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Executive Summary

Background

Ghana has been described as a peaceful country, but violence occurs from time to time involving various protagonists, which are ethnic, religious, economic and political. Fortunately for Ghana as a country, the potential for war has long been recognised and efforts geared at addressing it have included the following:

1. Establishment of the National Peace Council with offices nationwide
2. Participation in the creation of the ECOWAS treaties of both 1993 and 1999
3. Periodic educational campaigns on peace (especially during general elections).

Attempts have also been made by various agencies to establish a database of conflict zones and to design early warning systems to help pre-empt violence. However, to date, no comprehensive mapping of conflict hotspots has been undertaken for the country, which will, in map overlays, show the spatial incidences of these conflicts. This gap is what this study seeks to fill – to provide in text and in maps the spatial and temporal dynamics of violent conflicts in Ghana as a tool for policy makers, the security agencies and students of peace studies to anticipate and pre-empt violence.

In mapping conflict zones in Ghana, this study also examined the various conditions that breed violence in relation to direct violence (deliberate policies and structures that cause human suffering, death and harm) and cultural violence (cultural norms and practices that create discrimination, injustice and human suffering) as well as the current state of the violent conflicts. In situations where conflict is destructive, it can hinder progress in the society; encourage individuals to resort to unfriendly behaviours such as “win-by-all means-necessary” attitudes, where emotions take precedence over reason leading to the disintegration of groups and the scuttling of national development projects.

Objectives

The main objective of the study was to map conflict zones in Ghana with northern Ghana as the case for this phase.

Specifically, the study sought to:

1. Analyze the spatio-temporal dynamics of conflicts
2. Examine the underlying causes of such conflicts
3. Examine the current status of various conflicts
4. Appraise the management strategies in place, and
5. Explore policy response interventions to conflicts

Methodology

A multi-layered method was adopted in collecting and analysing the data as follows: First, we reviewed information in two national daily newspapers (Daily Graphic and Ghanaian Times) on violent conflicts in Ghana between 2007 and 2012. The period covered both the 2008 and 2012 elections. Finally, the information collected from the newspapers and the regional/district visits was then synthesised and mapped using Geographic Information Systems software. The maps produced a clear picture of the exact locations of these hotspots and the relative densities with which they occur in Ghana. Subsequently, social research methodology was employed to understand the perceptual dynamics of key actors in these areas.

Conceptual Issues

The literature on conflict, especially those that attempt to connect the outcomes of conflict to the underlying causes emphasizes the role of structure and power relations in explaining most conflicts. The basic proposition is that conflict occurs as a result of the natural competition between two or more parties about scarce resources, power and prestige. Under these circumstances parties in conflict may believe that they have incompatible goals, and their aim is to neutralize, gain advantage over, injure or destroy another. This unequal accumulation of wealth, control over scarce resources and the innate desire of some people to gain control over political systems as well as the means of production account for many of the intra and inter-system conflicts in contemporary African society. The skewness of the political system coupled with the distribution of the benefits of economic development in favour of the privileged elites as against the marginalised groups may tend to bring about polarization thereby leading to increase in the number of violent conflicts or the exacerbation of existing one.

As conflicts occur, society becomes saddled with ways to adequately respond to and manage the outcomes of the conflict. Conflict analysis and conflict mapping have become essential tools in enabling a comprehensive understanding of all aspects of the conflict, which aids in finding solutions. This is the theoretical perspective of this study.

The purpose of conflict analysis in a development policy context is to devise strategies, programmes and projects which respond sensitively to a conflict and hence make a certain contribution to reducing or resolving the conflict. Conflict analysis is the systematic study of the profile, causes, actors, and dynamics of conflict. It helps peace building organizations to gain a better understanding of the context in which they work and their role in that context. Conflict analysis is a process by which a conflict analyst tries to gain historical knowledge about the situation and the current events leading to the conflict and identify relevant groups involved in the conflict including the hidden ones. Conflict analysis helps the analyst to understand the perceptions of groups in conflict and how they relate to each other. It then becomes an analytical tool that deepens the understanding of potential or ongoing violent conflicts through the assessment of structures, actors, and conflict dynamics.

Findings

Northern region

The northern region recorded most of the conflicts in this study. The underlying causes have deep historical roots stemming from the colonial policy of putting a-cephalous societies under the centralised states. The former societies feel marginalised and desire their own chiefs and control over the lands on which they have settled. The other major causes are about succession to skins and political differences. These conflicts have taken political dimensions with some political parties aligning themselves to certain ethnic groups and chieftaincy gates for votes.

On the whole, the study revealed that mediation efforts can be best described as yielding short term calm but not guaranteeing long-lasting and sustainable peace. All the interventions (especially the military ones) tend to achieve short term stability but they fail to eradicate the root cause of the conflict. In all the study areas, we found that the root causes of the conflicts have been barely addressed. Even where the legal system has pronounced emphatically on the conflict (e.g, Yendi, Kpandai, and Buiepe), the losing party has not accepted the results and have either appealed the decisions or decided to flagrantly ignore them. In Bimbilla for example, our study found that the military intervention had stopped the violence but there was still a lingering potential for more violence because the root cause of the problem - the installation of a substantive chief has still not been solved. This creates a situation where tensions are latent and suspicions rife thereby threatening the prevailing peace. The same goes for the Bimbilla ethnic conflict, the Yendi and Kpandai chieftaincy conflicts.

Upper east region

Conflicts in the region were concentrated in the Bolgatanga and Bawku areas. Like some of the conflicts in the Northern region, the Bawku conflict has to do with the Mamprussi (centralised state) control over chieftaincy in Bawku – the major town of the Kusasis (a-cephalous society). The mediation efforts have included recourse to the courts, the institution of commissions of enquiry, the setting up of an inter-ethnic peace committee, organisation of many workshops by NGOs and the use of the security agencies. At the time of this research, Bawku was calm and this is despite the fact 2012 is an election year. Relative peace has been maintained for three principal reasons: the presence of the military, the voluntarism of some residents to report to the security agencies potential sources of trouble for pre-emptive action and the determination of some of the youth not to be used anymore in violent activities. Clearly, the economy has suffered substantially as trade has reduced and many business persons are relocating to more peaceful towns to ply their trade. While the inter-ethnic peace committee continues to work to calm passions, it is pertinent that politicians follow suit by not exploiting the situation for votes.

The conflicts discussed in the Bolgatanga area are related to chieftaincy and the control over resources. Chieftaincy is alien to the societies in the Bolgatanga area as the societies of the region have and continue to organise their lives and the use of land around the institution of the tindamba – the earth-priests. Secular chiefs are recognised by the state and have considerable powers in the administration of the traditional areas. Modernisation and widespread adoption of Christianity and Islam

and higher levels of educational attainment by the population, has worked to reduce the recognition of traditional authorities who work in the spiritual realm. Also, the state by vesting lands in the people through the chiefs as occurs in southern Ghana creates conflict in the role of the chief and the earth-priest. On both scores, the chiefs no longer respect the position of the earth-priest and, in general, traditional methods of dispute resolution are no longer respected and indigenous methods of dispute resolution are being ignored.

Urbanisation and increases in land prices complicate the issues. The conflicts in the Bolgatanga area relate to access to land for sale as urban land prices are on the increase. As demand for land for home construction increases, conflicts are bound to arise especially in peri-urban zones. Peace has been restored in the area through police action; but this is only temporary. Long term improvements in the general economy are required to create the jobs and reduce reliance on agriculture. In the meantime, sanity can be restored through the urgent implementation by the state of land titles so as to secure land boundaries.

However, the cooperation of the chiefs and the *tendanba* along with the state land agencies and the political authorities is required to ensure effective land title regimes. Where some communities see some of these authorities as compromised (see the case of Gbane for example), it will be difficult to obtain durable peace. The use of the security agencies and the courts has superseded the traditional methods of dispute resolution. But these are win-lose approaches that never bring about enduring peace.

Upper west region

The study did not encounter serious conflicts of any type in the Upper west region. Whatever exists relates to minor chieftaincy succession disputes – the Nadowli case is with the courts and the other (Wallembele) has been solved democratically by the people of Wallembele accepting not to deskin their chief as ordered by the court. However, nobody in the community pays allegiance to him. The fact that social, political and economic activities are carried out smoothly under the control of the earth-priest and the clan elders in this town demonstrates the irrelevance of chieftaincy in acephalous societies.

Recommendations

As part of efforts to maintain peace in the northern part of Ghana – Northern region, Upper east and Upper west – certain key issues stand out that need to be focused on to manage the conflicts that exist. These are presented in relation to the stakeholders in the peace process.

The government has a major role to play in managing conflict by utilising the resources it marshals to provide gainful employment opportunities. The argument is that so long as the economy does not provide the opportunities for gainful employment, young men may fall prey to conflict entrepreneurs and take up arms at the least provocation. Therefore, the government efforts in growing the economy to create jobs, needs to be stepped up in the north.

There is also imperative on the part of government to ensure equal and unfettered access to justice for all by creating strong institutions that can manage conflict. The long delays in adjudicating disputes and perceptions of political interference in the justice system weaken the confidence of feuding parties in the system of justice. Government must therefore invest in institutions for non-violent conflict resolution, by strengthening the judiciary and promoting alternative dispute resolution.

Chieftaincy succession is a major source of conflict in the north of Ghana. Especially for societies that were a-cephalous, the gates that can ascend to the skin are often contested. Yet not much effort has been done by government to codify customs, practices and usages in all the traditional areas, including who is or can become chief, kingmaker or tendanba (earthpriests or landowners) and their respective roles. This is the responsibility of the National House of Chiefs (NHC) as stipulated in Article 270 of the 1992 Constitution. Government has to provide the resources for this codification to be carried out as a matter of urgency.

Land disputes are becoming a major source conflict in the north of Ghana. Ghana is currently implementing a land title registration programme ostensibly to make clear ownership of land. Yet as land gets scarce with population growth and urbanisation, land disputes are bound to increase, not decrease. Government has a role to ensure the speedy completion of land titling to curb the spate of these conflicts.

Indigenous ways of resolving conflicts have existed in the various societies. Yet many of the conflicts are now in the courts principally because the indigenous mechanisms are not allowed to work. Chiefs do not respect the position of the earth-priest and prefer the courts to settle disputes. For northern Ghana, customs relating to the earth have played major roles in maintaining the peace and such mechanism need to be strengthened.

Section One

Introduction

Background to the study

Political stability is viewed as an important ingredient to attract foreign direct investment essential to technology transfer and economic development (Canterbury and Kendie, 2010). Globally, the factors that have sparked conflict include poverty and its attendant struggle for resources, rapid economic growth, ethnic rivalries, religious intolerance, bad governance, misuse of resources and arbitrary national boundaries. These and many others have led to erosion of the whole architecture for peace. For a long time now, Africa has been challenged by a variety of complex political, economic, ethnic, environmental and social upheavals in varying degrees of intensity. These challenges have launched the continent into a series of devastating conflicts in the last decade and a half (Galadima, 2009).

Armed conflict is one of the principal causes of the plight of Sub-Saharan Africa today. Conflicts have caused death and destruction, uprooting of populations and erosion of social capital. Conflict by definition is an intrinsic and inevitable part of human existence. However, violent conflict is not inevitable and as such is an anomaly. Conflict is defined as the pursuit of incompatible goals and interests by different groups (Francis, 2006). Conflict resolution scholars argue that conflict has an ontological basis in human needs, and it is the denial which causes violent conflicts, or causes re-solvable differences to degenerate into armed conflict.

The West African Sub-region has been plagued by intra-state conflicts derived largely from ethnic and religious causes. In a few cases such as Liberia, Sierra-Leone and Cote d'Ivoire, these conflicts have evolved into full scale wars with unimaginable consequences. Peace is of prime value in contemporary Africa today, the most valuable "public good", but yet the most elusive. So volatile is the situation that Ghana has normally been described as an oasis of peace within the sub-region. Peace is generally seen as the absence of war, fear, conflict, anxiety, suffering and violence and about peaceful co-existence. It is primarily concerned with creating and maintaining a just order in society and the resolution of conflicts by non-violent means (Francis, 2006). In general, six meanings of peace are agreed on by peace researchers. The first is peace as the absence of war (absence of direct violence), peace as justice and development (absence of structural violence), peace as respect and tolerance between people. Others include peace as *gaia* (balance in and with the ecosphere), inner peace (spiritual peace) and as wholeness (making whole).

While Ghana has been so described as peaceful, it is evident that violence occurs from time to time involving various protagonists that may be ethnic, religious, economic or political. Attempts have been made by various agencies to establish a database of conflict zones and to design early warning systems to help pre-empt violence. However, to date, no comprehensive mapping of conflict hotspots has been undertaken for the country, which will, in map overlays, show the spatial and temporal incidences of these conflicts. This gap is what this study seeks to fill – to provide in text and in maps the spatial and temporal dynamics of violent conflicts in Ghana as a tool for policy makers, the security agencies and students of peace studies to anticipate and pre-empt violence. In mapping conflict zones in Ghana, this

study also examined the various conditions that breed violence in relation to direct violence (deliberate policies and structures that cause human suffering, death and harm) and cultural violence (cultural norms and practices that create discrimination, injustice and human suffering) as well as the current state of the violent conflicts. In situations where conflict is destructive, it can hinder progress in the society; encourage individuals to resort to unfriendly behaviours such as “win-by-all means-necessary” attitudes, where emotions take precedence over reason leading to the disintegration of groups and the scuttling of national development projects (Ademola, 2006).

Some violent conflicts in Ghana

Several parts of Ghana have been plagued with communal strife, particularly land and chieftaincy related conflicts in the past two decades or more. Some of these conflicts easily engage the attention of the country as a whole and, in some cases, the international community. The ethnic conflicts between Nanumba-Kokomba, Nkonya-Alavanyo, Konkomba versus Gonja, Dagomba, Nanumba; Gonja versus Vagla etc wars as well as violent chieftaincy conflicts in Dagbon, Winneba and Gushiegu are examples. Economic violence (settler farmers versus host communities, pastoralists versus farmers), political violence and cultural violence that are more subtle are constantly threatening the peace. Indeed, almost every part of the country has one form of violent conflict erupting from time to time.

Fortunately for Ghana as a country, the potential for war has long been recognised and efforts geared at addressing it have included the following:

4. Establishment of the National Peace Council with offices nationwide
5. Participation in the creation of the ECOWAS treaties of both 1993 and 1999
6. Periodic educational campaigns on peace (especially during general elections).

In more recent times, a worrying pattern is the way elections are becoming the conduit through which the already-existing simmering tensions explode into armed conflict. Political violence between supporters of the different political parties predates independence and has become part of the political scene since the anti-colonial struggle (Seini and Tsikata, 2004). Many political conflicts end up being ethnic or factional.

Furthermore, the subtle formation of political parties along ethnic lines in Ghana has created latent conflicts which normally manifest themselves during campaigning and electioneering periods. For example, it is generally thought that the New Patriotic Party and National Democratic Congress, the two leading parties in Ghana are Akan and Ewe biased respectively. It is important to note that there is an emerging pattern in Africa whereby contested election results have triggered full scale ethno-religious armed conflicts. Examples can be found in Kenya, Cote d’Ivoire and Nigeria where contested election results led to violent conflict along ethnic lines. Amazingly, multiparty democracy, though a good and desirable concept, has unwittingly offered itself as a legitimate excuse for pent-up tensions (which may be totally unrelated to politics) to be expressed.

Conflicts in Ghana are complex and have varied causes ranging from religious differences to land, chieftaincy and ethnic differences and political and economic marginalisation. The fact that the north of Ghana seems to have a disproportionate share of conflicts compared to the southern regions is probably not by chance. Poverty, marginalisation and the lack of economic opportunities for productive employment do create conditions that can trigger violence. While poverty per se is not a cause of violent conflict, when people perceive their situation to be the result of somebody else's actions or inactions, violence can ensue. This study explored both the political and economic aspects of conflict to explain the causes of some of the conflicts. Ethnic conflicts are also largely cultural conflicts; these are often intractable and difficult to resolve because they border on the very existence or survival of a social group. The intractability, however, also tends to worsen with the introduction of external elements such as political interference; hence the need to apply the political dimension in exploring the causes and resolution mechanisms for violent conflicts. The political dimension is more so relevant given that indigenous conflict resolution mechanisms seldom work because of these external 'remote control' activities of conflict entrepreneurs – be they political or economic; hence the status of each of the conflicts was also studied and mapped.

Objectives

The first step to conflict resolution is to understand the spatio-temporal dynamics of the phenomenon in Ghana. It is in this light this research project was proposed to study the dynamics of conflict to enable a mapping of the trouble spots in Ghana. The pictorial representation of such information would provide practitioners with a useful overview of conflict zones in the country. The main objective was to map conflict zones in Ghana. However, this phase was limited to northern Ghana only.

Specifically, it sought to:

1. Analyze the spatio-temporal dynamics of conflicts
2. Examine the underlying causes of such conflicts
3. Examine the current status of various conflicts
4. Appraise the management strategies in place, and
5. Explore policy response interventions to conflicts.

Statement of need and justification for a spatial mapping of conflicts

The possible effects of conflict, especially instability, in undermining the potential for economic reform, democratisation and better governance have brought security to the top of the international development agenda. However, the inconsistencies between theoretical constructs or speculations of a country's intra-national conflicts and their reality may give rise to, theoretically and politically, inadequate generalisation, as issues of definition and distinction homogenise and obscure the analysis of conflict. The various theories on conflict such as the structural, transformative, and psycho-cultural theories though may provide valuable clues to the causes of conflict, fail to adequately explain the contextual dynamics within which these conflicts occur in reality. A study of this nature therefore becomes all the more imperative to provide insight into the realities as well as the locus and dynamics of conflict.

In Ghana the potential for conflict is ever present owing to the fact that the differences and inequalities which cause conflicts in other countries are equally present. In all these, the various conflicts that are evidenced in Ghana can be seen through the lens of identity, participation and legitimacy (Enu-Kwesi and Tuffour, 2010). For example, Ghana like most African countries is multi-ethnic, multi-religious and multi cultural. Its current population which is estimated at about 25 million is a vast mosaic of small and large ethnic groups. The major ethnic groups are the Akan, the Mole-Dagbani, the Ewe, the Ga Adangbe, the Guan, the Guma, the Grusi and the Mande-Busanga (Ghana Statistical Service, 2010). The influence of colonialism has further exacerbated intra and inter-ethnic tensions and the uneven distribution of social and economic amenities provides a sure recipe for conflict.

For example, there are instances where conflict occurred as a result of rebellion against the traditional authority of some ethnic groups over others (e.g. Konkomba-Gonja; Gonja-Vagala). Similarly, conflicts have occurred in certain parts of Ghana over questions of what constitutes authentic local representation, and legitimate land rights, all of which have consequences that must not be ignored. Naming of district capitals and boundary demarcations for electoral areas have also unearthed latent tensions in recent years. Interestingly, decisions on which town constitutes a district capital have resulted in clashes between different traditional authorities within the same area. Studies that seek to continuously draw the attention of policy makers to the latent causes and potential for violence are ever necessary in an era when this country needs absolute peace in order to focus attention on reducing poverty and advancing social inclusion.

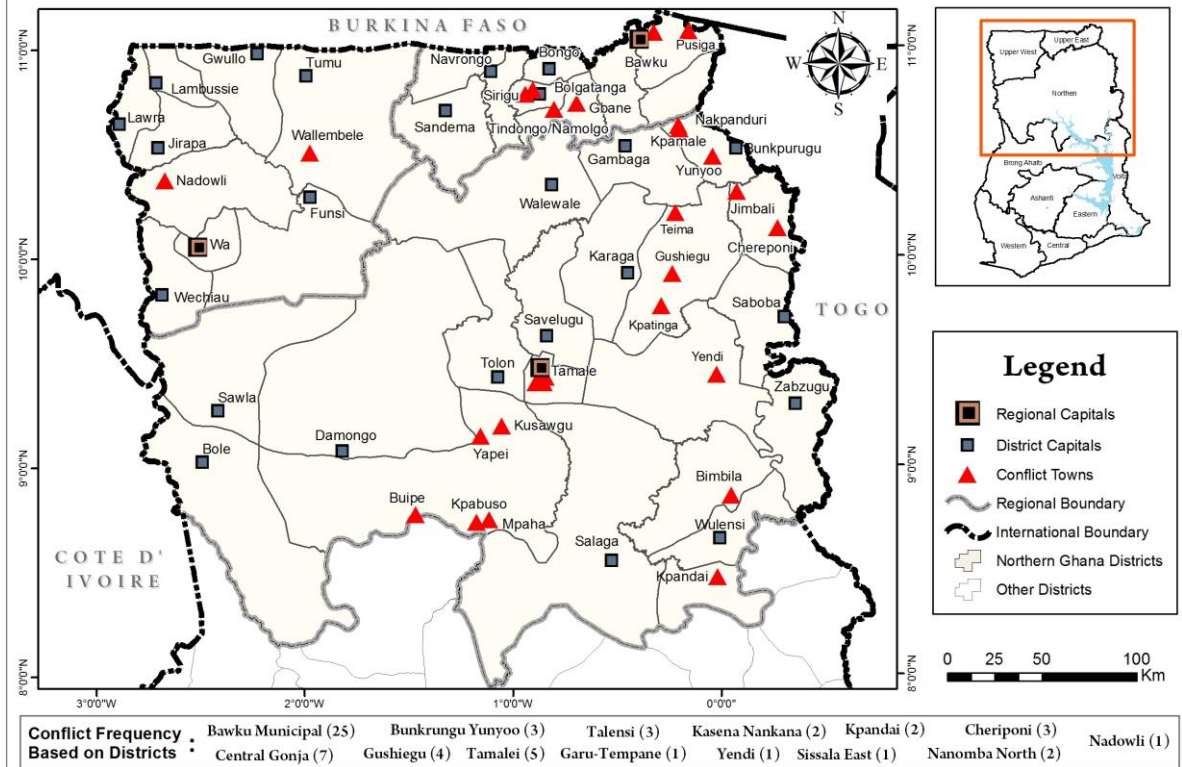
Methodology

A multi-layered method was adopted in collecting and analysing the data. The first step was to acquire from secondary data sources the conflict cases as reported in state-owned media (Daily Graphic and Ghanaian Times) over the past five years (2007-2012). The dates allowed us to cover the 2008 national elections.

