CSOs will make much more significant impacts if they stop enticing the people with money. Likewise, they should pay attention to issues raised during their meetings particularly problems facing the youth. Since unemployment is a serious economic problem facing the youth making them susceptible to be influenced to indulge in violence, CSOs should come together and establish industries to employ the idle hands. Finally they should follow up on programmes they initiate so as to strengthen them and make them yield the necessary results.

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APPENDIX

DEPARTMENT OF POLITICAL SCIENCE

UNIVERSITY OF GHANA, LEGON

INTERVIEW GUIDE

INTRODUCTION

My name is Ahiave Edwin Carscious, a final year MPhil student of the Department of Political Science, University of Ghana, Legon. I am interested in understanding the cause(s) of the Dagbon chieftaincy conflict; why it has not been resolved in spite of attempts made by various governments to solve it and how it could be resolved. I will be recording the session because I do not want to miss any of your comments. Although I will be taking some notes during the session, I cannot possibly write fast enough to get it all down. Because we are on tape, please be sure to speak up so that we do not miss your comments. All responses will be kept confidential. This means that your interview responses will only be shared with research team members like my supervisor and external supervisor and we will ensure that any information we include in our report does not identify you as the respondent. Remember, you are not obliged to talk about anything you do not want to and you may end the interview at any time.

Thank you for accepting to participate in this research.

1.0 Bio Data

1.1 Sex of respondent: 1. Male [] 2. Female []

1.2 Educational level of respondent: 1. Basic [] 2. Second cycle [] 3. Tertiary []

1.3 Are you a Dagbonba? 1. Yes [] 2. No []

1.4 'Gate' belong/associated with: 1. Abudu [] 2. Andani [] 3. None [] 4. Both []

1.5 Status of respondent: 1. Chief [] 2. Opinion leader [] 3. Commoner []

4. Security officer [] 5. C.S.O. representative [] 6. Resec [] 7. Disec []

8. political leader []

2.0 Emergence, Escalation and the Protracted Nature of the Conflict.

2.1 What in your opinion is/are the cause(s) of the conflict Dagbon?

1. Chieftaincy [] 2. Politics [] 3. Poverty [] 4. Other (please specify)

.....

2.2 What is fuelling/sustaining the conflict? 1. The need to preserve Dagbon custom and

tradition [] 2. Warring nature of the people [] 3. Politicisation of the issues

involved [] 4. Other

2.3 How have partisan politics, in the forth republic, contributed to the escalation of the

conflict in 2002?

.....

3.0 Efforts to Resolve the Conflict and Their Implementation.

3.1 What are the conflict resolution mechanisms in Dagbon tradition?

.....

3.2 How have these mechanisms been applied to the conflict in Dagbon?

.....

3.3 How was the conflict managed before the violence erupted in 2002? 1. The

legal system [] 2. Military/Police intervention [] 3. Committees and

Commissions of inquiry [] 4. Third party mediation 5. Other

.....

3.4 Why could these management efforts not resolve the dispute and avert the clashes in

2002? 1. Because they were not effective [] 2. Because the parties

have firmly aligned themselves with political parties [] 3. Politicians took unfair advantage of the situation to further their cause. [] 4. The violation of Dagbon custom and tradition []

3.5 How many of the various LIs, CIs, Decrees and court rulings on the dispute are you aware of? 1. All 2. Less than seven 3. Less than four 4. None

3.6 Which of the various LIs, CIs, Decrees and court rulings on the dispute prior the 2002 violence in your opinion could have resolved the conflict? 1. L I 59 of 1960 [] 2. NRCD 299 of 1974 [] 3. Supreme Court ruling of 1986 [] 4.

3.7 What measures have been adopted to resolve the conflict since the outbreak of the violence in 2002? 1. The legal system [] 2. Military/Police intervention [] 3. Committees and Commissions of inquiry [] 4. Third party mediation 5. Other

.....

3.8 What is your impression about the measure you indicated in 3.7 above?

.....

3.9 What role did Civil Society Organisations play in resolving the conflict?

.....

3.10 How have the measures adopted to resolve the conflict been implemented? ...

.....

3.11 How do the mechanisms put in place to resolve the conflict fit into the Dagbon tradition?

3.12 In spite of these efforts the conflict doesn't seem to have been resolved. What do you think is wrong?

.....

4 How can the Conflict be Resolved?

4.1 Where do you think the new Ya-Na should come from? 1. Abudu gate [] 2. Andani gate [] 3. Other

4.2 Why?

4.3 How should the government handle the conflict to ensure a lasting resolution? 1. Find and punish the killers of Naa Yakubu II [] 2. Facilitate dialogue between the two gates [] 3. Politicians should refrain from making statements that suggest their sport for or prejudice against either party to the conflict. [] 4. Should revisit the L.Is/E.Is, reports of all past committees/commissions of inquiry and court rulings on the conflict in order to produce a document that will synchronise the loopholes in these previous documents.

4.4 What about the Dagombas themselves? 1. All Dagombas, including the Abudu and the Andani family should make concessions. [] 2. The Dagbon Traditional Council should decide the performance of the funeral rites of Naa Mahamadu Abdulai IV and Naa Yakubu Andani II and all Dagombas should support and participate in it. [] 3. The Dagbon Traditional Council should work towards enskinning a new Ya-Na in the shortest possible time [] 4. Other

4.5 What role can civil society organisations play to help resolve the conflict?

.....
.....