The second phase entailed validation of the information provided in the national dailies. This is premised on the assumption that such information may be inadequate for the purpose. Hence, a mop-up activity was conducted to validate the data from the three regional peace councils, (and district peace councils where they exist), the regional and district security committees, religious bodies, and chiefs.

The information from these sources was then synthesised and mapped using Geographic Information Systems software. Figure 1 presents a detailed map of all the conflict locations identified in both the daily Graphic and the Ghanaian Times between 2007 and 2012. The maps produced a clear picture of the exact locations of these hotspots and the relative densities with which they occur in Ghana. Consequently, social research methodology was employed to understand the perceptual dynamics of key actors in these areas. Key actors included the protagonists (e.g. the competing sides in a chieftaincy/religious conflict) and ordinary residents in such places. In-depth interviews and survey instruments were used to elicit the relevant information from the sampled stakeholders.

Figure 1 : Map of the Three Northern Regions Showing Towns with Conflict (2007 - 2012)



Source: Daily Graphic and Ghanaian Time, 2007-2012

Section Two

Conceptual issues

Introduction

There are no simple and easy explanations for conflicts and the theories that have been advanced are both numerous and contradictory. Rather than attempt to catalogue these theories, this review examines some of the paradoxes in the attempt to explain conflicts. The first part of this review conceptualises conflict before providing a detailed classification of the concept. The next section discusses the causes of conflict including the known effects of conflict. The second part therefore examines how and why conflict occurs in human society, and what we can do to mitigate its destructive aspects. We will highlight the societal, structural, and cultural factors that play a part in conflict and its resolution. Finally, the review seeks to provide a framework for analysing conflict so as to appreciate the contextual factors that influence conflict

Conceptualising conflict

Consensus exist among scholars of conflict and peace studies that a key fact about conflict is that it cannot be prevented in social life but it can only be contained. In as much as there are numerous definitions of conflict, conflict is usually assumed to have occurred when individuals fail to live according to their values, or when their values are threatened (Kendie, 2010). Usually conflict is assumed to be present when two or more parties perceive that their interests are incompatible, express hostile attitudes, or pursue their interests through actions that damage the other parties. Within the literature, interests can diverge in many ways including differences in the access to and control over resources, unequal power relations, identity, status and values. Conflict occurs when two or more people engage in a struggle over values and claims to status, power and resources in which the aims of the opponents are to neutralise, injure or eliminate their enemies (Coser, 1956).

However, Bajura (2010), notes that any attempt to conceptualise conflict should place emphasis on disagreement between wider aggregates of society (either between states or tribes) as well as the incidence of violence and injury. Conflicts are expressed through the manner in which people react to differences and reflect their frustrations concerning each other's behaviour (Burton, 1990).

For Sandole (1993:3) conflict is a dynamic phenomenon characterised by phases of initiation, escalation, controlled maintenance and an end stage that is normally reflective of settlement, resolution and transformation. In this context, a conflict is conceptualised as a process that has to go through certain specific stages. Each stage of the conflict might be either independent from or related to the other stages before or after it. Sandole further argues that conflict becomes a 'manifest conflict process' (MCP) when two individuals or groups pursue their "perceptions" of mutually incompatible goals by undermining directly or indirectly each other's goal seeking capability.

It should be noted however that conflicts need not necessarily be violent. Hence, conflicts arising as a result of incompatible goals may not be a bad idea but may give

clues as to the dissatisfactions or uneasiness that may exist in an important relationship that needs to be addressed promptly (Dissanayake, 1984). Thus conflicts are supposed to be frameworks for resolving internal differences, as well as transforming hidden differences to open tension (Ross, 1993). Conflict only becomes violent when it is not well handled either by the authorities or parties concerned. A conflict becomes aggressive or negative when it manifests in some form of physical destruction of property and high value symbols. Conflicts can become violent when parties go beyond seeking to attain their goals peacefully, and try to dominate or destroy the opposing parties' ability to pursue their own interests. According to Burton (1990) the potential for conflict being destructive of persons, properties and systems makes it more deeply rooted in aspects of human behaviour. What Burton seems to be emphasizing is that when people's aspirations are frustrated in a given situation by others irrespective of whether they are closer to them or not, may manifest in violent conflicts that may have negative consequences. Violence is contingent upon the presence or absence of certain conditions. However, different dimensions distinguish violent conflicts. These dimensions include the parties involved in the conflict, the main substantive issues in contention between the conflicting parties, the nature of force or coercion being used by the conflicting party as well as the geographic scope of the conflict.

The literature on conflict, especially those that attempt to connect the outcomes of conflict to the underlying causes emphasizes the role of structure and power relations in explaining most conflicts. The basic proposition is that conflict occurs as a result of the natural competition between two or more parties about scarce resources, power and prestige. Under these circumstances parties in conflict may believe that they have incompatible goals, and their aim is to neutralize, gain advantage over, injure or destroy another (Galtung, 1978; Laue, 1987). This unequal accumulation of wealth, control over scarce resources and the innate desire of some people to gain control over political systems as well as the means of production account for the many of the intra and inter-system conflicts in contemporary African society. The skewness of the political system coupled with the distribution of the benefits of economic development in favour of the privileged elites as against the marginalised groups may tend to bring about polarization thereby leading to increase in the number of violent conflicts or the exacerbation of existing one (Enu-Kwesi and Tuffour, 2010).

It is also important to discern that conflicts generally occur at all levels – intrapersonal, inter-personal, intra-group, inter-group, inter-organisational, inter-sectoral and international. This makes conflict a pervasive aspect of human existence occurring at all levels of social life (Deatson, 1991).

In summary, conflict as discussed in this section is inevitable in social life. The discussions attest to the fact that conflict does not occur in a vacuum and that for conflict to occur there must be a relationship or some form of "interdependence" between two or more parties – individuals or groups or collective entities – as well as differences or divergence of interest. The perception that each of the parties involved in the conflict has of the other gives clues as to the levels of the differences involved in the conflict. Furthermore, every conflict has a cause and it is important to identify the causes and understand its nature and the different interests/issues that shape the conflict.

Classification of conflict

After a conflict has occurred, it is very important to figure out what kind of conflict it is. According to Awedoba (2009:5), conflicts that occur as a result of differentiation can be classified based on the sources of differentiation to include kinship, location, language or dialect interest and political parties tradition. Furthermore, conflicts that occur especially in Africa can be explained and classified from various perspectives such as those of the classical social theorists (including Marx, Comte, Simmel and Sorrel) and the structural conflict theorists (Collier, 2000). Theories belonging to the latter are of various shades but mostly they can be classified into five levels namely, biological, physiological, societal, international and global conflicts (Burton, 1990). The structural basis of conflict attempts to explain conflict as a product of the tension that arises when groups must compete for scarce resources. The theorists of structural conflict see conflict as occurring among groups, and that groups have structures which define the groups. Therefore, understanding the causes of each set of conflict provides deeper insights into designing mechanisms to adequately deal with the conflict.

Biological conflicts assume that violent human behaviour is a function of biologically determined human nature. Conflicts under this category are produced as a result of the biologically motivated actions of human beings (Sandole, 1993). Furthermore, Freud viewed human destructiveness as a dialectical struggle between two opposing forces within an individual. Some individuals combine powerful drives with charismatic personality to which others are drawn. On the other hand, Morgenthau (1973) believes that power is the determinant factor in human relations, and thus the main drive behind conflict. Key to the biological level of conflict is the understanding of human motivation of actions to provide insights to why different people act in certain ways. This explains the character of the person acting whether consciously or unconsciously and how his/her actions are related to his/her motives.

According to Sandole (1993), the physiological level of conflict is determined by the interaction between a physiological mechanism, stimulation of the mechanism and learning. Conflict at this level occurs as a result of the interaction between nature and other fellow human beings. The key issue here is the internal physiological mechanism of the individual, the motivation for aggression that can be stimulated to produce a fight. In most conflict situations the individual's perception of an impending success or failure in the conflict mostly informs the interest in resolving the conflict.

The conflicts occurring at the societal level are informed by the particular ways in which societies are structured and organised. It highlights situations of unfair access to political, economic and other resources because of one's involuntary membership in certain ethnic, religious, racial and other groups that often leads to conflict (Moore, 1986; Galtung, 1969).

The nature and scope of conflicts in Africa

Following up on the conceptualisation of conflict above, this section highlights the nature and scope of conflicts in Africa. Even though conflicts may occur as a result of the incidence of differences between and among individuals or groups, such

differences are further complicated by the nature of the conflict, mostly over goals, power, values, motives, ideas and resources. In Africa most conflicts are reflections of internal weaknesses that are easily exploited by political actors. In the view of Gordon-Summers (1999), a snapshot of explosive conflict in today's Africa presents a worrying picture in countries such as Eritrea, Ethiopia, the DRC, Rwanda, Uganda, Namibia, Zimbabwe, the Sudan, Sierra Leone, Somalia, Burundi, Guinea Bissau, Cote d'Ivoire, Mali and Lesotho. The conflicts in Africa have been described as 'cyclical' with an almost regular occurrence (Odonkor and Mason, 1994; Discap discussion paper, 2002). Krugaman (2012) clearly captures the nature of conflict in Africa by explaining that within the African continent, conflict has metamorphosed from a well organised altruistic liberation movement (which fought against colonialism, tyranny, or apartheid) into wilder, messier, more violent, ego-centred terrorist activity. The unsettling part of it is that most of these conflicts appear endless.

Lemarchand (1999) identifies power struggles as the cause of conflict among various groups in Africa. For Enu-Kwesi and Tuffour (2010: 49), "Africa's violent present and recent past is seen through the frameworks of identity, participation and legitimacy". Conflicts in Africa are further informed by the structure of production and the existing power relations that embed a particular context (Kendie, 2010). On the African continent, the factors put forward to explain a particular conflict are oftentimes multilayered and complex and so interwoven that it become difficult to assign one particular cause to any given conflict. For example, evidence abounds in the literature of how trivial bread and butter issues and other democratic real life experiences lead to violent conflict (Adu Boahen, 1997).

As a summary, the causes of conflicts in Africa can be explained as a result of competition over scarce but valuable resources (Awedoba, 2009; Vines, 2000; Manning, 1998); as struggles for power, ethnicity, militarism and deep rooted historical, socio-economic and cultural elements (Steadman, 1991), as the consequences of the machinations of colonialism and neo-colonialism (Kendie, 2010; Awedoba, 2009; Onadipe and Lord 1999). However, it is pertinent to note that pre-colonial African societies were believed to have witnessed one form of conflicts or the other though on a smaller scale. The causes of conflict are examined in turn with special emphasis on Northern Ghana which is the object of this study.

Generic Causes of Conflict in northern Ghana

The impact of colonialism on inter-ethnic relations cannot be ignored in the quest to understand the causes of conflict in northern Ghana (Kendie, 2010; Awedoba, 2010; Alli, 2006; Adetula, 2006). The colonialists established structures which would create the conditions for deepened mistrust and tensions between ethnic groups. The fact is that colonial incursions exploited and compounded inter-ethnic relations. The divide-and-rule policies of colonial administrators assured the docility of different ethnic groups and thus shielded them from the menace of insurrection. In other words, it was feasible to divide ethnic groups and pit them against each other so that they could focus their energies on fighting one another rather than overthrowing colonial governments.

This is not to say that prior to the Bond of 1844 there were no ethnic conflicts but the reality is that such structures sometimes even inverted the existing power relations thereby offering the ‘weaker/marginal’ groups greater influence (Awedoba, 2007). In short, the colonialists socially engineered African societies and, in the process, compounded the simmering inter-ethnic tensions. Prior to colonial rule, two distinct systems of traditional rule existed in northern Ghana - the highly centralized systems of the Dagombas, Gonjas, Nanumbas, and Mamprusis, referred to as the “invader tribes” (Stride and Ifeka 1971:83) on one hand, and the decentralized systems of the majority of ethnic groups in the north, including the Konkombas, Nawuris, Sisaalas, Kusasis, Grune etc. Among the highly centralized tribes, royal dynasties have constituted the locus of power and succession to the seat of power is by patrilineal inheritance (Staniland, 1975). Conversely, the decentralised tribes had no single apical head as the locus of political power for the entire ethnic group. This constituted the basis of their being described as “acephalous” (Talton, 2003). Despite years of coexistence, the two traditional systems of governance remained distinct from each other. With the advent of colonial rule in 1899, however, the need for control over a vast landmass forced the British to attempt to streamline and universalize the chieftaincy system in the north.

This was clearly the case in Northern Ghana, where despite their shared history, culture and language, ecology and geography, communities rather differed traditionally from one to the other in terms of their mode of social organisation as well as internal governance. But the colonial administrative system tinkered with the existing communal governance structures as well as the land tenure systems ending up with the creation of chieftaincy titles in jurisdictions where they never existed (Awedoba, 2009). These actions of the colonial administration account for the multiple land and chieftaincy conflicts that affect northern Ghana.

The principle of indirect rule in northern Ghana presented a political structure in which different ethnic groups with diverse values and customs engaged with Britain’s indirect rule. During the 1930s and 1940s, the socio-economic change that accompanied indirect rule led to an emphasis on ethnicity, or “tribe,” over other identities (Iliffe, 1979:318). A collection of these “tribes,” from the British officials’ view was what comprised African societies, and each “tribe” was distinct, largely isolated and ruled by a chief. As Lentz and Nugent (2000) suggest, as they constructed policy from a misreading of African politics and culture, “the British laid the foundation for today’s ethnic identities by imposing a number of ‘native states’ which they imagined corresponded with established tribal boundaries” (p.9). Yet, shortly after imposing their authority over what they defined as the Northern Territories of the Gold Coast, the British became generally aware that what they labelled “tribe” did not reflect the political and social realities that they encountered.

Given the range and diversity of conflicts in Northern Ghana, it stands to reason that their causes are as varied and complex as their courses and consequences. Some attribute these conflicts to the lingering legacies of colonialism, but for many, especially in the Western popular and academic media, singular historical and internal explanations tend to be offered, assigning the conflicts to either Africa’s primordial afflictions of ‘tribalism’, or the depredations of the continent’s proverbial poverty and inequalities, or authoritarianism and poor governance. To be sure, these conflicts are often provoked and sustained by ethnic rivalries and polarizations,

economic underdevelopment and inequalities, poor governance and elite political instability and manipulations, but these factors, individually or collectively, have a history rooted in the political economy of colonialism, post colonialism, and neo-liberal globalization (Canterbury and Kendie, 2010); they are as much internal in their causation and scale as they are regional and transnational, involving national, regional and international actors and networks that are simultaneously economic, political, military and social.

The underlying historical causes for conflict can be attributed to domestic grievances which for instance manifest themselves in the so called acephalous states now demanding the right to have their own paramount chiefs and the accompanying access to land and natural resources. As a result of these fertile circumstances, warfare can be expected to grow and develop into widespread conflicts (Plant 2008:7). Ethnic motivations where the Konkomba for example go to war over land and power with the Dagomba, Nanumba, and Gonja and the Kusasi fight the Mamprusi for similar reasons abound and have been at the centre of some of the conflicts. Feelings of marginalization can therefore lead to violent conflicts.

Therefore, the challenge to uniting the divergent socio-cultural groupings of Northern Ghana is the issue of centralised states versus the a-cephalous states. Whereas the former ethnic groups continue to exert their superiority over the latter groups, the latter continue to struggle for their independence and recognition which in most cases results in open confrontations and violent conflicts as already discussed. The challenge of forging unity among these groups emanate from the fact that leaders of the centralised states continue to regard mediation processes as unfair and an attempt to equate them with those of the 'other' groups. Similarly, there have always been concerns by the traditional leaders of a-cephalous groups of not entering the mediation processes on an equal footing and that the authenticity of their traditions is threatened by the adjustments required for participating in mediation processes that were formulated on the basis of other cultural backgrounds (Kendie and Akudugu, 2010).

Membership in formally constituted institutions such as the National and Regional Houses of Chiefs is seen as a mark of recognition and the status of the chief, which also implies control over territory. Territory and its control are part of a society's heritage and identity. As such, the so called a-cephalous groups seek separate territory; the first step being to demand to have a paramount chief and hence membership of the regional and national Houses of Chiefs. A disharmony of interests exists between these societies and the mutual suspicion makes it difficult to achieve any level of cooperation between the ethnic groups on the one hand and between these and the state mandated mediation institutions on the other (Kendie and Akudugu, 2010).

Most of the conflicts in northern Ghana may therefore fit the postulates of the Collier and Hoeffler's (2002) greed - grievance-driven theory of conflicts. According to these authors, greed outperforms grievance as a motivation for conflict. Two contrasting models, the grievance and greed models were constructed by Collier and Hoeffler (2002) to explain the difference in motivations. The grievance model refers to inequality, political oppression, ethnic and religious motivations for conflict, while the greed model refers to the sources of finance to maintain the civil war.

Collier (in Berdal 2005) holds that the key to understanding why such wars erupt lies in greed and the quest for loot by rebel actors.

Hidden under the issues of chieftaincy and title for land are deep resentments based on perceptions of economic and political inequalities, social and cultural prejudices, and competition for limited resources. Moreover, the era of multiparty politics in Ghana has made population size a sensitive issue. The population of some of the a-cephalous people has been increasing rapidly, and this has meant more demand for land and natural resources as well as representation in national and regional politics.

Religion is also associated with ethnicity. Ethnic and religious affiliations in the north are very strong and they have been sources of tension which often leads to a crystallization of identities. The leadership of the a-cephalous groups is predominately Christian, having close connections with Western churches and missionaries, while the chiefly groups are primarily Muslim.

The formation of tribal youth associations also creates fertile grounds for fermenting of ethnic and tribal conflicts in the region. The 1970s witnessed the formation of ethnic based youth associations, whose activities are believed to be the major factors that led to the violent conflicts in 1981, 1994 and 1995 (Skalnik, 1983; Linde and Naylor, 1999; Brukum, 1999; Oquaye, 2000). A recent occurrence is the phenomenon of political party 'sheds' constructed in the communities especially in the northern and Upper East regions in which the youth sit to discuss political issues and a 'no go' area for political (and chieftaincy) opponents. These sheds have been used to foment trouble and conflict. This emerging issue needs further research to determine the financiers and their operations.

Multiparty democracy has unwittingly contributed to the occurrence of conflicts (Awedoba, 2007). Lund (2003) has blamed the recurrence of violence in the Bawku area on the politicization it has been subjected to by politicians. This view is supported by Anekunabe (2012) who posits that politicians have since Ghana's independence and in particular since the return to multi-party politics, exploited longstanding historical grievances related to land and chieftaincy in ethnic terms in Northern Ghana.

Ghana Living Standards Survey data over the years have shown the poverty of northern Ghana. Indeed, while extreme poverty is reducing in the rest of Ghana, it is increasing in the north. The reasons are obvious: the north is deemed not have exportable natural resources to exploit and so FDI naturally flows to the endowed southern regions. The official colonial policy to deliberately under-develop the north to encourage (or force) labour migration to provide cheap labour in the south of Ghana appears to continue albeit in a subtle manner. This shows in the rather low participation of school children in this poor region in the recently introduced school feeding programme for instance. So capitalist power dynamics and its organisation of space continues to account for the poverty of the area leading to a large army of uneducated and unemployed youth who thereby become tools in the scheme of operations of politicians and the petit bourgeoisie who benefit from the perpetuation of conflicts (Canterbury and Kendie, 2010:1). While the conflicts have cultural dimensions, their intractability results from historical and political perspectives.

Effects of Conflict

Given the intensity and violent nature of some of the conflicts in Northern Ghana, especially those between the Mamprusis and Kusasis in Bawku, the Nanumbas and Konkombas in Nanumba North District, and the Dagbon crisis over the Dagbon Kingship, it is enough for one to draw the conclusion that conflict undoubtedly, retards the progress of development (Canterbury and Kendie, 2010). Different types of conflict have different effects on the economy. However, one of the major effects of the conflicts on the regional economy is the fact that scarce resources (both private and public) are diverted from development and channelled to security. Furthermore, after every violent clash, reconstruction and rehabilitation of destroyed facilities and infrastructure become additional burdens for the government and other stakeholders. The destruction of social infrastructure like schools, water and health facilities during violent conflicts severely impacts on the development of education and health in the region. This is further exacerbated by the refusal of professionals to take up postings to the conflict area. Psychologically, the conflicts in the region create severe division and mistrust between ethnic groups.

Northern Ghana now accounts for more conflict-related deaths than the rest of the regions combined (Human Security Report, 2005). These conflicts lead to internal displacement of people and migration of the youth to the southern sector in search of jobs and security. Awedoba (2009) catalogues the consequences of violent conflict at the community level to include heavy loss of life, injury to affected and innocent bystanders, destruction of public and personal property, ruined social relations, polarization and fictionalisation of every aspect of social life and exodus of community members to safe areas. The 1994 Konkomba Nanumba conflict popularly known as the guinea fowl-conflict that escalated to involved several feuding tribes in the northern region led to the destruction of lives and properties. By the time the conflict was over, according to some estimates close to 2,000 people were dead. Schools, clinics, and development projects estimated to be worth millions of dollars were destroyed. At least 423 villages were burnt or destroyed. Some towns were “ethnically cleansed.” The conflict left over 178,000 internally displaced people, out of an estimated population of close to 700,000 for the entire region (Brukum, 1999).

Conflict Analysis

As conflicts occur, society becomes saddled with ways to adequately respond to and manage the outcomes of the conflict. Conflict analysis and conflict mapping are essential tools in enabling a comprehensive understanding of all aspects of the conflict, which aids in finding solutions.

The purpose of conflict analysis in a development policy context is to devise strategies, programmes and projects which respond sensitively to a conflict and hence make a certain contribution to reducing or resolving the conflict. According to Kinoti (2011), conflict analysis is the systematic study of the profile, causes, actors, and dynamics of conflict. It helps peace building organizations to gain a better understanding of the context in which they work and their role in that context. Conflict analysis is a process by which a conflict analyst tries to gain historical

knowledge about the situation and the current events leading to the conflict and identify relevant groups involved in the conflict including the hidden ones. Conflict analysis helps the analyst to understand the perceptions of groups in conflict and how they relate to each other. It then becomes an analytical tool that deepens the understanding of potential or ongoing violent conflicts through the assessment of structures, actors, and conflict dynamics (Wehr, 2005).

Conflict analysis is influenced by different methodological perspectives namely the Harvard approach (HA), the Human Needs Theory (HNT) and the conflict transformation approach (CTA) (SDC, 2005). The Harvard approach emphasizes the differences between positions (what people say they want) and interests (why people want what they say they want). Conflicts can be resolved when actors focus on interests instead of positions, and when they develop jointly accepted criteria to deal with these differences (Ury, et.al. 1993). The HNT argues that conflicts are caused by basic “universal” human needs that are not satisfied. The needs should be analysed and communicated for the conflict to be resolved (Rosenberg, 2001; Burton, 1990). The CTA conceptualises conflicts as destructive or constructive interactions, depending on how conflicts are dealt with or “transformed”. Conflicts are viewed as an interaction of energies. Emphasis is placed on the different perceptions, and the social and cultural context in which reality is constructed (Lederach, 2005; Bitter, 2003).

Conflict analysis can be carried out at various levels (e.g. local, regional, national, etc) and seeks to establish the linkages between these levels. Whereas at the country level the aim is to develop long term strategies for conflict management, at the local level the primary focus is on the local impact of the conflict or on the local conflicts themselves. But while linking the level of conflict analysis (e.g. community, district, region or national) with the level of intervention (e.g. project, sector, policy), it is also important to establish systematic linkages with other interrelated levels of conflict dynamics. These linkages are important, as all of these different levels impact on each other. Conflict analysis is intended to highlight areas of concern and help design proactive and responsive peace building interventions to address institutional weakness or pre violent conflict trends before they reach a critical stage.

Even the simplest interpersonal conflict has many elements hence certain key guidelines have been developed to aid conflict analysis. For any conflict analysis, the key elements are the potential for conflict and peace, the development of scenarios for the future development of the social situation and suppositions on the impact of the planned project work. Sandole (nd) emphasises on the need for conflict analysis to be done from the point of view of structure, actors and dynamics. It is essential that conflict analysis also places emphasis on context to deepen insights into the various aspects of the conflict (SDC, 2005).

A number of conflict analysis frameworks exist in the literature. One such framework reviewed for this study is the UNDG-ECHE Working Group on Transition (2004) approach. The framework explains that methodologically, a conflict can be analysed from three main stages namely, the conflict analysis stage, analysis of ongoing responses and the strategic recommendation stage. The group explains that the three stages can be looked at separately although in reality these are closely linked and should be viewed as a whole. Under the conflict analysis stage,

the Working Group emphasises the importance of exploring the proximate and structural factors that shape the conflict. Understanding the proximate factors is critical to ensuring that the various strategic responses are able to mitigate the impact of the violent conflict in the short term. An analysis of the structural factors is aimed at providing insights into the broader societal causes of the conflict. The analysis of both the proximate and the structural conflict factors must involve assessing the relative importance of the various issues identified and their interrelationship.

To complete the conflict analysis stage, the Working Group highlights the relevance of performing an actor analysis as well as the analysis for capacities for peace. For actor analysis, the focus is on the individuals, groups and institutions engaged in, as well as affected by the conflict. The emphasis is on the interests and motivation of the actors. This must include their shared interests, hidden agendas, and the nature of the existing social relations, at various levels and their perceptions of such relationships. Equally important to analyse are the resources that the actors bring to bear on the conflict as well as the resources they still require in order to realise their agenda. The framework suggests exploring the capacities for peace including potential spoilers or conflict entrepreneurs. Capacities for peace traditionally refer to structures, mechanisms, processes and institutions that exist in society in order to peacefully and constructively manage the conflict.

Regions vary widely in how peaceful they are and what kinds of conflict they experience. Therefore, it is also important to place emphasis on identifying the potential and existing conflict causes, as well as possible factors contributing to peace (SIDA, 2006). Violent conflicts stem from multiple interconnected causes. Yet there are key factors or variables that are likely to determine whether disputes evolve into violence or are settled peacefully. These variables can be causes of violence or causes of peace; analysts can examine conflict settings to assess these factors' relative influence. From the literature, conflict causes can be defined as those factors which contribute to people's grievances and can be further described as:

- structural causes – pervasive factors that have become built into the policies, structures and fabric of a society and may create the pre-conditions for violent conflict
- proximate causes – factors contributing to a climate conducive to violent conflict or its further escalation, sometimes apparently symptomatic of a deeper problem
- triggers – single key acts, events, or their anticipation that will set off or escalate violent conflict.

Crucial structural factors that should be analysed include economic development and equity of distribution, the political system, democratic structural causes, and respect for human rights, natural resources, the environment, and other sources of violent conflict or positive structural influence. The ability (strengths and weaknesses) of institutions to address grievances, prevent opportunistic behaviour, and further the interests of confrontational actors should also be examined. As the main causes and factors contributing to conflict and to peace are identified, it is also essential to establish linkages and synergies between causes and factors, in order to identify potential areas for intervention and further prioritise them.

The logical thing to do after the contextual analysis is to identify the critical actors that influence or are influenced by the violent conflict under study. Actors refer to all those engaged in or being affected by conflict. These include attitudes as well as identified organisations and actors involved in interventions promoting peace. Burton (1984) notes that the individual constitutes the “basic unit of explanation” in any conflict analysis irrespective of the level that the analysis focuses on. Such a position reinforces the argument that people are central when thinking about conflict analysis. The actor analysis must focus on individuals, groups and institutions contributing to conflict or being affected by it in a positive or negative manner, as well as those engaged in dealing with conflict. While identifying the various actors in the conflict, attention must also be paid to their goals and interests, their positions, capacities to realise their interests, and relationships with other actors. The incompatible interests of the actors in terms of greed and grievances and on how these factors affect and are affected by ongoing and potential violent conflicts also needs to be critically analysed.

During the ongoing response stage, the analysis focuses on an assessment of all ongoing responses from a range of diverse actors as well as their impact in relation to the set of priority conflict factors identified at the earlier stages of the analysis. Two key principal steps are involved at this stage, namely, mapping all ongoing responses and the assessment of the impact of these ongoing responses identified in relation to the conflict under study. The mapping of ongoing responses must at all times focus on issues and level of implementation. The second stage assesses the impact of ongoing responses in relation to the conflicts. In particular while the conflict analysis aids in the identification of the proximate and structural factors that are of particular concern for sustainable conflict management, the assessment provides insights into existing gaps and possible new areas of engagement, the need to strengthen ongoing interventions as well as the need to refocus ongoing interventions (UNDG-ECHA, 2004).

The in-depth conflict analysis usually results in a simplified conflict map that provides a spatial representation of the actors and their powers or their influence on the conflict, as well as their relationship with each other including the conflict themes or issues at stake. Thus the conflict map provides a specific viewpoint of a specific conflict situation at a specific moment in time (SDC, 2005). Neufeldt et al. (2002), contend that conflict analysis and the eventual maps that are produced as a result of the process helps to inform programming response to the conflict. This will include who is involved in the conflict, their motivations as well as the conflict “fault lines” (the issues in the conflict) and how the conflict is unfolding.

On the basis of the mapping and the assessment of all ongoing responses undertaken, the conflict analysis moves to the next critical stage where the focus is on the formulation of key objectives and principles for sustainable conflict management and peace building.

Section Three

Presentation and Discussion of Findings

Introduction

In the following sections, a regional approach is adopted in the presentation of the findings. There are variations in the cultural and political organisation of the various ethnic groups occupying the three regions which have implications for the types and intensity of conflicts. For instance, much of the northern region is occupied by traditionally centralised states (Dagbon, Gonja, Nanum, Mamprugi) while the Upper East region is occupied by predominantly a-cephalous societies. The same is true of the Upper West region (except the Wala). There are manifest differences therefore in the level of power bestowed on a chief in the centralised states compared with the a-cephalous ones. The a-cephalous states recognised and intensely differentiated the functions of a *tendana* (spiritual land owner) and the local leader(s): the latter were not generally recognised as chiefs in the modern usage of the term. And while there was a hierarchy of *tendanba*, this did not constitute recognition of a hierarchy of even traditional spiritual leaders as each village or group of villages (same clan) was more or less autonomous.

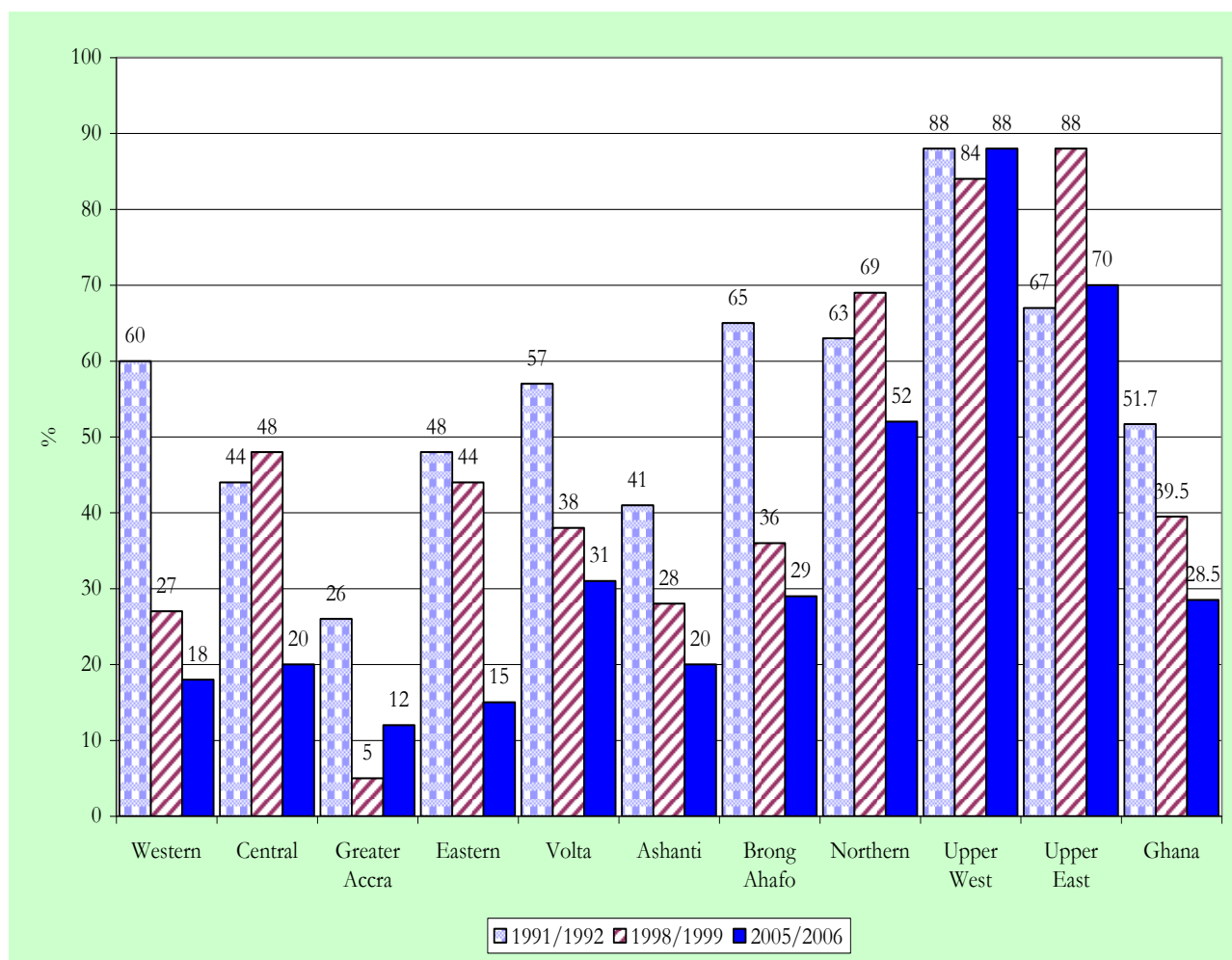
Colonialism however tempered with this structure of political and spiritual control in the societies when the British sought to achieve administrative control by instituting chieftaincy in the a-cephalous societies. Besides, the British recognised and institutionalised the control of some of these a-cephalous societies by putting them under the centralised states (e.g. Vagala under Gonja, Kusaal, Grune under Mamprugi, Konkomba under Gonja) thereby turning them into 'vassal' states with implications for land resources control and ethnic identity. Lands in northern Ghana were also vested in the crown and after independence in the state. This policy was however reversed by the 1979 Constitution of the Republic of Ghana. But since chiefs do not control land, this reversal is also creating conflicts between the chiefs and the *tendanba* whose traditional function it is to protect the land for the use of the people.

Colonialism has been held responsible for the general underdevelopment and the poverty of northern Ghana, which neglect has continued to date and has implications for the conflicts in the area. Historically, northern Ghana has served as a manual labour reservoir for the mines and cocoa farms of the southern regions. This deliberate colonial government development policy was implemented through an active process of official neglect and discouragement of worthwhile investment in education, transportation and economic development projects generally (see Benning, 1990, Kendie, 1981, 1993). Active state underdevelopment of the north of Ghana continued into the post-colonial era. Thus, the industrial development drive of the first post-independence government of Dr. Kwame Nkrumah passed Northern Ghana by although this government paid some attention to the provision of educational infrastructure. The educational support in the post independence era also included the institution of the northern scholarship scheme through which students from northern Ghana were given scholarships when admitted into the secondary schools. Whatever additions have been made to the efforts of the First Republican

government by succeeding governments include some improvement in trunk roads and the opening of more educational institutions.

Figure 1 shows the regional variation in poverty incidence which clearly reveals the continuing difficulties at ensuring that people in northern Ghana have the opportunities for self-actualisation.

Figure 2: Trends in Poverty Incidence by Administrative Regions, 1991 - 2006



Source: NDPC (2008)

This study is not expressly about the causes and effects of conflict in northern Ghana. There are many publications now on this subject (for recent publications see Awedoba, 2009; Kendie 2010a, b). However, the above discussions are meant to put the maps presented and discussed subsequently in context – to show the historical basis of current occurrences. In the next sections, we present the findings as pertain in each region.

Northern region

Location and physical features

The Northern Region is the largest of the 10 regions of the country in terms of landmass, occupying approximately 70,384 square kilometres and accounting for 29.5 per cent of the total land area of Ghana. The region shares boundaries with the Upper East and the Upper West Regions to the north, the Brong Ahafo and the Volta Regions to the south, and two neighbouring countries, the Republic of Togo to the east, and La Cote d' Ivoire to the west. The land is mostly low lying except in the north-eastern corner with the Gambaga escarpment and along the western corridor.

The climate of the region is relatively dry, with a single rainy season that begins in May and ends in October. The dry season normally referred to as the harmattan period starts in November and ends in March/April with maximum temperatures occurring towards the end of the dry season (March-April) and minimum temperatures in December and January. Temperatures during the harmattan season are very high varying between 14°C at night and 40°C during the day. Humidity, however, which is very low, mitigates the effect of the daytime heat. The main vegetation is classified as vast areas of grassland, interspersed with the guinea savannah woodland, characterised by drought-resistant trees such as the acacia, baobab, shea nut, dawadawa, mango, neem.

Population characteristics

The region currently has a population of 2,468,557 made up of 1,210,702 and 1,257,855 males and females respectively. Though the region has the largest land mass among all the ten regions in the country, its population is just about 10.1% of the national population. The population density has gradually increased from the 1984 figure of 17sq/km to 26sq/km in 2000 and finally to 35sq/km in 2010 (Ghana Statistical Service, 2011). The current 35 persons per square kilometer is lower than the national density of 79.3 and ranks last in the country suggesting that the Northern region of Ghana is sparsely populated. The intercensal growth rate of the Northern region between 2000 and 2010 is 2.9% which is higher than the national figure of 2.5%.

The 2010 population and housing census shows that the proportion of economically active children of the population aged 5-17 years is relatively high (38.2%) as compared to the national figure of 16.6 percent suggesting that a lot of children are not into full time education in the region. Obviously, this has consequences for educational attainment, which is relatively low in the Northern region. The proportion of the population aged above three years who have never been to school is estimated to be 54.9 percent in the Northern region. This figure is higher than the national average of 23.4 per cent. Furthermore, the proportion of the population over 15 years in the region that is not literate is about 37.3% compared to the 28.5% of the country as a whole. Further analysis revealed that only 18 per cent of the population (15 years and older) are literate, including 7.3 percent in English only, 9.9 per cent in both English and Ghanaian language and 0.7 per cent in Ghanaian language only (Ghana Statistical Service, 2012). This could be explained by the fact

that, the proportion of 6 years and over that has never been to school in the Northern region is 44.9 per cent compared to the national figure of 23.5 per cent.

The region's population falls under four major categorisations namely; the Mole Dagbon, (52.2%) the Gurma, (21.8%) the Akan and the Guan (8.7%). Among the Mole-Dagbon, the largest sub-group are the Dagomba and the Mamprusi, while the Komkomba are the largest of the Gurma, the Chokosi of the Akan and the Gonja of the Guan. The Dagomba constitute about a third of the population of the region (source: Ghana districts.com). In all, the Northern region is home to about 17 ethnic groups.

Economic activities

The Northern region has a high proportion of economically active population aged 15 years and older (about 73.6 per cent) engaged as agriculture, forestry and fishery workers. Together, agriculture, hunting, and forestry account for the employment of 71.2 per cent of the economically active population, aged 15 years and older. Less than a tenth (7.0%) of the economically active people in the region are unemployed. The majority (71.2%) of the economically active population in the region are employed in agriculture. Only 5.7 per cent of the workforce is made up of professionals, administrative or clerical staff. The rest (23.1%) are in Sales, Services, and transport and production. The main industrial activity is agriculture (70.9%) comprising largely of farming, animal husbandry, hunting and forestry. There is very limited manufacturing (7.1%) in the region. Wholesale and retail trading also account for about 7.5 per cent of all industrial activities in the region. Only about (0.7%) of the population are engaged in mining and quarrying activities.

Administration

The Northern Region of Ghana contains 20 districts made up 18 ordinary districts alongside one municipal and one metropolitan districts (Bole, Bunkpurugu Yoyo, Central Gonja, Chereponi, East Gonja, East Mamprusi, Gushegu, Karaga, Kpandai, Nanumba North, Nanumba South, Saboba, Savlugu-Nanton, Sawla-Tuna-Kalba, Tamale, Tolon-Kumbungu, West Gonja, West Mamprusi, Yendi and Zazugu-Tatale).

Key causal factors of conflicts in the Northern Region

In order to understand the causes of ethnic conflict in the Northern Region of Ghana, one must gain better understanding of the social structure of the region and the significance of chieftaincy alongside land ownership. Traditionally, the social structure in the Northern Region has been divided into chiefly and acephalous societies. Chiefly groups such as the Dagomaba, Nanumba, Gonja and Mamprusi are normally referred to as the majority ethnic group and they perceive themselves as indigenous and own land¹. Historically these groups are organised hierarchically

¹ Importantly, ethnicity in Ghana has come to assume a group of overlapping characteristics: language, culture and, for groups indigenous to the modern territorial unit, a 'traditional' place of residence (Nugent and Lentz, 2000).

from lower level chiefs to divisional chief as well as paramount chiefs. On the other hand, the acephalous groups include the Konkombas, Vagala, Tampulima, Nawuris, Basares and Nchumurus. These ethnic groups are seen as minority groups and are often labelled segmentary societies (Assefa, 2000). The minority groups have resented the monopoly of land ownership in the hands of the majority ethnic groups as well as the tribute that they are required to pay. Land tenure security has been the major underlying factor for most conflicts in the region. In most instances, inter ethnic conflict in the Northern Region has generally taken place between minority and majority groups and can be partly explained by the perceived polarisation of minority and majority blocks. For Brukum (2001), most of these conflicts occurring in the northern region of Ghana are best described as “wars of emancipation”. The classification of the people in the Northern region into the ‘majority’ and ‘minority’ groups has led to the existence of a premise of inequality and accounts for the majority of the conflict occurring in the region (Awedoba, 2009).

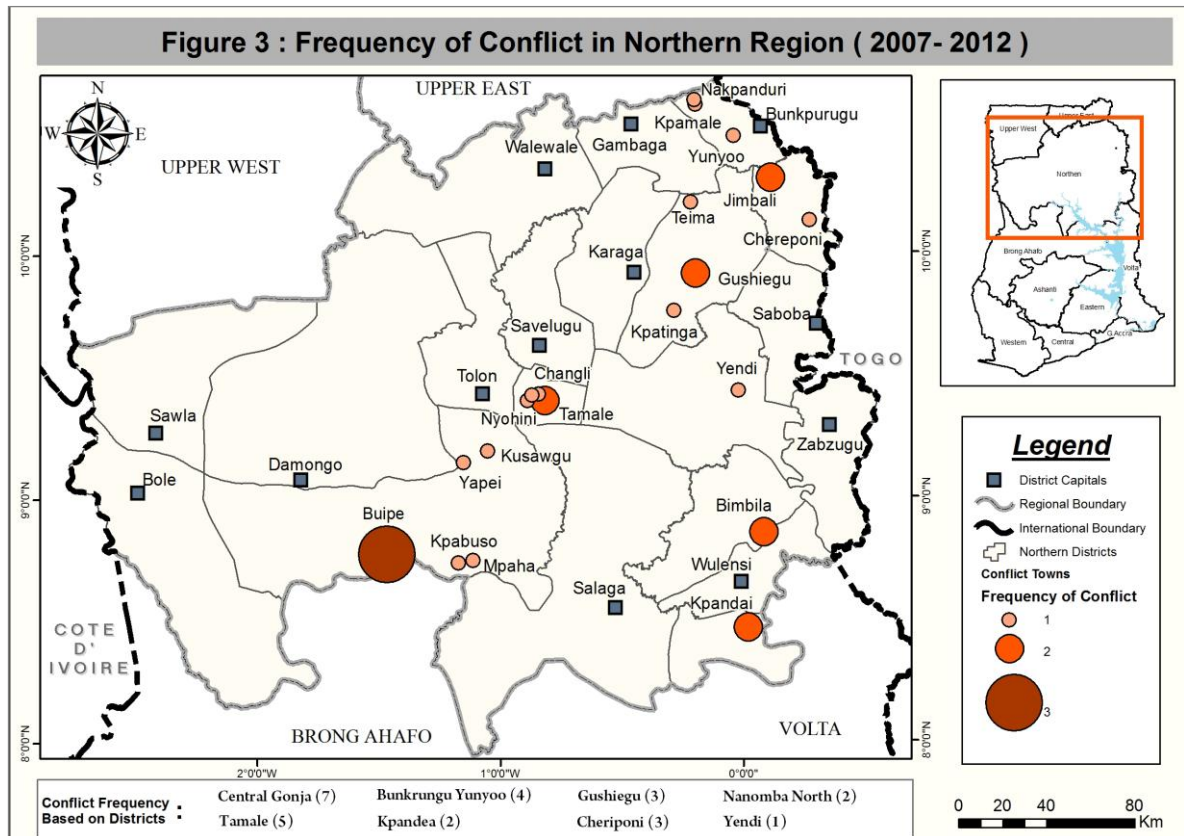
General perceived causes of conflict in northern Ghana have already been discussed both in the literature review section and in the introduction to the regional analysis. This subsection focuses on an analysis and discussion of the field data on conflicts in the northern region as reported in the two national daily newspapers between 2007 and July 2012. The region is much more diverse in its range of conflicts compared to the Upper West and Upper East regions due mainly to the juxtaposition of centralised and acephalous states.

Analysis of conflicts zones in the northern region

From 2007 to present there were several conflicts reported in the national dailies – Daily Graphic and Ghanaian Times. Figure 3 presents the frequency of conflicts recorded in the Northern Region during the period under review. This section attempts to provide a brief overview of what is known and understood about the causes of each conflict zone visited in the northern region. A key issue is that there are not just a variety of causes of conflicts but different types of causes in the study area. Therefore, the next section presents the context of conflict in the Northern region, before moving on to discuss the causes of conflicts in the region.

The current context of conflicts in the Northern Region

In the northern region, the study observed four distinct types of conflicts, namely; chieftaincy succession conflicts (mostly intra-ethnic), political conflicts (usually between the supporters of NDC and the NPP), resource based conflicts (normally between different ethnic groups over land) and religious conflicts (between Tijaniya and Alusuna Muslim groups). With the exception of the violent political conflicts that were episodic in nature and were to do with election related activities all the other conflicts were noted to be cyclical as well as ethnic in nature. This observation is consistent with Tsikata and Seini’s (2004) classification of conflicts in Ghana into inter-ethnic conflicts over land and political power, intra-ethnic disputes, usually over succession to traditional political office or boundary disputes and religious disputes. Table 1 presents the incidence of these different types of conflict in each of the conflict hot spots visited in the region. Similarly, Figure 4 provides a graphic representation of the types of conflict recorded in the Northern Region during the period under study.



Source: Fieldwork, 2012

Chieftaincy conflicts

Chieftaincy conflicts were recorded in Buipe, Kpandai, Yendi and Bimbilla. Chieftaincy conflicts were mostly to do with succession rules to skins, practices and processes. The chieftaincy conflicts were either inter-ethnic or intra ethnic. The Buipe conflict was intra-ethnic between the Jinapo and the Lebu gates. In Kpandai, the chieftaincy conflict is among the Nawuris but it is also subtly shaped by access to and control over land. The chieftaincy conflict in Bimbilla is intra ethnic between Nanumbas.

Political conflicts

Political conflicts occurred as a result of violent clashes among rival political groupings mostly between supporters of the governing National Democratic Congress (NDC) and the main opposition New Patriotic Party (NPP). The perception that politicians would step in to favour their political agenda actually fuels these types of conflict. The conflict occurring in Tamale, Chereponi and Gushiegu occurred as a result of a political event, in this case elections.

The Gusheigu conflict was a post-election violence that occurred on the 30th September 2008 in the Kpatinga electoral area when the NDC supporters were hoisting a flag to celebrate the victory of their party in the December 2008 elections. Unfortunately the ceremony was taking place near a place where some NPP activists were also erecting their party shed. In the Tamale metropolis political conflicts

occurred in Gumbihini, Choggu and Changli as a result of political rivalries between the two main parties. The conflict was a pre-election violence between supporters NDC and the NPP in which 26 houses were burnt in the Choggu hill top and Choggu manayili areas. The conflict emanated as a result of radio station discussion between the activists of the two main political parties. The discussion on the radio station led to an argument between butchers in the Tamale central market. The argument resulted into a conflict among the butchers which resulted in the death of a colleague butcher who was an NDC sympathiser. The NDC organised, attacked and burnt the home of one of the panellist on the radio discussion who was seen as an NPP person. Series of attacks ensued between the NPP and NDC in three suburbs of Tamale namely Dagbon-Dabafong, Gumbihini, Aboabo/Tamale central and Zogbeli/Nyohini.

Table 1: Conflict Location and Type

Locality	Type of conflict
Bimbilla	Chieftaincy (intra-ethnic) Long standing ethnic conflict between Nanumbas and Konkombas as a result of the installation of a Kokomba chief in Bimbilla.
Kpandai	Inter-ethnic conflict as a result of land (between Nawuris and Gonjas)
Kpandai	Intra-ethnic (chieftaincy among the Nawuris in Kpandai and Nawuris in Balai)
Buipe	Recurring Chieftaincy conflict
Tamale (Gumbihini)	Political violence - NPP NDC clashes
Tamale (Choggu)	Political violence - NPP NDC clashes
Tamale (Changli)	Political violence - NPP NDC clashes
Gusheigu	Political violence - NPP NDC clashes Struggles over land use between Fulanis and indigenous Farmers mostly Kokombas
Yendi	Intra-ethnic chieftaincy conflict between two gates (recurring and having spill over effects to other areas of the Dagomba traditional area. Political undertones existing (Abudu Gate belonging to NPP and Adani Gate to NDC)
Bunkprugu Yoooyuo (Nankpanduri, Teima, Kpamele, Jimbale)	Recurring land conflict
Chereponi	Political conflict (bye-election)

Source: Fieldwork, 2012

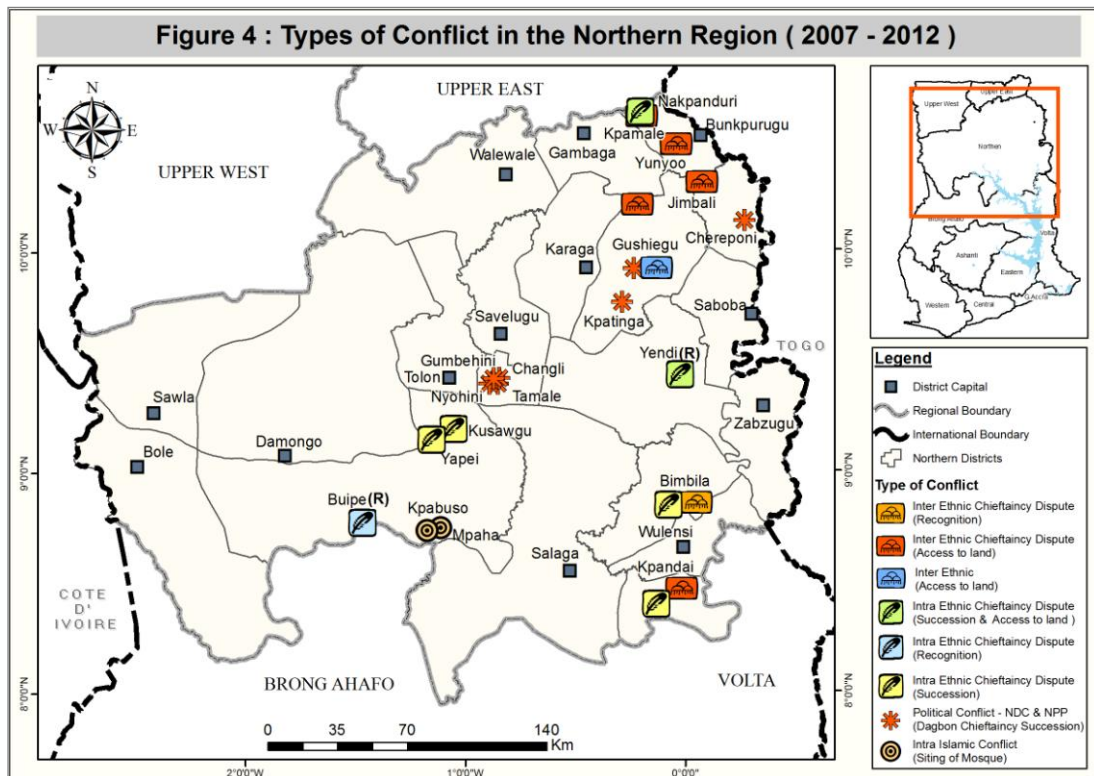
The Chereponi conflict was a bye-election violence that occurred when members or agents of both the NDC and the NPP attempted to organise a rally in the same locality on the same day. These political conflicts are not detached from the institution of chieftaincy but both in many instances are inextricably linked. For

instance, these political conflicts occur along ethnic cleavages that are patterned by the different parties to a chieftaincy dispute. On the other hand, some chieftaincy conflicts that are purely traditional matters (eg the Dagbon succession dispute) have become the main subject of local politics, as well as an issue in national politics. Though the political hand has meddled in chieftaincy conflicts since the time of the colonial government, the introduction of NPP/NDC partisanship struggles within the arenas of chieftaincy related conflicts is a new development in the conflict landscape in the Northern region.

Resource based conflicts

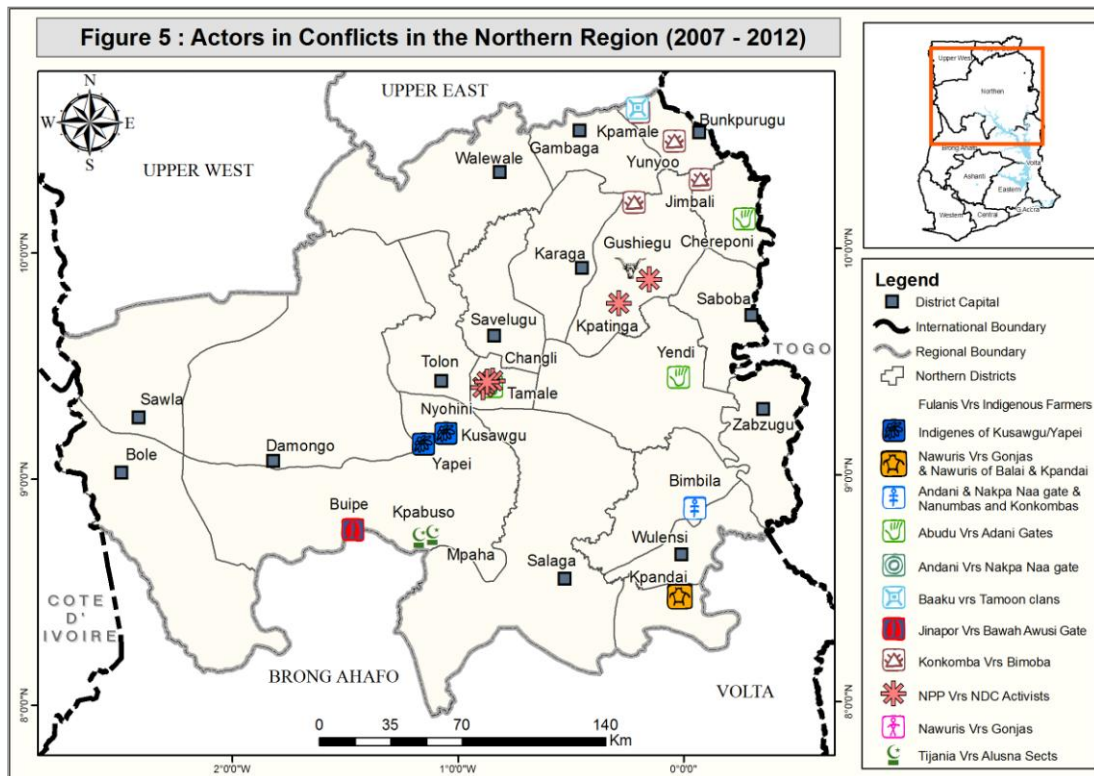
Land conflicts were mostly inter-ethnic struggles over access to, control over and ownership of land. Resource based conflicts especially land related ones were noted in Kpandai, Bimbilla, Bunkprugu Yoooyo and Gushegu. The Kpandai conflict was between the Gonjas and the Nawuris over land ownership. The Bimbilla conflict is an inter-ethnic conflict between the Konkomba and Nanumba ethnic groups. The conflict dates back to 1994 and it is about recognition and respect as well as control over resources including political resources. The Bunkprugu Yonyuo conflict happened in many villages such as Kpamale, Terma, Jimbale, Kambatia and Bakoni due to competing claims over land ownership among the Manprusis, Bimobas and Konkombas. The violent conflict between Fulanis and the Konkombas occurred in Zamashegu in the Gushegu District of the Northern region due to competition over land use. This violent conflict that led to the death of 13 Fulani herdsmen was not about ownership of land but it was about control over land use.

Although most of these conflicts on the surface seem to be about struggles over land or other resources, however, narratives from respondents also suggested that they were also about struggles for recognition, respect and self esteem. The self esteem of the individual is also inextricably linked to the self esteem of the group. Given the key role that the sense of belonging plays in shaping individual identity in Africa, it is not out of place to find people placing value on self esteem for the individual as well as the ethnic group even though most academics perceive some of these factors as primordial. This is because, as Chabal (2009:43) puts it, “in African social relations individuals conceive themselves in terms of the multiple and multifaceted relations which link them with others within ever-expanding and overlapping concentric spheres of identity”. Alongside belonging, ethnic groupings give identity to people within the context of nationalism in most parts of Africa including Ghana.



The origin and causes of violent conflicts in the northern region

Effectively responding to conflict requires both an understanding of its causes as well as a conscious effort to gain deeper insights into the context within which conflict has operated in order to come out with appropriate responses to address the causes of the conflict. For the purpose of this discussion a distinction is made between the structural and the proximate causes of each conflict hot spots visited in the northern region. To move the analysis further, the proximate causes of the conflict are further categorised into secondary causes –factors that enable and sustain the conflict and tertiary causes or the drivers that hinder resolution. Furthermore, a detailed map of the actors involved in each conflict identified in the Northern region is presented in Figure 5.



Source: Fieldwork, 2012

The causes of conflict in the Northern region are obviously complex and varied. It is quite a daunting task to categorise these causes under specific headings. However, going through the narratives it was apparent that violent conflicts that occurred in the northern region of Ghana were basically ethnic in nature and were informed by issues such as succession to skins, land ownership, superiority and inferiority complexes, pride and discrimination against perceived ethnic minorities groups. There is a recent phenomenon of inter political party conflict that is gradually adding to the vista of conflicts in the Northern region. However, for the purpose of clarity the causes of conflicts will be analysed separately for each conflict area studied. Tables 2, 3 and 4 detail the causes of the conflicts, the actors and the capacity for peace after mediation. These are derived from the narratives from key respondents.

Table 2: Northern region conflicts: analysis of key conflict causal factors

Type and form of conflict	Location	Proximate	Structural
Chieftaincy (intra-ethnic)	Bimbilla	The death of the Bimbilla chief leading to succession problem	Legitimacy/Succession to throne
Long standing ethnic conflict between Nanumbas and Konkombas	Bimbilla	Market square quarrel over the price of a guinea fowl	Konkombas-Resisting oppressed rule and sense of being marginalized Nanumbas-Trying to maintain status quo as overlords and indigenes
Inter-ethnic	Kpandai	Multiple selling of piece of land and taking of the proceeds	Contestation over land ownership
Intra-ethnic (chieftaincy)	Kpandai	Chieftaincy over who to be the chief of Kpandai and the paramount chief of Nawuris	Access to and control of land
Chieftaincy recurring one	Buipe	Firing of gun at Yagbon Wura's palace by a member of one of the gates (Jinapor)	Power and authority in order to be recognised and accorded the needed respect and prestige
NPP/NDC clashes	Tamale (Gumbihini)	Argument at the slaughter house over a heated radio station's political discussion	Abudu, Andani chieftaincy conflict in Dagbon, politics
	Tamale (Choggu)	Cleaning of a gutter by NDC supporters in front of NPP Tamale north constituency office.	Abudu, Andani chieftaincy conflict in Dagbon, politics
	Tamale (Changli)	Argument at the slaughter house over a heated radio station's political discussion	Abudu, Andani chieftaincy conflict in Dagbon, politics
NPP NDC clashes (not recurring)	Gusheigu	Hoisting of NDC flag and celebrating NDC supporters and Erection of a party shed by NPP activists	Abudu, Andani chieftaincy conflict in Dagbon and politics as the base
Dagbon Chieftaincy conflict (recurring and having split over effect to all other areas of the Dagomba traditional area)	Yendi	Any misunderstanding between individuals of the two gates in whatever situation triggers the conflict.	Power, Recognition, and Control over land and its resources by the two feuding gates (Abudus and Adanis)
Land conflict (not recurring)	Bunkprugu Yooyun (Nankpanduri, Kpamele, Teima, Jimbale)	Building of a school on a land which part belongs to a Bimoba man and another part belonging to a Konkomba man. Difficulties in resolving the differences led to the conflict	control over land by the Mamprusi, Bimoba and Konkomba ethnic groups

Source: Fieldwork, 2012

Table 3: Northern region conflicts: actor analysis

Type and form of Conflict	Location	Actors	Motivation	Interests	Hidden agenda
Chieftaincy succession (intra-ethnic)	Bimbilla	Andani gate and Nakpa Naa gate	To become the ruling class in the community	To occupy the skin and take control over resources in the community	Ascending to the throne in order to become the overlord so that he (the chief) can enjoy the benefits and prestige of the throne
Long standing ethnic conflict	Bimbilla	Nanumbas and Konkombas	Nanumbas-to be accorded the needed recognition from the Konkombas Konkombas-to liberate themselves from the oppressed rule of the Nanumbas	Nanumbas - to have control over land and resources Konkombas - to get to land and control of resources, recognition	Nanumbas - want to protect and maintain their position and integrity as the overlords
Inter-ethnic	Kpandai	Nawuris-Gonjas	To take control of land and resources	To get access to and control over land	Land ownership and control of resources
Intra-ethnic (chieftaincy)	Kpandai	Raymond Assuo (Kpandai) - Felix Atosah (Balai)	To become the ruling class in the community	To occupy the skin and take control over land and resources in the community	To be recognised as the paramount chief in order to get control over land and resources/prestige
Chieftaincy recurring one	Buipe	Jinapor's gate and Bawah Awusi's gate	Quest for power and to be recognised	To rule the community	To get access to and control of resources/prestige
NPP NDC clashes	Tamale (Gumbihini, Choggu, Changli)	NPP and NDC activists	NPP -Release the people in jail NDC - jailing of the murderers of Ya Naa.	NPP - Political dominance NDC - Political dominance	Abudu/Andani struggle for power
NPP/NDC clashes (not recurring)	Gusheigu	NPP and NDC activists	NPP - the NPP supporters want to release their jailed members NDC - The NDC actors main motivation is to jail	NPP - Political dominance with the hope of getting their people released from jail NDC - Political dominance with the hope of jailing those who murdered the Ya Naa	Abudu - Andani struggle for power over the control of resources in the traditional area

			all the murderers of the Ya Naa		
Dagbon Chieftaincy conflict (recurring and having spillover effects to all other areas of the Dagomba traditional area)	Yendi	Abudu and Adani gates	Recognition and power to control land and its related resources	succession to the chieftaincy (overlord) title	The Adanis want to get those who killed the Ya Na punished and still have someone from the Adani gate as the overlord of the traditional area. The Abudus want to also gain access to the throne by the performance of their late father's funeral, Mohamadu Abdulai
Land conflict	Bunkprugu Yooyuo (Nakpan Kuri, Kpamele, Teima, Jimbale	Mamprusi, Bimoba, and Konkomba	To acquire more farm lands and other land resource like the dawadawa trees	Control over land and resources in Bunkprugu Yooyuo traditional area	Resisting the rule and marginalization among the three ethnic groups in the traditional area

Source: Fieldwork, 2012

Table 4: Northern region conflicts: capacity for peace

Type and form of conflict	Location	Type of mediation efforts	Efficacy of the mediation process	Outcome	Current status
Chieftaincy succession (intra-ethnic)	Bimbilla	DISEC/Military detachment	It has helped in maintaining the current relative peace in the area through imposition of curfews and arms disarmament	Brought calm to the community since there is no more violence and rioting in Bimbilla town and its surroundings and also putting a ban on drumming during festive occasions	Relative peace but the issue has not been resolved because there is no substantive chief in Bimbilla
		Legal court system	Weak since the court has not been able to implement its ruling even though it ruled in favour of one gate	Not successful because the people have not accepted the court ruling and has appealed for further hearing	Peaceful but not satisfied with the situation because there is no chief
Ethnic conflict	Bimbilla	REGSEC/DISEC /Military detachment	Has helped in keeping the issue calm through curfews and disarming of the people	Not successful since the issue keeps on recurring	Fragile peace because the people are living in mutual suspicion. They doubt each other and suspect evil acts from time to time
		Concerned Citizen Association	Effective in the sense that it is through this that the feuding parties have been able to come together to decide on how to resolve their differences and smoke the peace pipe	The Association has been able to bring the people together and educate them on the need for peace	Fragile peace due to lack of trust among the people
Inter-ethnic	Kpandai	REGSEC/DISEC /Military detachment	Helped in keeping the issue calm through curfews and disarming of the people in the area	Has helped to bring calm to the area	Relatively peaceful since there is no violence and rioting but anything can happen because the dispute has not been settled and the disputants are not happy with that

Intra-ethnic	Kpandai	DISEC/Military detachment	Helped in maintaining the current relative peace through military detachment and imposition of curfews	Brought calm to the community since there is no more violence and rioting in the area	Relative peace but the issue has not been resolved because there is no recognised chief in Kpandai
		Legal court system	Weak since the court has not been able to implement its ruling even though it ruled in favour of one gate	Not successful because the people have not accepted the court ruling and have appealed for further hearing	Peaceful but the people are not satisfied with the situation because there is no chief which could lead to eruption of violence in the area
Chieftaincy recurring one	Buipe	Court system	Contradicts the tradition and customs of the people because one of the parties views the court decision not to be in consonance with the custom	Not satisfactory because one of the disputants is not satisfied with the court's rulings and has appealed for further deliberations	Relative peace prevails
		DISEC	Somehow efficient because it has been able to disarm the disputants and prevent attacks on each other	Ban on drumming and performing of traditional festivals such as damba	Has brought calm leading to relative peace in the community
NPP NDC clashes	Tamale(Gumbihini, Choggu, Changli)	IPAC	Credibility of the mediators said to be questionable therefore not satisfactory	Not successful	Not resolved
NPP NDC clashes (not recurring)	Gusheigu	NCCE/IPAC	It was somehow efficient because it involved all the political party elders. They felt the process was transparent	It was able to bring the situation under control	relatively calm with suspicion due to Abudu and Adani struggle for power in Dagbon

Dagbon Chieftaincy conflict (recurring)	Yendi	MUGSEC/REGS EC	Somehow efficient.	It was able to bring the situation (attacking each other) under control	Relatively calm for now but there is suspicion in all interaction between the two gates. The peace is described as "joking peace"
		The Catholic church	Efficient but not sufficient	The catholic church was the first to bring the two gates together for a mediation process to take place. The conciliatory role by the church prepared the grounds for engagement to bring peace to the area.	There is calm in the Yendi municipality but the conflict is not resolved.
		Committee of Eminent chiefs (Asanti hene, Yagbonwura, and Nayiri)	somehow efficient but not sufficient	A road map to peace in Dagbon with a number of activities to be undertaken by each gate (installing of chiefs and performance of funerals of some prominent people in the traditional area)	Implementation in process but some of the activities by both sides against the road map to peace. The conflict is not resolved; the place is calm but with mutual suspicion high; Tension is high due to the multiplicity of the installation of chiefs by both sides
Land conflict	Bunkprugu Yooyuo (Nakpanduri, Kpamele, Teima, Jimbale)	DISEC	It was somehow efficient as all the ethnic/village leaders are involved in the process making it transparent	It was able to bring the situation under control	Relatively calm for now but there is suspicion in all interaction among the ethnic groups

Source: Fieldwork, 2012

Bunkprugu Yonyuo District Conflict

In the Bunkprugu Yonyuo District, settlements or villages are made up of a combination of either Mamprusi and Bimoba or Mamprusi and Kokombas. However, Nankpanduri have members of the minority settler group – bimobas and kokombas – as the inhabitants. The mamprusis see themselves as owners of the traditional areas and as such claim access to and control over of land.

The ethnic conflict in Bunkprugu Yonyuo District occurred in Nankpanduri , Kpamele, Teima, Jimbale. The conflict manifested in reprisal attacks between the Kokombas and Bemobas ethnic groups. The conflict that broke out between the Konkombas and Bimobas at Kpamale a village near Nankpanduri in the Bunkpurugu-Yunyoo District in the Northern Region claimed three lives. The proximate cause of the violent conflict that occurred was a misunderstanding between two individuals, a Konkomba man and a Bimoba man over a piece of land meant for the construction of a school. Both the Konkombas and the Bimobas rallied around their kinsman to claim ownership of the particular land that was meant for a communal project. The misunderstanding degenerated into violence, which was characterised by sporadic shootings and the burning down of houses.

Obviously one will question why the two ethnic groups found it very difficult to let go a portion of land that was meant for community project that will end up benefiting all community members. The problem here is the multiple claims made over the same piece of land (between a Bimoba and a Kokomaba) where property right is supported by oral history but not legal documents and have last a couple of generations. Such property rights over land have followed different forms over time and have shaped debate concerning authority over resources. Further insights into the dispute over the land meant for the construction of the school building revealed the different meanings that were attached to the process as well as the wider implications for the outcome of social interaction. For each ethnic group letting the land go meant accepting that the other group was superior and owned the land in the area. The disagreement was all about who had the right to allocate the land for the school project.

Though elders from both ethnic groups as well as the members from the district Security Council had intervened to settle the issue, different meanings attached to letting the land go. For instance a key informant explained that for each ethnic group (Konkomba and Bimoba) having the absolute authority to give out the land would be interpreted as some form of control and power over all land in the area.

You see, when you say land is the cause, it looks so broad but the main issue is who controls the land because the manprusis claim that the whole of this area including Bunkprugu belongs to them and so when you go to so many communities around here, the manprusis are the chiefs. It is only these days that the other tribes, ie bimobas and konkombas are struggling to become some chiefs. Initially, you will find communities of konkombas or bimobas with a manprusi as their chief. What happened is that, the manprusis settled at those places first but the konkomba population turned out to be high . Now the Kokombas dominate almost all the communities in this area in terms of population size. So there is a feeling among the Kokombas that, how can we

be majority population and allow these people – Mamprusis – to be making decisions for us.

The above narratives suggest that both the Bimobas and the Kokombas recognise the Mamprusis as owners of the land. So in Bunkrugu you have all the three ethnic groups peacefully coexisting as a result of the recognition of the Mamprusis (or Nayiri) as chiefs and land owners. Although historical narratives suggests that there has been conflicts between Mamprusis and either the Bimobas or the Kokombas, however, this was not found during the period of this study. Areas in which conflict occurred in the district especially the four towns mentioned above are villages in which legitimate authority or ownership of the land is often ambiguous. Current conflicts seem to occur between the two settler ethnic groups – Bimobas and Kokombas – who perceive each other as not being the rightful owner of the land. Here, there exist ambiguities concerning the rightful or recognised owner of the land. The Bimobas settled in the area earlier than the Kokombas, so the former are more accepted by the Mamprusis. This is evident by the fact that the Nayiri even gives some chieftaincy titles to Bimobas and not the Kokombas. Hence, the Konkombas, are seen as more alien but then they outnumber all the other ethnic groups in the area². This is the basis of the conflict in this area. The analysis reveals that, struggles over questions of what constitutes authentic authority, and legitimate land rights have serious implications for the incidence as well as the resolution of conflict in this area and hence it must not be ignored.

Other tertiary causes

The easy access to small arms from neighbouring Togo seems to perpetuate the conflict. For example, guns are easily available for sale in the open market in both Sankansi and Nyanburi markets in Togo. There are also many routes to cross the border without security detection.

Another respondent revealed that the history of conflict in the district has nothing to do with politics and elections. Conflict in the district is informed by how much harvest the individual can have from the land and is therefore directly derived from access to land. The claim is that once there is good harvest and people have excess funds, they will buy more guns to ferment trouble in the villages. This could be explained by the fact the two tribes - Bimobas and Konkombas - feel insecure and will always want to stockpile arms for any eventuality.

In some instances trivial issues are re-interpreted and given different meanings leading to unintended consequences. Given the high incidence of poverty, low educational attainment and high illiteracy rates in the area, trivial issues can ignite conflict in so far as people see and interpret it differently to power and authority. An example is the recent electrification project that nearly ignited conflict as narrated by one informant as follows:

² The Konkomba are seen as having higher birth rates than the other groups, a perception connected to recent migration patterns as well as to external understandings of their family structure, which has fuelled fears amongst the Mamprusis and Bimobas of being ‘swamped’.

There is a national ongoing electrification project , which is relying on old data rather than a comprehensive list that is current and include all the communities. Hence most communities are omitted from the current list of towns to be connected to the national electricity grid. So, the communities not on the list upon seeing the electric lines jumping their communities to other places felt humiliated and did not take it kindly. The issue is that, these communities have their dominant ethnic groups and it was like they are giving it to some ethnic groups and leaving others. So far the project is on hold and if not well explained to the members, resumption may lead to conflict.

Bimbilla Conflict

The Nanumbas and Konkombas are the two major ethnic groups in the district. The Nanumbas are perceived as the indigenes while the Konkombas are seen as settlers. The claim is that the Konkombas first settled in Bimbilla in the 1940s. In Bimbilla, there is a long standing inter-ethnic conflict between the Nanumbas and Konkombas alongside the reoccurring intra-ethnic succession conflict among the Nanumbas – (the Andani gate and Nakpa Naa gate).

The narratives suggest that the Nanumba hold a position from tradition and history that dates back to periods long before independence which affirms them as landlords and overlords. The Konkomba hold a contrary view that though they do not own the land they should not be marginalised. The quest of the Konkombas is their desire to get a chief from their kin installed as a Konkomba Na in Bimbilla Township who could also adjudicate cases among the Konkombas. However, the intention of the Konkombas to install their own chief in Bimbilla generated resistance and anger from the then Bimbilla chief. The rejection of the Konkomba request to install their own chief in Bimbilla was to avoid the creation of another power centre that will parallel the position and authority of the Bimbilla Naa. Rather, the Bimbilla Naa enskinned a Konkomba as a chief but this Konkomba chief was neither accepted nor recognised by his own kinsmen. He is known in the area to be the only chief of Konkombas recognised by the Nanumbas and he reciprocates this gesture by paying allegiance to the Bimbilla chief. This Konkomba chief is the only Konkomba who owns a permanent house/structure in the entire Bimbilla Township³.

The consciousness of the Konkombas to struggle for emancipation (in this case having their own chief) was shaped by their opposition to their subordinate status and exploitation by the Nanumbas. This is the major cause of the ethnic conflict between the Nanumbas and the Konkombas. A key informant revealed that:

The Konkombas feel they are marginalized and have no power. The truth is that Konkombas are the majority in terms of population here but they still have to come to the Bimbilla chief to settle their cases. Concerning the legitimacy of land there is no problem because the Konkombas don't claim ownership of land. The Konkomba were attracted to Bimbilla area because

³ Konkombas will not attempt to put up any permanent structure in Bimbilla because of the constant security delimas and uncertainties about the behaviour of the Nanumbas. In the Bimbilla Township itself, Nanumbas outnumber the Konkomba in terms of population.

there is no law concerning acquisition of land here and I blame my people for that... You see, there had never been any problem until 1980s when the Konkombas felt that they should have a chief in Bimbilla who could also rule their cases but that request was denied by the then Bimbilla chief. By 1981 between February and March the first conflict between the Nanumbas and Konkombas started. The conflict reoccurred around 1993 and in February 1994 the conflict started and in 1995 there was a 'war' for three days and was very serious.

The inter-ethnic conflict between the Nanumbas and Konkombas occurred as a result of the attempt by the Konkombas to alter a long standing ruler-subject relationship and also to claim control of land as a result of long use. The Konkombas felt that though they were in the majority they were being marginalised by the Nanumbas. The Nanumbas also felt the need to maintain the status quo as overlords as the indigenes. However, hidden under the issues of recognition for chieftaincy and title for land are deep resentments based on perceptions of political inequalities, social and cultural prejudices.

The Bimbilla Chieftaincy succession dispute

The chieftaincy succession conflict occurred after the death of the Bimbilla chief, Naa Abarka in 1994 and it is an intra-ethnic struggle to become the paramount chief among the nanumba ethnic group. Getting a substantive chief to succeed the late paramount chief of Bimbilla has been a problem since 2002/2003. The conflict is between the Andani gate and Nakpa Naa gate all of whom are Nanumbas. The nominated chief has to be from either the *Gbomayili* or *Bangyili* gates and these gates occupy the Bimbilla skin in turns.

The Nanumbas have a hierarchical chieftaincy system and any candidate to the Bimbilla skin from either the *Gbomayili* or *Bangyili* gates must have risen through the intermediate ranks to Nakpaa and Dokpam skin respectively. Since Naa Abarka was from the *Bangyili* gate it was obvious that the next Bimbilla chief after his death would have come from the *Gbomayili* gate. The dispute over who to succeed the late Bimbilla Naa was as a result of disagreement concerning which of the two individuals, Andani Dasana Abdulai and Alhaji Salifu Dawuni was qualified to become the next Bimbilla Naa. The ensuing struggles are informed by disputes of chiefly appointments to some of the skins in the traditional area by the late Bimbilla chief, Naa Abarka. However, the supporters of Andani Dasana Abdulai quickly enskinned him as the Bimbilla Naa and this action has been the cause of the chieftaincy conflict in the area. As a result of the desire of certain key individuals to get chiefly power, members of the same ethnic group are divided into factions, rallying behind the main contenders.

Kpandai conflict

The Kpandai district is made up of the Gonja, Nawuri, Konkomba, Kotokoli, Ewe, Bassare and Nchrumru ethnic groups. Recent conflicts between the two (the Gonjas and Nawuris) happened in 1991, 1992 and 1995. The conflict in this area is primarily between the Gonjas and Nawuris and it is essentially over land. However, the presence of various minority ethnic groups alongside the Gonjas and Nawuris has

complicated the dynamics of the entire conflict in the area. The Nawuris are supported by other minority ethnic groups notably the Nchrumrus and Konkomba against the Gonjas. As suggested by one informant:

this place is very volatile because there are many ethnic groups in the area with different motives. The conflict between the Gonjas and Nawuris is over land ownership which became an ethnic conflict. However, for the Nawuris, it is chieftaincy and access to and control of land ...The Konkombas here have never challenged any Nawuri man that they own Kpandai. It is rather the Gonjas and Nawuris who are fighting over who owns the land.

The narrative above suggests that, in the Kpandai area, Konkombas consider themselves as settler groups and do not lay any claim to land ownership, however, they have aligned with other minority ethnic groups because they regard the Gonjas as “too domineering” (Awedoba, 2009). However, the Gonjas, Nawuris and the Nchrumrus each claim indigene status and regard their respective ethnic group as the indigenous owners of the land in the Kpandai area. For example, the Gonjas assert that they were the first ethnic group to settle in Kpandai and later brought in the Nawuris to settle in the area. Such struggles and competition over land ownership explains the current tension among the multi-ethnic groups in the Kpandai area. Between the majority ethnic groups - Gonjas, Nawuris and the Nchrumrus - claims to land rights were expressed based on different legitimising discourses, ranging from historical claims of indigeneity, to claims based on current land-use.

Dispute over the legitimate chief of Kpandai (Kpandai Wura)

The chieftaincy dispute is between the Kpandai and Balai Nawuris and it is all about who is the legitimate Chief of Kpandai (Kpandai Wura). There are two factions, the Raymond Assuo or Nana Abugapa, usually referred to as the paramount chief of Kpandai and Nana Okore Atorsah II, usually referred to as the Kpandai Wura. The latter is present at government functions and is seen as the formal chief of Kpandai. Interviews suggest that the competition between the two to become the legitimate/substantive chief of Kpandai intensified in 2011 when Nana Abugapa wanted to be enskinned and gazetted as a paramount chief of the Nawuris by the Gonja chief of Salaga (Kpembi) on Thursday, 29th September, 2011. However, the DISEC saw the attempt by Nana Abugapa to be enskinned as a paramount chief over Nawuris in Kpembi as a security threat and prevented this event from happening. This was after eleven chiefs within the Nawuri Traditional Area, in a press conference on Friday, September 23, 2011, warned the Gonja's to stay away from Nawuri chieftaincy issues to avoid another communal war between the two ethnic groups (Source: Oman News, Monday, 26 September 2011).

The Yendi intra-ethnic lineage-based succession conflict

The conflict in Yendi is as a result of an extended intra-ethnic lineage-based succession crisis in the Dagbon Kingdom and the recent murder of the Overlord of the Dagomba, the Ya-Na, in 2002. In Dagbon, only the sons of former Ya Nas could become a paramount chief but the caveat here is that no man could rise higher than his father. Furthermore, only the occupant of the skins of Karaga, Savelugu and Mion can be the Ya Na. Brukum (2004) writes that these provisions did not

eliminate competition; rather, it merely structured the field, because there are always several qualified candidates for the post. Though the succession procedure may look simple, in practice it is complex and accounts for the current chieftaincy succession dispute among the Dagombas.

An informant explained that:

The cause of the conflict in Yendi is all about the chieftaincy dispute between the Abudus and Adanis. The interesting part of the whole thing is that, because this place is the home of all the Dagombas, with this division, conflicts in other villages like Gushiegu, Savelegu, Mion and even in Tamale raises tensions in Yendi. The fight might not necessary be in Yendi but if is just in any town of the Dagombas, there is tension in Yendi. Another cause of the conflict is the behaviour of politicians. The two gates (Abudus and Adanis) have aligned themselves to NPP and NDC respectively. This has further deepened the whole issue of the Dagbon chieftaincy conflict. Look, let me tell you something which am very sure of, without the politicians, this matter would not have gotten to this extend, it would have been resolved by now. In fact, they are causing all that is going on in Dagbon.

The above narrative illuminates the three principal causes of the conflict in Yendi. The chieftaincy succession rivalry between the two 'lineage gates' - Abudus and Adanis - that has to do with "eligibility, legitimacy and proper enskinment procedure"; the murder of Yakubu Andani IV, overlord of Dagbon in Yendi in 2002 and the complicity of politicians in stoking the conflict. The most recent violent conflict in Yendi between the two gates occurred on 22nd April, 2012 and it was triggered by the enskinment of a chief at Kpatinga. As one informant put it:

The conflict grows day in day out and the peace that is present is best described as a joking peace. As we speak now the regent of Dagbon by virtue of his father's murder is enskinning chiefs in some areas of Dagbon while the GbonLana⁴ from the Abudu side is also enskinning chiefs in the same area. I must say that traditionally the Mion Lana is in charge of enskinning chiefs but the GbonLana has taken it upon himself based on bitterness of the situation in the Yendi. May be I should let you know that the current GbonLana is the son of the deskinning Abudu chief.

The simultaneous enskinment of lower chiefs within the hierarchy by both the current regent of Dagbon and the Gbonlana of the Abudus is leading to increased tension in the Dagbon area and this has the propensity to turn into violent conflict. For example, the current regent enskined a new KpatiNaa while the Gbonlana of the Abudus also enskined another Kpati Naa from the Abudus though the latter is not recognised by the Northern Regional House of chiefs. However, the Kpati Naa of the Abudus died and the Abudus wanted to play drums and bury him but the DISEC prevented them from playing drums to signify the death of the Kpati Naa of the Abudus. The funeral rites of the late Kpati Naa of the Abudus were not performed

⁴ The Gbonlana is the eldest son of the last king (or Ya Na) and acts as the regent from the time of the Ya Na's death until the final funeral rites of his father, the late King has been performed (Awedoba, 2009).

after his burial. Meanwhile the formally recognised Kpati Naa is still alive but the Abudus want to play drums to traditionally signify the death of the Kpati Naa. The Andanis are preventing the Abudus from doing this and once this is not settled it will eventually lead to violent conflict. Though the structural cause of the Yendi conflict is well known to be intra-ethnic lineage-based chieftaincy succession, such contestations and struggles over purely traditional matters may serve as proximate for new conflicts in the entire Dagbon area.

Religious Conflict in Mpaha

The conflict in Mpaha in the West Gonja district was an intra religious conflict between the Tijaniyya and the Alusuna Muslim sects. The dispute was about citing of a mosque. Mpaha is a muslim dominated village with Tijaniyya and Alusuna factions. In terms of population, the Alusuna sect dominates the Tijaniyyas with each sect having a spatial stronghold in the community based on population density. The Tijaniyya dominates the Buipe side of the town while the Alusunas control the Mpaha side of the community.

The conflict started when the Tijaniyya Muslim sect wanted to build their mosque in the middle of Mpaha on a land that was closer to the Alusuna area of the village. With their numbers, the Alusuna faction insisted that they would not allow the Tijaniyya faction to build their mosque nearer to their section of the town. During interviews it was alleged that the attack and subsequent killing of an Alusuna Muslim who had visited a mosque the Alusunas were constructing at Kpanbuso triggered the violent conflict. Reports suggested that, the Tijaniyyas, from Mpaha had gone to Kpanbuso to assist their colleagues to attack the Al Sunas. The matter was resolved when the Tijaniyya Muslim sect shifted their mosque a little bit from where it was initially supposed to be built.

The Buipe chieftaincy dispute

The Buipe case is purely about chieftaincy. Informant accounts claim that there was a traditional council meeting at Yagbonwura's⁵ palace at Damango and at the said meeting Abdulai Mahama Jinapor, Chief of Bupei shot a gun in the air. However, shooting a gun in the air in the presence of the Yagbonwura was interpreted as a sign of disrespect to the YagbonWura since it was against the rules and practices of the Gonja tradition. The Yagbonwura and his council then decided to sanction the BuipeWura, Abdulai Mahama Jinapor by ousting from the traditional council meeting and subsequently deskinning him. When he was dethroned, a new BuipeWura in the person of Bawah Awusi was enskinned as chief of Buipe. The deskinning BuipeWura, Abdulai Mahama Jinapor sent the case to Tamale High Court and won the case. The YagbonWura appealed against the ruling of the Tamale High Court at the Appeals Court in Accra. Here too the deskinning BuipeWura, Abdulai Mahama Jinapor won the case. The jubilation by the Jinapor gate following the Appeals court ruling in their favour led to violent clashes between the two gates in Buipe on the 5th of March, 2011.

⁵ The overlord of the Gonja Traditional Area

As one informant said:

The Buipe chieftaincy conflict is about traditional institutions versus formal institutions. The traditional council recognised Bawah Awusi as the legitimate and substantive BuipeWura while legally the formal court recognised Abdulai Mahama Jinapor as the BuipeWura. My understanding is that there are plans to take the issue to the Supreme Court. But in our tradition those who enskin chiefs have the right to dethrone them but not the courts in Tamale and Accra.

Competition between the two factions to assert their control over (political, economic and social activities) in Buipe has triggered violent clashes in recent times in Buipe. Two such recent clashes were narrated by our informants. First, the attempt by the two competing factions to celebrate the Damba festival simultaneously resulted in violent skirmishes in the Buipe Township. It was alleged that each chief - Abdulai Mahama Jinapor and Bawah Awusi - supported by their followers felt that they had the right to perform certain rituals in the Buipe Township during the Damba festival.

The youth of the two competing gates – Lebu and Jinapor – each claims control over the collection of market tolls that was done on a particular day of the week. Though the market women were able to negotiate payment with the two gates, in one instance, during the collection of market tolls, there were clashes when a group of women decided not to pay a second time to the Jinapor gate. Their reason was that collection team of the Lebu gate had already collected their market tolls. Incidentally, the collectors of the Lebu gate were nearby and were immediately confronted by the Jinapor gate and then a conflict ensued.

The consequence of this act of toll collection is that, the market women are taxed double every week. Thus, the District Assembly as well as the two gates each collect market levies which is worrying for the traders but they are unable to resist such payments. Though the research team did not explore the utilisation of the market levies but then the question that arises is how are the taxes collected accounted for by the two palaces (gates) and how does it support the overall development of the Buipe Traditional Area.

The Yapei/Kusawgu Chieftaincy dispute

The Yapei/Kasawgu conflict is a chieftaincy succession dispute. The conflict in Kusawgu started in 2009 when the late Yagbonwura became weak and people were afraid that his condition could lead to death. Among the Gonjas, the office of Yagbonwura is restricted to chiefs from the towns of Kpembe, Bole, Tuluwe and Kusawgu. As a custom, the line of succession is such that whenever the Yagbonwura dies, and it is the term of Kusawgu to occupy the throne, the Kusawgu chief rises to occupy the skin at Yagbon as the Yagbonwura and the Yapei chief also moves to occupy the skin at Kasawgu. The then Yapeiwura who was supposed to succeed the Kusawgu chief was not in good terms with the Kusawgu chief as a result of a misunderstanding between them. So when the Yagbonwura died in 2010, the Kusawgu chief was elevated to Yagbonwura. The Yapei incident occurred when the

current Yagbonwura was elevated from Kusawgu to Yagbon. One man also elevated himself as chief from Soale gate and this brought about the conflict.

Gusheigu political violence

The Gusheigu conflict had two dimensions, political and chieftaincy, though it was politics that triggered the recent violence on the 30th September 2008. According to one informant:

The politics in this area is linked to the Dagbon chieftaincy affairs. People feel that once their political parties are in power they will be able to push forward their agenda. To me these are the major causes of the conflict... As I said earlier, the immediate problem is politics but we also have chieftaincy problem as far back as 50 years ago. Even some time ago there was a fight or should I say a war in Gusheigu between the Abudus and the Andanis. The Abudus defeated the Andanis and the Andanis had to run to Yendi. So the people here took the current issue as retaliation. The politics in this area is linked to the Dagbon chieftaincy affairs because Gusheigu is one of the major king makers of the Dagbon area.

The violence started at Kpatinga, a nearby village and spread to the Gusheigu Township. The NDC supporters in the Kpatinga area were hoisting a flag to celebrate the victory of their party in the 2008 December elections. Unfortunately the ceremony was taking place nearer to where some NPP activists were also erecting their party shed. As a result of their closeness to each other, hooting and chants of mockery ensued between the two groups resulting into stone throwing. It later became a physical fight between the two groups and the police had to intervene to calm the situation. After the incident the police escorted the NDC supporters back to town. As the NPP supporters also returned to Gusheigu Township on their way to their constituency party office stone throwing ensued again between the supporters of the two parties. The NPP's party office is very close to the NDC chairman's house. Therefore, as the two group's path crossed at the NDC chairman's house intense fighting resumed but the police were able to quell the situation.

The following morning, gun shots were heard in town as the fighting intensified. A pro NDC area in the Gusheigu was worst hit as the NDC chairman's house was attacked and burnt. As many as 41 houses were burnt down and 3 people lost their lives in the violence. The dead included an elderly man who was not a politician but a chief aspirant to the vacant Gusheigu skin confirming the claim that the conflict was not all about politics. Another person, a scrap metal dealer, was unfortunately killed as he found himself in the house of the NDC chairman at the time of the attack. His death sparked tensions in Agbogloshie in Accra. Since the September 2008 violence, there has been a curfew between 12 midnight and 4am in Gusheigu.

Gusheigu indigenes/fulanis clashes

The indigenes and Fulani violence happened in Zamashegu, a farming community in the Gusheigu district. It was alleged to be a reprisal attack by rival Konkombas on the Fulanis. Our Informant explained that the main trigger to this particular violent conflict was the destruction of crops by cattle shepherded by the Fulanis as well as the pollution of water bodies by the animals. Furthermore the Fulanis were accused of unleashing brutality on indigenes especially anyone who caused harm to their cattle or refused them access to grazing land.

Analysing mediation efforts to resolve conflicts in the Northern Region

An analysis of the region in question reveals three major findings : (1) availability of a wide range of mediation organizations and their related efforts (2) the adoption by the state of a range of different interventions for the same conflict, and, (3) the volatile nature of the region in question which has culminated in a plethora of mediation organizations

Key mediation actors and their activities

Three categories of interveners were identified. These are the state initiated and directed; state initiated but not led and private entity initiated. The interventions are also classified under three broad subdivisions: military force; legal processes and, negotiation/education. Figure 6 presents a detailed map of all the mediators in the Northern region conflicts.

State initiated and directed

These interventions dominate almost all the recorded conflicts in the Northern Region. Otherwise, the state's interventions have come in two main forms- military and legal. These military interventions have been initiated by the state through the Regional/District Security Committees and have included (1) military/ police engagement to stop the hostilities and after (2) stationed personnel at the conflict zones to keep peace through curfews, patrols and disarming of the people. The legal methods have centred on court actions- injunctions as well as prosecutorial activity. Except in a few instances, the court employs a combination of both methods. This trend has been found in the Bimbilla, Kpandai, and Buipe. In Bunkprugu Yooyuo, and Yendi the state employed only the military intervention. On a relatively-limited scale, the National Commission on Civic Education (NCCE) - a state institution was also found to have intervened in the Gushiegu NPP-NDC clashes.

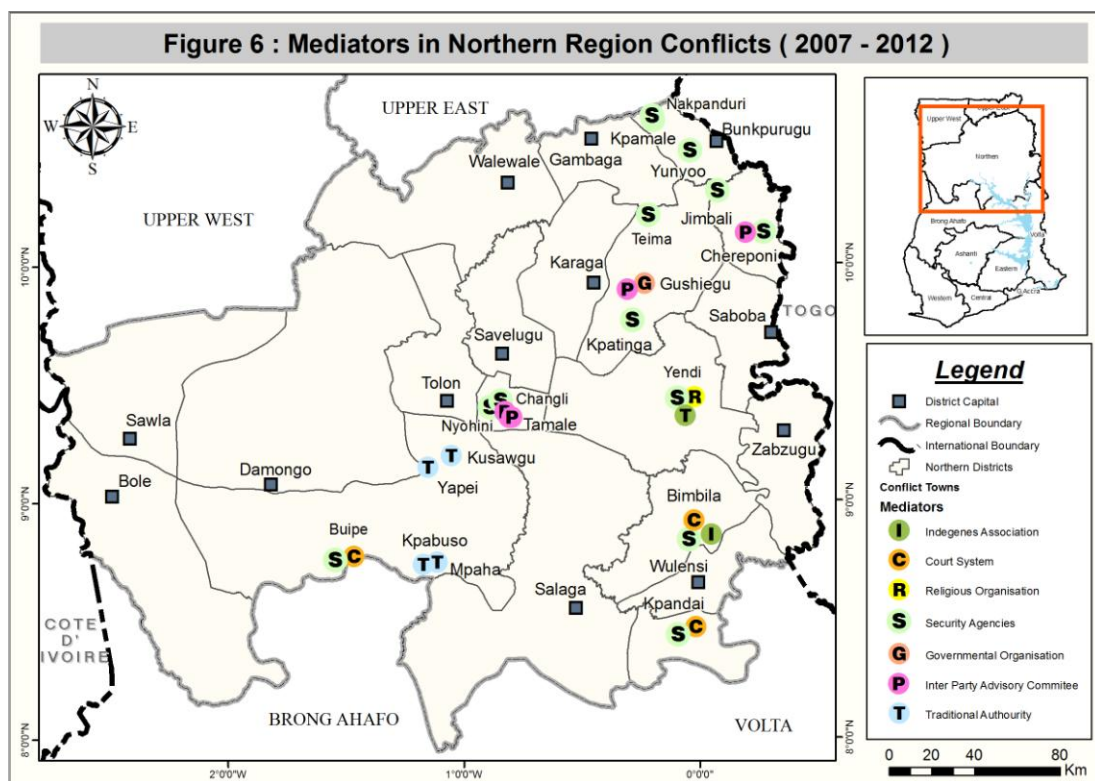
State initiated but not led;

These interventions are those which have been initiated by the state but have been left to non-state actors to lead. Negotiation and mediation have been the main tools employed by these actors. The most prominent in this regard was the constitution by government in 2002 of the Committee of Eminent chiefs (Asantihene, Yagbonwura, and Nayiri) to mediate in the Yendi conflict.

Another group noted to be active in post conflict management was the Interparty Advisory Committee (IPAC) that consists of joint membership of the various political parties acting in concert with the Electoral Commission. It is categorized as such because the committee operates under the aegis of the Electoral Commission which is an organ of the state. The results showed that IPAC had also been involved in mediating peace in the Gushiegu as well as the Tamale NPP-NDC clashes.

Civil Society Initiated

Private entity initiated mediations are both initiated and led by non-state institutions or civil society groups. Key actors in this regard were the Catholic Church in the Yendi conflict and other Non-Governmental Organization/Civil Society Group called the Concern Citizen Association which is working in the Bimbilla conflict and the West Africa Network for Peace Building (WANEP). The study noted that WANEP played active roles in post conflict management in most of the conflict areas in the Northern region.



Source: Fieldwork, 2012

Outcomes of interventions

On the whole, the outcomes of the various mechanisms for post-conflict management bear a direct relationship with the type of intervention.

Military

It is generally the case that the military interventions have appeared the most effective in terms of maintaining peace and calm. This was noted in all the areas- Bimbilla, Kpandai, Buipe, Yendi and Bunkprugu Yooyuo. The use of armed force coupled with the restrictions of movement, disarmaments and imposition of curfews tend to prevent the combatants from engaging in warfare. To that extent, the study found that there has been relative calm and a prevention of recurrence of violence in the areas where these interventions have taken place. The only exception to this trend was found in Bimbilla where the conflict recurred. Even then the interventions always bring some calm - albeit temporary.

Legal

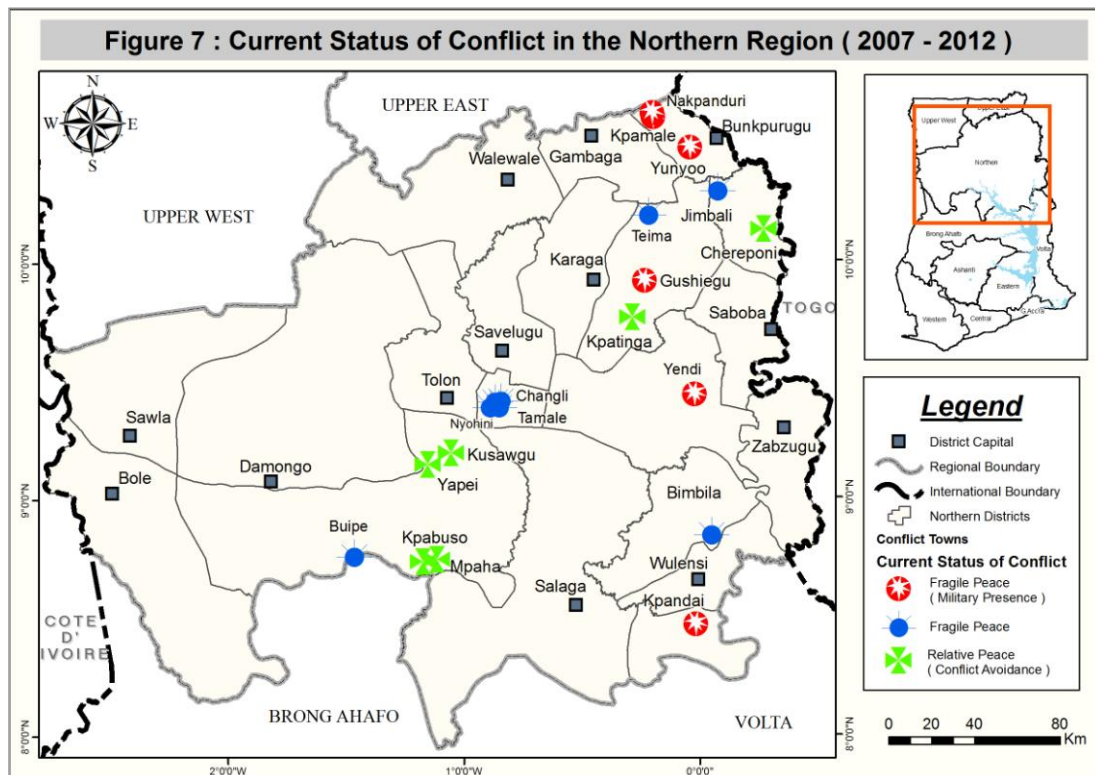
The legal interventions however, have not been as successful as the military effort. As noted in Bimbilla, Kpandai and Yendi, the legal interventions have only served to weaken an already volatile situation. The court systems have been found either to be culturally insensitive (Buipe), unjust (Yendi) or not having the power to enforce its own decisions (Bimbilla).

Negotiation/education

Comparatively, the negotiation/ education efforts have fared better than the legal system. In Bimbilla for example the Concerned Citizens Association has contributed in no small way to the peace effort by facilitating discussions with the feuding parties. This has culminated in these parties dialoguing on how to resolve their differences with the aim of smoking the proverbial peace pipe together. The efforts of Catholic Church in the Yendi crises have also been met with encouraging results. The church is credited with being the first body to bring the two feuding gates (Andani and Abudu) together for a mediation process to take place. The conciliatory role by the church not only ensured temporary calm, but also prepared the grounds for engagement to bring peace to the area.

The third specific instance under negotiation is also found in Yendi, as per the effort of the Committee of Eminent Chiefs (Asantehene, Yagbonwura, and Nayiri) who are mediating the chieftaincy crises of the Dagbon conflict. Through the efforts of this group, a road map to peace in Dagbon has been negotiated with both gates. Under the agreement, each gate has some responsibilities and activities to perform (e.g. installing of chiefs and performance of funerals of some prominent people in the traditional area). To the extent that succeeding governments have maintained this group and supported their activities, it can be suggested that their efforts are yielding some positive results. The study found that this positive outcome notwithstanding, the implementation of the road map has not progressed at the desired pace owing to intense suspicions by the gates of each other. This has culminated in periodic accusations of the committee by one gate or the other of being biased against them

with the attendant effects of the multiplicity of installation of rival chiefs and a gradual escalation of tensions.



Source: Fieldwork, 2012

Current status of peace in the Northern Region

On the whole, the study revealed that mediation efforts can be best described as yielding short term calm but not guaranteeing long-lasting and sustainable peace. All the interventions (especially the military ones) tend to achieve short term stability but they fail to eradicate the root cause of the conflict. In all the study areas, it was revealed that the root causes of the conflicts have been barely addressed. Even where the legal system has pronounced emphatically on the conflict (e.g, Yendi, Kpandai, and Buipe), the losing party has not accepted the results and have either appealed the decisions or decided to flagrantly ignore them. In Bimbilla for example, our study found that the military intervention had stopped the violence but there was still a lingering potential for more violence because the root cause of the problem - the installation of a substantive chief has still not been solved. This creates a situation where tensions are latent and suspicions rife thereby threatening the prevailing peace. The same goes for the Bimbilla ethnic conflict, the Yendi and Kpandai chieftaincy conflicts.

It is clear from the study that conflict leaves more than just a loss of life and property. It permanently changes society by introducing a never-ending suspicion into social interaction and engagement which serves as a fertile breeding ground for future eruptions. For example, it is common knowledge that during ceasefires, feuding parties in various conflicts in Northern Ghana have been known to stockpile weapons. This is illustrated in the Bunkrugugu and Bimbilla conflicts.

Upper East region⁶

Location and physical features

The Upper East region is located in the north-eastern corner of the country between longitude 00 and 10 West and latitudes (check latitudes) 10° 30'N and 11°N. It is bordered to the north by Burkina Faso, the east by the Republic of Togo, the west by the Sissala East district of the Upper West region and the south by West Mamprusi district in Northern Region. The land is relatively flat with a few hills to the east and southeast. The total land area is about 8,842 sq km, which is approximately 2.7 per cent of the total land area of the country.

The soils are predominantly upland soils mainly developed from granite rocks and consequently coarse structured, shallow and low in fertility. Erosion is a major problem due mainly to the low vegetation cover and the concentrated and torrential nature of the rains. Valley areas have mostly sandy or clayey loams, which are naturally more fertile but sometimes difficult to till due to the clayey nature. Drainage is mainly by the White and Red Volta and Sissili Rivers (Upper East Regional Coordinating Unit, 2003).

The vegetation is savannah woodland characterized by short scattered drought-resistant trees and grasses. The climate is characterized by one rainy season from May/June to September/October. The mean annual rainfall during this period is between 800 mm and 1100 mm. The rainfall is erratic spatially and in duration. There is a long spell of dry season from November to mid February, characterized by cold, dry and dusty harmattan winds. Temperatures during this period can be as low as 14 degrees centigrade at night, but can go to more than 35 degrees centigrade during the daytime. Human interference through bush burning during the long dry season and permanent cultivation is significant, resulting in near semi-arid conditions. The most common economic fruit trees are the sheanut, dawadawa, baobab and acacia.

Population characteristics

The population of the region is 1,046,545 from the 2010 census reports, which is less than five percent of the national population. The population density of 104.1 persons per square kilometre is higher than the national density of 79.3 and ranks fifth in the country. With only 15.7 per cent of the population living in urban areas, the region is the least urbanized in the country. The Upper East region also has a large and youthful labour force: about 56 per cent (55.7 percent) of the labour force is below 35 years, which is slightly lower than the national average of 61.1 per cent in 2000. The dependency ratio was 99.2 for the region as a whole, but this is rather high in three districts: Bawku West (116.1), Bawku East (110.0) and Bongo (107.4). This may be related to the conflict in the case of Bawku and the rocky and therefore low returns to agriculture in the Bongo district leading to high out migration.

⁶ The information on the profile of the region is derived from the Ghana statistical service reports as well as data available on the Ghana web about the region.

The overall levels of educational attainment are much lower in the region, compared with the country as whole. For instance the proportion of the population aged three years and over that had no schooling or attended only pre-school is 75.7 per cent in the region compared to 47.7 per cent in the country as a whole. For those 6 years and over, the proportion which has never attended school is 71.8 percent. The data also show that only 21.2 per cent of the population (15 years and older) are literate in either English only (12.9%), both English and Ghanaian language (6.6%) or Ghanaian language only (1.7%). The regional level of illiteracy (78.1%) is much higher than the national average of 45.9 per cent.

The major ethnic groups in the region fall under the broad categories of Mole Dagbane (74.5%), Grusi (8.5%), Mande-Busanga (6.2%) and Gurma (3.2%). Among the Mole-Dagbane, the major sub-groupings are the Namnam (30.5%), Kusasi (22.6%), Nankani- Gurene (9.2%) and Builsa (7.6%). The major languages of the region are Gurene (Frafra), Kasem, Nankani, Buile, Kusal, Mampruli and Bisa.

Economic activities

Agriculture, hunting and forestry are the main economic activities in the region. About eighty per cent of the economically active population engages in agriculture. The main produce are millet, guinea-corn, maize, groundnut, beans, sorghum and dry season tomatoes and onions. Livestock and poultry production are also important. There are two main irrigation projects, the Vea Project in Bolgatanga covering 850 hectares and the Tono Project in Navrongo covering 2,490 hectares. Altogether they provide employment to about 6,000 small-scale farmers. Other water-retaining structures (dams and dugouts) provide water for both domestic and agricultural purposes. Small scale mining activities occur around Tongo, Sheaga, Duusi, Pelengu and other small villages. Crafts of various types are produced especially by the women. These include pottery, basketry and smock weaving.

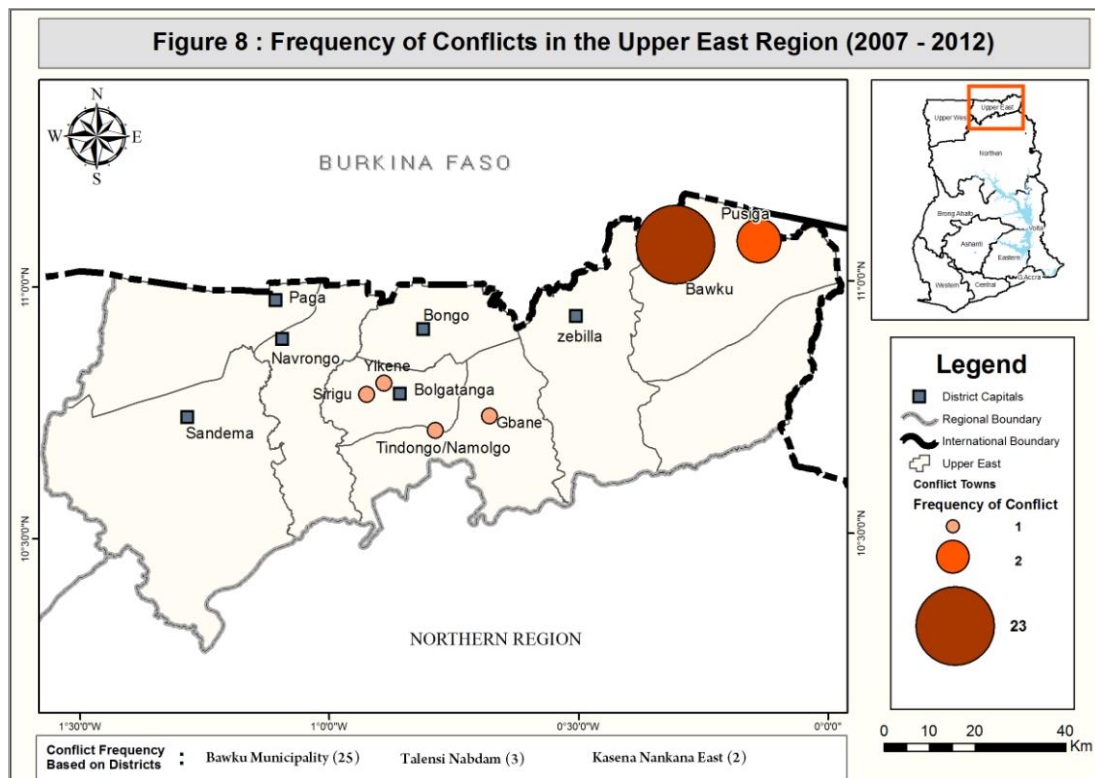
The region is characterized by largely illiterate and youthful population. Agriculture, the main economic activity is seasonal and low paying. Crafts in cottage industries are also of low skill attracting low returns. These coupled with the high population densities and limited lands for farming are creating tensions in some parts of the region.

Administration

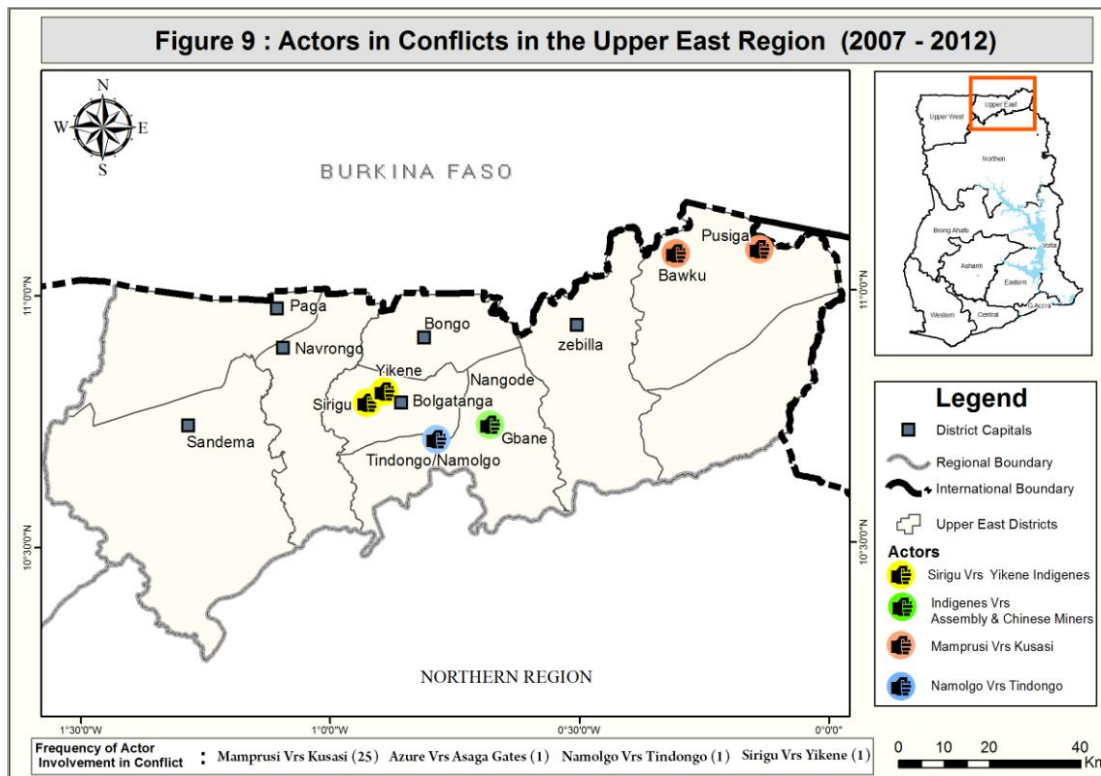
Currently, there are 13 administrative districts (Bawku Municipal, Bawku West, Binduri, Pusiga, Garu Tempene, Bolgatanga Municipal, Nabdam, Tallensi, Bongo, Kasena-Nankana West, Kasena-Nankana East, Builsa and Builsa South). The districts are autonomous with regard to the planning, budgeting and implementation of projects. The Districts are further subdivided into Area/Town Councils/Unit Committees. As discussed above, there is a hierarchy of chiefs for all the traditional areas although the position of some of them is in dispute. For instance, Chuchuliga disputes the dominance of the Sandema Nab as paramount chief of all Builsas and the Bawku conflict is largely about the role of the Nayiri of Mamprussi in controlling and enskining Mamprussis as Bawku Naba.

Key conflict causal factors in the Upper East Region

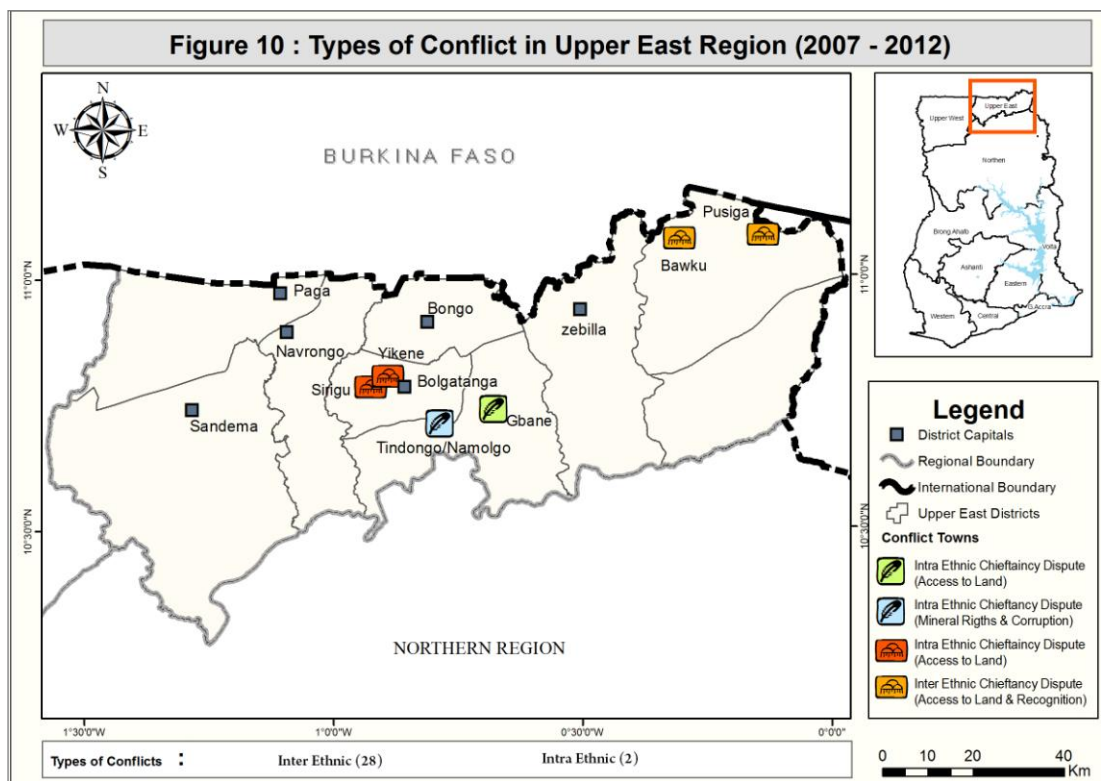
A review of reports on violent conflicts in the Daily Graphic and the Ghanaian Times showed a concentration of these conflicts in the Bawku and Bolgatanga areas. This is not to say that the Navrongo and Sandema areas are devoid of conflict, but it would appear that for the period January 2007 to September 2012 covered by the review, the conflicts in these other districts have been resolved or that peace had been maintained. (For a chronicle of conflicts in the region, see Awedoba, 2009). Figures 8, 9 and 10 provide a map of the frequency, actors and types of conflicts in the Upper East region respectively.



Source: Fieldwork, 2012



Source: Fieldwork, 2012



Source: Fieldwork, 2012

The Bawku skin affairs

The conflicts in Bawku relate to the chieftaincy problem, which has increasingly become political so that some of the conflicts reported in the past have been between the supporters of the NPP and the NDC. The conflict is also increasingly about access to land for agricultural purposes given the high population density in the area. Political interference has become the immediate cause now of conflicts in the Bawku area which then are waged along ethnic lines as the ethnic groups align themselves to political parties. While political undertones have been rife since the post independence era, in recent decades these have intensified pitting the NPP (purported to support the Mamprussi) against the NDC, which is said to support the Kusasi. The Kusasi are the majority ethnic group in the area which was put under the Nayiri (Mamprussi overlord) in Nalerigu in the northern region during the colonial period for administrative convenience.

The history of this conflict has been extensively chronicled and explained (see Awedoba, 2009, Bonbande, 2007, Lund, 2003). Our research in the area reveals deep and entrenched positions. One neutral respondent put it clearly: “there is a funny situation, if you go to the Mamprusis, they give you the story to favour them and the same way, if you listen to the Kusasis, they tell you the story to favour them too”. Beneath these sentiments is the struggle for ethnic identity, power (chieftaincy) and the control over land that goes with attaining the paramountcy. The colonial policy of empowering the Nayiri to rule over Bawku and many other a-cephelous societies in the Upper East region has been at the base of the conflict. Putting a society that reveres a spiritual leader under one that upholds the virtues of secular political leadership provided the opportunity for entrenched positions in the modern era especially when chiefs now everywhere are seen to wield much power and wealth. The Mamprussi insist that the Kusasi remain as *tendana* (spiritual leaders), while the political chieftaincy position stays under Mamprussi control. The conflict has been deeply politicised and this started with the colonial government supporting an external overlord for political expediency. The first president of Ghana revoked the Mamprussi control, installing a Kusasi as chief ostensibly to reduce the power of the Nayiri (the CPP lost the elections in Nayiri controlled areas). This was reversed after the 1966 coup. But the PNDC government ensured Kusasi control of the chieftaincy and this has continued to date.

Several commissions of enquiry have examined this conflict and several court hearings have been held: yet there is only relative peace in the area. One respondent put this clearly:

There is relative peace, that is what I will say for now and it is this way because of the current security we have on the ground. Initially, it was very difficult for the security agencies to break through their camps to pick information but this no longer holds. The security agencies have been able to infiltrate the ranks of the feuding parties and have reliable informants who feed them with information on opposing plans. Hence, they are able to nib any disturbance in the bud. Of course, there may be occasional violent conflicts, but the security agencies are on top of the situation.

The greed-grievance model underscores the seemingly intractable nature of this conflict. Grievance revolves around the issues of identity (ethnicity) and the loss of power to an alien group based on historical injustices. Greed and grievance are not

mutually exclusive. A conflict motivated by grievance can mutate into greed if resources are available or if the war creates avenues for some people to accumulate wealth (Mba, 2010) and this is seen in the overt politicisation of the Bawku conflict. It is also driven by long-term frustration of the Kusasi for the fact that, while they are the original settlers of the area and are the majority, they did not have any political power. When peoples' aspirations are frustrated in a given situation by others, this may degenerate into violent conflict (Burton, 1990). The Bawku conflict is also about competition for scarce resources – in this case power as embedded in the chieftaincy institution.

Peace has been maintained at a cost to the state in the form of permanent military presence. There appears to be no end in sight for this conflict given the entrenched positions. The military presence has not been able to completely solve the underlying problem: at least it has maintained the peace. An inter-ethnic peace committee is working on the protagonists sensitising them on the need for peace, but this does not also work on obtaining a permanent solution. Workshops are routinely organised to sensitize the people on the need for peace; but that is how far external intervention can go. Peace prevails but its fragility shows in the many business people who are solving the problem their own way by migrating to nearby Bolgatanga and Wa to ply their trade. Increasingly however, the youth are getting tired with the internecine conflict and key respondents reveal how the youth are resisting the temptation of taking up arms under the lure of conflict entrepreneurs. The peaceful nature of the 2012 election campaign in the area compared to previous election years bear testimony to this resistance by the youth.

One respondent, exasperated by the lack of progress in all the peace building and conflict resolution methods, suggested a lasting solution to the conflict:

If you ask me what the government can do to ensure peace, if they want the solution to this matter, they should depend on the Nayiri. The government should send a delegation to the Nayiri for him to come out with the word that Bawku is not part of his area of command. They should convince him to do that because other areas he was even ruling have all gained their independence and so should Bawku.

The above may be true but even those areas that got their 'independence' from the Nayiri (e.g. Bolgatanga) unilaterally decided to abrogate the role of the Nayiri in installing their chiefs. Significant other chiefs such as Bongo and Tongo in the Upper East region are still enskined by the Nayiri. That there was no violent conflict after the decision of the Bolganaba to sever links to the Nayiri probably stems from the fact that there are no Mampurussi settlements in that area. The conflicts in the Tongo area that have been reported in Awedoba (2009) (and also discussed below) occurred because of the large population of people with Mamprussi descent in the area, who as in the case of Bawku, insist on controlling the chieftaincy institution. The role of the Beodana (of Mamprussi origins) in the conflict between the Zuarungu and Tongo Beo people is documented in Awedoba (2009).

Summary of Bawku conflict discourse

Table 5, 6 and 7 present summarised information on the causal factors in the conflict (Table 5), the actors in the conflict (Table 6) and the capacity of peace (Table 7). The mediation efforts have included recourse to the courts, the institution of commissions of enquiry, the setting up of an inter-ethnic peace committee and the use of the security agencies. At the time of this research Bawku was calm and this is despite the fact 2012 is an election. Relative peace has been maintained for three principal reasons: the presence of the military, the voluntarism of some residents to report to the security agencies potential sources of trouble for pre-emptive action and the determination of some of the youth not to be used anymore in violent activities. Clearly, the economy has suffered substantially as trade has reduced and many business persons are relocating to more peaceful towns to ply their trade. While the inter-ethnic peace committee continues to work to calm passions, it is pertinent that politicians follow suit by not exploiting the situation for votes.

Table 5: Analysis of key causal factors – Bawku conflict

Type and form of conflict	Location	Proximate	Structural
Chieftaincy conflict (recurring)	Bawku	misunderstanding between individuals of two ethnic groups in whatever situation can lead to violence	control over chieftaincy and accompanying resources

Source: Fieldwork, 2012

Table 6: Actor analysis – Bawku conflict

Type and form of Conflict	Location	Actors	Motivation	Interests	Hidden agenda
Chieftaincy conflict (recurring)	Bawku	Mamprusi and Kusasi ethnic groups	To be recognised as the rulers (owners) of the traditional area	Control over the land resources in the traditional area	Kusasi resisting rule of Mamprusi

Source: Fieldwork, 2012

Table 7: Capacity for peace – Bawku conflict

Type and form of Conflict	Location	Type of mediation efforts	Efficacy of the mediation process	Outcome	Current status
Chieftaincy conflict (recurring)	Bawku	REGSEC (police and military maintain a curfew	Somehow efficient – relative peace exists	It was able to bring the situation under control	Relatively calm for now but there is suspicion in all interactions between the two ethnic groups
Chieftaincy conflict	Bawku	Court	Even though both parties were coerced to go through the process, it has not been efficient in resolving the conflict	Court rulings further deepen the gap between the two ethnic groups	Even though Bawku is calm, the conflict is not resolved and can be sparked again due to the high mutual suspicion
Chieftaincy conflict	Bawku	NGOs, inter-ethnic peace committee and youth groups	Mediation efforts are ongoing. Youth getting fed up with the conflict and are refusing to take up arms – some have become informants to the military	Electioneering campaigns for the 2012 elections have been rather peaceful compared to the previous elections due to these actions by the youth	Relative peace has been maintained

Source: Fieldwork, 2012

Conflicts in the Bolgatanga area

While the right to assume the chieftaincy position can be a cause for violent conflict among rival claimants (see the Bawku case), the real issues behind the recent spate of chieftaincy disputes in the Bolgatanga area have to do with control over territory and natural resources (land). Particularly in fast growing urban centres in Ghana, land has become an expensive commodity and rising land prices give incentives for persons to want to lay claims to chieftaincy titles. Chiefs in Ghana have important roles to play in the land market. This is the case in the conflict between Namolgo and Tindongo in the Talensi district and between Yekene and Sirigu in the Bolgatanga Municipality.

Namolgo versus Tindongo

The Namolgo people are migrant settlers from Mamprussi in the Tindongo area (south-east of Bolgatanga). According to practice in the words of one informant:

The Namolgo people are trying to create confusion among us because they know what the practice has been. If someone died at Namolgo, it was Tindongo Tindaana who gave them the place to bury their dead. That has been the custom. If someone wants to build on the land it is Tindongo daana who must give the go ahead. If fire guts a house it is Tindongo daana who performs some rituals before the house can be rebuilt and if a stray animal entered our land and we could not trace the owner it was the duty of every indigene to bring the animal to the Tindongo daana for appropriate sacrifices. So we controlled the whole area.

The above are the traditional roles of the earth priest in a-cephalous societies. The conflict began when the Namolgo people (with the secular chief) attempted to sever these relationships and to seek control over the land. Beyond these, the area is also increasingly becoming important and attracting high prices as source of land for home construction by residents in Bolgatanga. Furthermore, the area is said to have significant gold deposits and it is possible that this information may also be at the base of the recent spate of land claims between the two communities.

The Namolgo chief declined all overtures to meet with the Tindongo people as well as the Tongo chief – the paramount chief of Talensi – and authorised farming on the disputed lands. Fighting erupted and lives were lost; calm was restored only on the intervention of the security agencies.

In addition to the security presence in the area to maintain the peace, various meetings have been held in which indigenous conflict resolution mechanisms were tried. Traditionally, when parties agree to maintain the peace, the peace water is drunk by the earth-priest to pacify the lost blood. This also shows who really owns the land. However, according to the Tindongo people:

The land is for the Tindongo earth priest and it is he who drinks the water and collects the blood but these people have refused to recognize that. They claim they are the ones to do that. So we have left it in the hands of the (Upper East Regional) House of Chiefs and the court. We even took the case to our overlord the Tongodana and the several times he invited them they claimed they were of equal rank and that the overlord could not invite them.

They claimed they were senior to him in Nalerigu and could not appear before him.

The Namolgo people have a different story; but their story exemplifies the current confusion in land ownership and right to land use between the chiefs and the earth priests. The Namolgo are aware that their chief does not own any land but insist that after staying in the area for such a long time, Namolgo people have come to own the land on which they have settled and have even installed their own earth-priest. Increasing population growth is a major problem which forces people to move farther afield in search of farmlands. This brings them into contact with other communities and, with traditional land boundaries often not well defined, land conflicts are bound to arise.

The conflict management approaches so far applied have not solved the problem. Positions are entrenched; the chief of Namolgo insists he must drink the 'peace water' first (which signifies ownership of the land) and not the earth priest of Tindongo. The Namolgo chief also does not respect the Tongo chief who is the paramount chief of the area, insisting he is older than the paramount chief. It is also alleged that the paramount chief, in the words of the Namolgo people, may have been compromised. Asked why the paramount chief cannot solve the conflict, one respondent in Namolgo related the following:

He can solve the matter but he has been compromised and we do not see him competent enough. We once had a boundary dispute with Gbane (the mining community) and we took the matter to him. The land we were fighting for inhabited our totems and shrines and he judged for Gbane. So if it were you will you take such a similar matter to him again? Even I believe the Tindongo people are emboldened by such false judgments to claim our land.

It would appear that the Namolgo people are not concerned about tradition. The youth groups in the area have attempted to solve the conflict, but the parties insist on their entrenched positions as this quote from a Namolgo respondent typifies:

We think that the court cannot be efficient enough to bring sustainable peace, so we prefer the traditional process. But then the traditional process will not solve it in any manner without offending any of us. The only way for the traditional process to be effective is for the resolution to declare us (the land) owners.

The land title registration project has to be scaled up and more urgently applied especially in peri-urban areas where the demand for land is high. This may be the solution to the problem of numerous land conflicts.

Sirigu versus Yekene

Sirigu and Yekene are peri-urban communities straddling the Bplgatanga – Navrongo road. Yekene is closer to Bolgatanga and it appears much of its land has been sold for home construction. Land prices have increased substantially in recent years and so lands adjoining the communities have become hot-beds for contestation as to the rightful owners. According to one Sirigu Informant:

Yekene people don't own land. The people of Yekene are from Burkina Faso and we gave them the place to settle. The Bolgatanga Polytechnic has attracted technocrats from Bolgatanga who are now buying land in the Yekene area and also now the land which is in dispute. The Yekene people have their land up to the where the Bolgatanga technical school is and they have sold most of their lands to Dagaaba (technocrats from the Upper West region) and many outsiders. They (Yekene people) sacrifice to our gods before farming and in times of harvest which shows that we own the land, but it is sale of land and the proceeds that has corrupted them to claim ownership of the land. They say their ancestors bought the land from us. The entire Bolgatanga is aware of this matter and are aware we own the land. Some of their people are even aware of this and have abstained from the dispute.

It is worrying some of us because in the whole of Bolgatanga, there is no place you can find land except here. They have sold all their lands and are now stretching their boundaries to us. We preserved our community by respecting our ancestors. If you go to our chief and say you want land to build, he will tell you we don't sell land here. It is the white man who put this (school) building there; he did not pay a pesewa. Even in Sumbrungu (neighbouring community) because of the polytechnic they have sold all their lands; the same goes for lands in Tindonmolgo and Tindonsolgo (suburbs of Bolgatanga). Now they say there is land at Sirigu so let's go and claim some. Why is it that we share boundary with Navrongo, Kolgo, Naaga, and Arugu and they haven't claimed our lands because people do not want to go far and build. If the STX (Housing project) were possible in Bolgatanga, there would have been nowhere to put it, except in Sirigu because we have preserved our land all this while.

The Yekene people accept this rendition of events. According to a key informant:

Actually our current place of stay is our exact place when we arrived but because of farming and expansion some of our people moved near and closer to the people of Sirigu to farm. The two groups kept farming near each other cautious of boundaries. But the conflict began when one person or a group attempted to exceed the boundary. Our ancestor demarcated the land by planting trees and certain grasses at demarcated parts but these are no more and this has made it difficult to know the actual boundaries. Really, the cause of the conflict is basically on the sale of land. The value of land and its proceeds have brought about this conflict situation. A plot of land by the road may go for about 7000 GHC while those in the hinterland may cost about 4000 GHC.

The land issue is in court again because the indigenous conflict management system was not allowed to work. According to the Sirigu informant:

I made the point that tradition has its own way of solving this matter, if they say the land is theirs what we do in tradition is to roast a fowl and divide in to two equal parts for the contending earth priests to eat, who ever dies later is automatically declared a liar and the case is put to bed. This is better than the weapons which are used to kill innocent people. The Yekene people refused to do this. The case was brought back to the overlord and he complained

about the reluctance of the Yekene people to use the traditional procedure but asked that the two parties go and solve the matter amicably and get back to him. Since then we have not met but it is my hope that we do so soon.

The lure of wealth is a major hindrance to finding a solution to this conflict. The Yekene people even question the credibility of the *tendana* because he is said to have not been properly appointed. The chief of Yekene stands to benefit when there is confusion regarding the position of the *tendana* because then he receives the royalties from the sale of the lands.

The Gbane conflict

The Gbane conflict is ongoing and is a classic case of the ‘resource curse’ phenomenon. Gbane community is blessed with gold reserves, which have been mined through small-scale open-cast operations, many of which are now considered illegal because of the need for licenses as mandated by the mining laws of Ghana. In the process, two individuals who are also citizens of the area obtained the licenses covering over 50 acres of land. These two licensees contracted a Chinese company ostensibly with better equipment to assist in the mining operations, but the Chinese were to engage only in deep mining. The chief granted the concession to the two gentlemen without consultation with the youth of the area who are also into the mining operations.

The conflict is all about the presence of the Chinese who the youth fear will soon deplete the mineral resources and the fact that the chief allowed their operations without resort to traditional consultations. There appears to be palpable deceit given the fact that the letter the illiterate chief signed was for the release of about 750 acres of land and not the 50 acres obtained by the two friend licensees. The Chinese, even though are engaged in deep mining do not have a license for that since they depend on the licenses of the two friends and do not pay taxes for deep mining. From the interviews, the Talensi District authorities, the Minerals Commission, Member of Parliament and the EPA were consulted and approved the activities of the Chinese company much against the wishes of the youth, the Assembly member of Gbane and some of the elders. The chief signed the documents permitting the activities of the Chinese without recourse to legal advice. Additionally, the promises the Chinese made of constructing a school and improving the road network never materialised. The youth vandalised their equipment leading to the response of the police in arresting and detaining several of the youth and the clan heads.

There is a general perception of official complicity and corruption in the presence of the Chinese. According to one informant:

We went on a peaceful demonstration with about six thousand people from the site to the district assembly then to the regional minister with petitions. We informed them how these Chinese have been destroying the shea-nut trees and polluting our water without compensation. They have not sunk any borehole since they arrived; the main road from Tongo to our community has been destroyed. The culverts are broken down; the school which is so close to their company is suffering. They have dug so deep underground that when the blast is to happen, school children have to leave their classes. The

Assembly has done nothing about this; the Planning officer just sits there and watches. For me the company should stop work completely so that proper negotiation can take place. The Regional Minister promised us that a committee will be set up to look into the matter. After three months I was in my office when I had a call that I was wanted by the police commander. He said to me at his office that he had called to warn me that I was the one fomenting trouble in the community. The Chinese were building a bridge across a stream to aid their operations and we were not even consulted. It was the Regional Minister and the DCE who were to cut the sod. I was not even there when the youth besieged the area and vandalized their property. I was later arrested along side 13 others, taken to court and placed on remand for 2 weeks. It was finally the Gbane Freedom and Justice Movement that pressured and got us out. The regional minister, DCE, the MP and the police commander are all compromised and Ghana should not wait for another Niger delta. Because if there is no serious intervention very soon, I bet you what will happen there will not be pleasant.

The youth are threatening to remove the chief and have petitioned the Tongo chief (the overlord) to remove the Gbane chief. A committee has been set up to advise the overlord, and was still working at the time of our visit. The overlord also ruled that a letter be written informing the Chinese that the land area in question is not leased to them so negotiations still needed to continue. Government agents need to listen to both sides of the story and ensure that peace is maintained by enabling the youth to have access to their resources while not undermining the ability of the two licensees to also make a living.

Summary of Bolgatanga area conflicts

The conflicts discussed in the Bolgatanga area are related to chieftaincy (an alien order) and the control over resources. Chieftaincy is an alien order because the societies of the region have and continue to organise their lives and the use of land around the institution of the tindamba – the earth-priests. Secular chiefs are recognised by the state and have considerable powers in the administration of the traditional areas. Modernisation and widespread adoption of Christianity and Islam and higher levels of educational attainment by the population, has worked to reduce the recognition of traditional authorities who work in the spiritual realm. Also, the state by vesting lands in the people through the chiefs as occurs in southern Ghana creates conflict in the role of the chief and the earth-priest. On both scores, the chiefs no longer respect the position of the earth-priest and, in general, traditional methods of dispute resolution are no longer respected and indigenous methods of dispute resolution are being ignored.

Urbanisation and increases in land prices complicate the issues. As demand for land for home construction increases, conflicts are bound to arise especially in peri-urban zones. Increasing commercialisation of land, speculation and the breakdown of traditional land ownership systems create new dynamics for land ownership and land use (Kendie and Enu-Kwesi, 2011). However, in peri-urban settings, farming and other agricultural pursuits still provide a substantial portion of household income; the pressures to sell land impoverishes many households when off-farm employment

opportunities in the urban setting are not readily available. These pressures in many peri-urban areas of Ghana have been discussed by Kendie and Enu-Kwesi (2011) and these are also being played out in the Bolgatanga area. Peace has been restored in the area through police action; but this is only temporary. Long term improvements in the general economy are required to create the jobs and reduce reliance on agriculture. In the meantime, sanity can be restored through the urgent implementation by the state of land titles so as to secure land boundaries.

However, the cooperation of the chiefs and the *tendanba* along with the state land agencies and the political authorities is required to ensure effective land title regimes. Where some communities see some of these authorities as compromised (see the case of Gbane for example), it will be difficult to obtain durable peace. The use of the security agencies and the courts has superseded the traditional methods of dispute resolution. But these are win-lose approaches that never bring about enduring peace.

Table 8 presents the causal factors in the conflicts in the Bolgatanga area, as already discussed. Table 9 details the actors and their motivations and agenda, while Table 10 explains the mediation efforts and the current state of the conflicts. Furthermore, Figures 11 and 12 provide a spatial map of the mediators in conflicts and current status of conflict in the Upper East region respectively. What is clear is that especially for the Gbane conflict, which is a resource conflict; there is currently no peace as some of the protagonists were on bail from the courts at the time of our visit. Urgent action is required from all parties to ensure that the natural environment is managed properly for the people, and not for foreign concerns.

Table 8: Key Conflict Causal Factors - Bolgatanga area conflicts

Type and form of conflict	Location	Proximate	Structural
Competition over mineral resources.	Gbane	Building a bridge to link other nearby areas Access to and control over land for mining among Galamsey operators, owner of concession and assembly man	Chief releasing of entire Gbane land to Chinese Collusion of the district assembly with the Chinese to extract minerals from the community Destruction of roads, schools including Shea nut trees as well as endangering lives
Struggles over land ownership	Namolgo versus Tindongo (Talensi District)	Signing of land documents at Tindongo	Liberation from Tindongo by Namolgo Tenure rights over land that is gradually becoming very valuable Insisting on the performance of custom by Tindongo chief
Boundary dispute	Yikene/Sirigu	Boundary of farm lands	Sale of lands

Table 9: Actor Analysis – Bolgatanga area conflicts

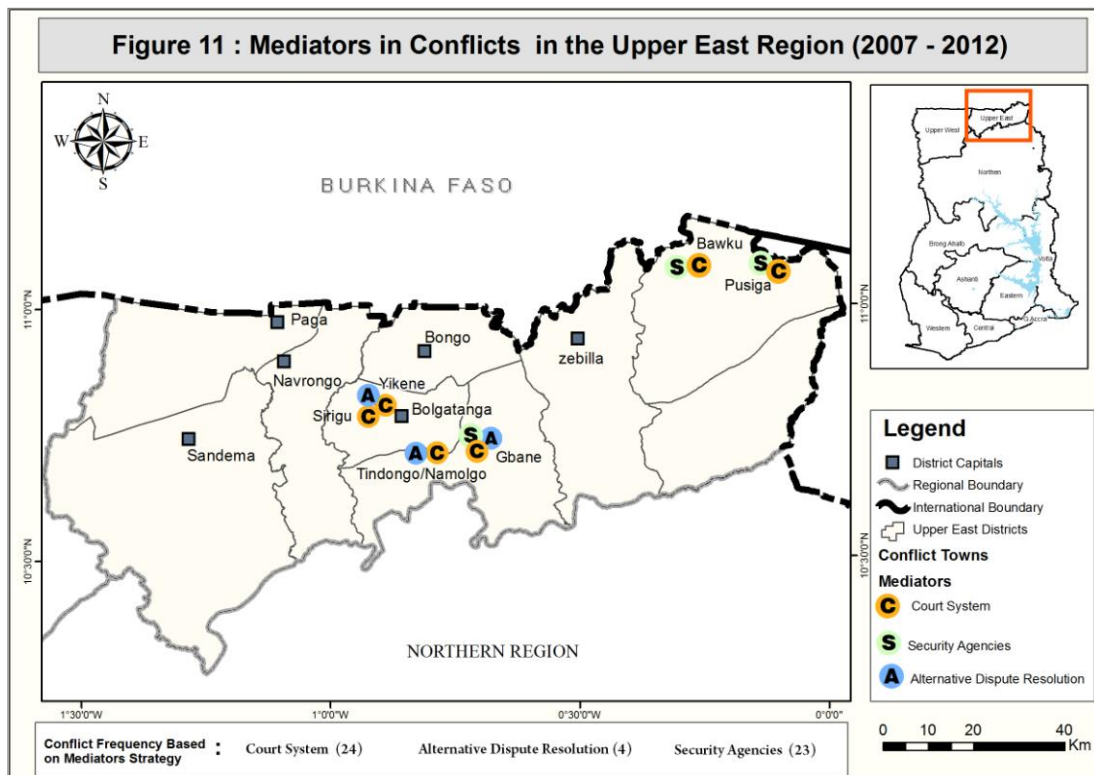
Type and form of Conflict	Location	Actors	Motivation	Interests	Hidden agenda
Competition over mineral resources.	Gbane	Indigenous small-scale miners Indigenous population (assemblyman) Local and foreign mining companies (China gold)	Community demands the use of their God given resources. Unfair takeover of land Improper documentation and mining procedure. Proper lease holding by indigenous miners	Indigenes must mine their gold without foreign interference The Chinese are service providers and must not be allowed to mine	Reduce or eliminate competition with Chinese heavy equipment
Struggles over land ownership	Namolgo and Tindongo	Namolgo and Tindongo	The land is ancestral and handed down to the current generation	Protection of land/territory	Benefits from new developments
Boundary dispute	Yikene / Sirigu	Indigenes of Yikene and Sirigu including Sumburungu.	Prices/ commodification of lands in the area	Protection of land/territories	Land purchase and speculation

Source: Fieldwork, 2012

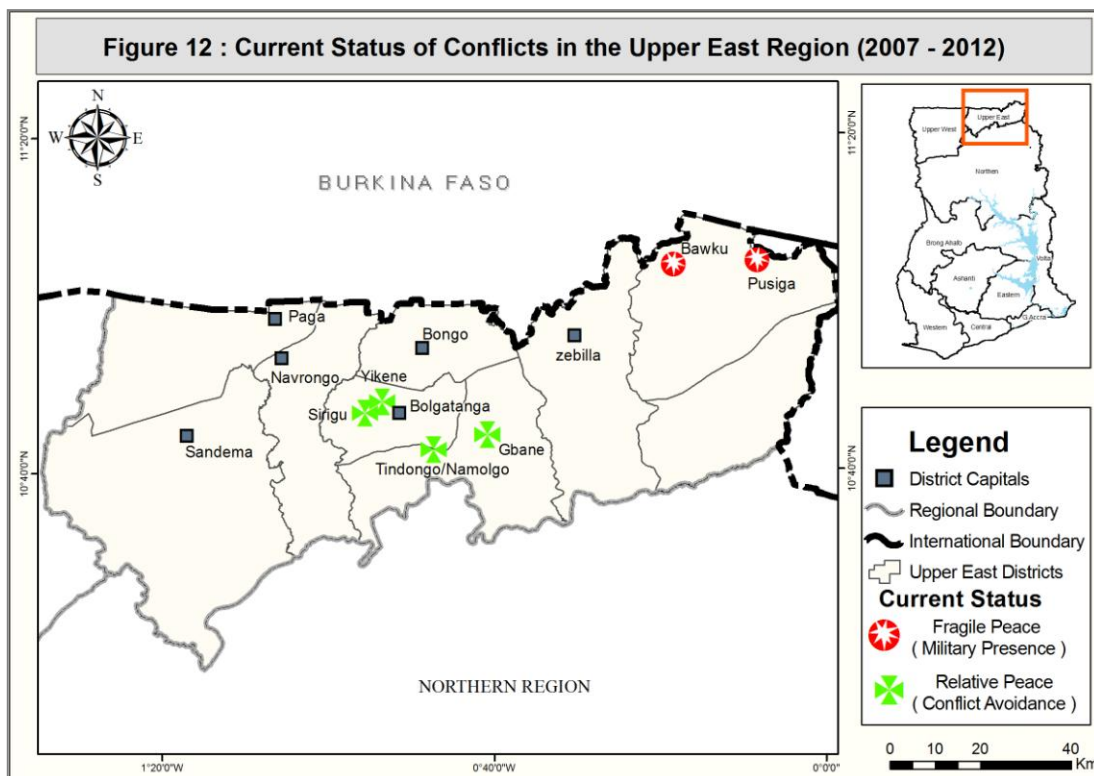
Table 10: Capacity for peace – Bolgatanga area conflicts

Type and form of conflict	Location	Type of mediation efforts	Efficacy of the mediation process	Outcome	Current status
Competition over mineral resources.	Gbane	ADR header by Tongo Daana/Raana	Made some progress at bringing the factions together to dialogue. But was limited in determining legal issues involved	Failed as some recommended committee members were arrested halfway	The conflict is deadlocked and there is only fragile a peace.
		Court/legal process	Would determine legal dimension and pave the way for effective ADR	Pending as at time of research	The conflict is deadlocked and there is only fragile a peace
		Mediation by DISEC/RESEC	Manage to stop the violence Questionable integrity and neutrality of mediators	Failed and even leading to the arrest of a section of actors in the conflict	The conflict is deadlocked and there is only a fragile peace
Struggles over land ownership	Namolgo and Tindongo	ADR by indigenes of both groups living in Kumasi	Efficient	Got the two feuding factions to dialogue and paved the way for traditional processes for peace, which are yet to begin	Still volatile though violence has been curbed
		Court/legal process	Will not solve the matter; winner takes all perspective	Pending as at time of research	Case still pending in court
		ADR by entire chiefs of Talensi Traditional area headed by the Tongo Daana overlord of Talensi traditional area	Inefficient because of overlords previous judgment between Namolgo and Gbane; Overlord not respectd	Failed as the two groups still held their positions in the conflict	Positions entrenched
Boundary dispute	Sirigu / Yikene	ADR headed by Bolganaba	Ineffective; Bolganaba said to be compromised mediator	Failed as a result of the partiality of the mediator	Still a dicey situation though confrontation has ceased
		Court/legal process	Ineffective due to winner takes all attitude	Pending at the time of research	Case pending
		ADR by Earth priest	Earth priest not respected by one side due to alleged of improper installation	Failed at the decision stage	

Source: Fieldwork, 2012



Source: Fieldwork, 2012



Source: Fieldwork, 2012

Upper West Region

Introduction

The region is located in the north western corner of Ghana. To the south, it shares borders with the Northern Region; to the east it share borders with the Upper East Region and to the north and West it is bordered by Burkina Faso. The Black Volta forms a natural boundary in the West between the region and Burkina Faso. The region has an estimated landmass of 18,478sq/km, which is 12.7% of the land area of Ghana.

The Upper West region has existed under different names in the past: from the Black Volta administrative district in 1898, it became known as the north Western Province in 1907 enjoying full provincial autonomy. Later in 1960, the Northern Region was carved out of the Northern territories and what remained became the Upper Region. The Upper West Region was created in 1983 in pursuance of the decentralization programme. The major ethnic groups in the region fall under the broad generic categories of the Mole Dagbon (75.7%) and Grusi (18.4%). The major languages of the region are Dagaare, Sissali, Wale and Lobi.

There are now 11 administrative districts - Wa Municipal, Wa East, Wa West, Jirapa, Lambussie - Karni, Lawra, Nandom, Nadowli, Sissala East, Sissala West, and Dafiama-Busie-Issa. There are three major religious groupings in the Region: Christianity (35.5%), Islam (32.2%) and traditional religion (29.3%).

The region is located in the guinea savannah vegetation belt. The vegetation consists of grass with scattered drought resistant trees such as the shea, the baobab, dawadawa, and neem trees. The heterogeneous collection of trees provides all domestic requirements for fuelwood and charcoal, construction of houses, cattle kraals and fencing of gardens. The shorter shrubs and grass provide fodder for livestock. The climate of the region is one that is common to the three northern regions. There are two seasons, the dry and the wet seasons. The wet season commences from early April and ends in October. The dry season, characterized by the cold and hazy harmattan weather, starts from early November and ends in the latter part of March when the hot weather begins, with intensity and ends only with the onset of the early rainfall in April. The temperature of the region is between a low of 15 degrees C at night time during the harmattan season and a high of 38 degrees C in the day during the hot season.

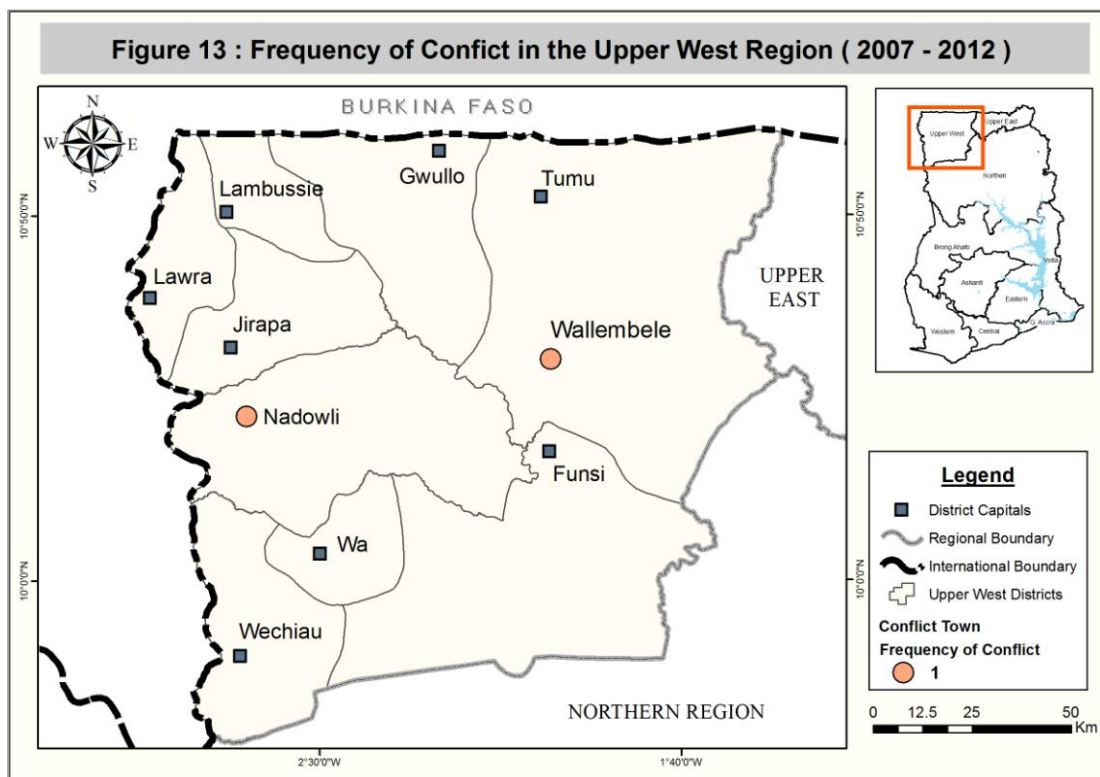
According to the 2000 Population and Housing census, the Upper West Region has a population of 576,583 people with a population density of about 33 persons/sqkm. One significant factor about the population of the region is the seasonal migration of the people, especially the youth to the southern parst of the country due to the short rainy season in the area.

Chieftaincy is a respected institution especially among the Walas and is a major medium for community mobilization. There are 21 paramountcies (Jirapa-Lambussie 2, Lawra-Nandom 3, Nadousli 7, Sissala 5 and Wala 4).

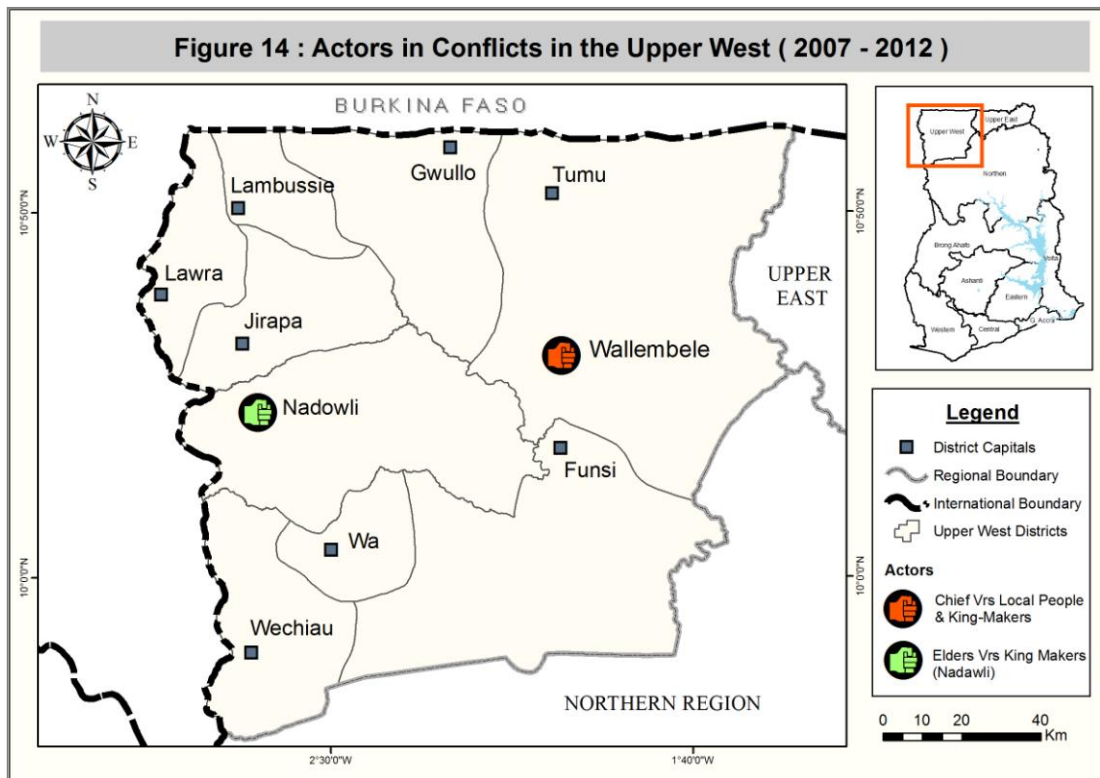
Analysis of conflicts in the Upper West Region

Peace is viewed as an important ingredient to attract foreign direct investment essential to technology transfer and economic development in the Third World. The current foreign direct investment activities of China however have exposed the flaw with this neo-classical and neo-liberal theory concerning foreign direct investment (Canterbury and Kendie, 2010). Political instability in Africa, the Caribbean and Latin America has not deterred Chinese investment in those regions. The Chinese are making investments in Africa regardless of political and other forms of conflict on the continent. This is one good reason why there is need to rethink the connections between peace and development.

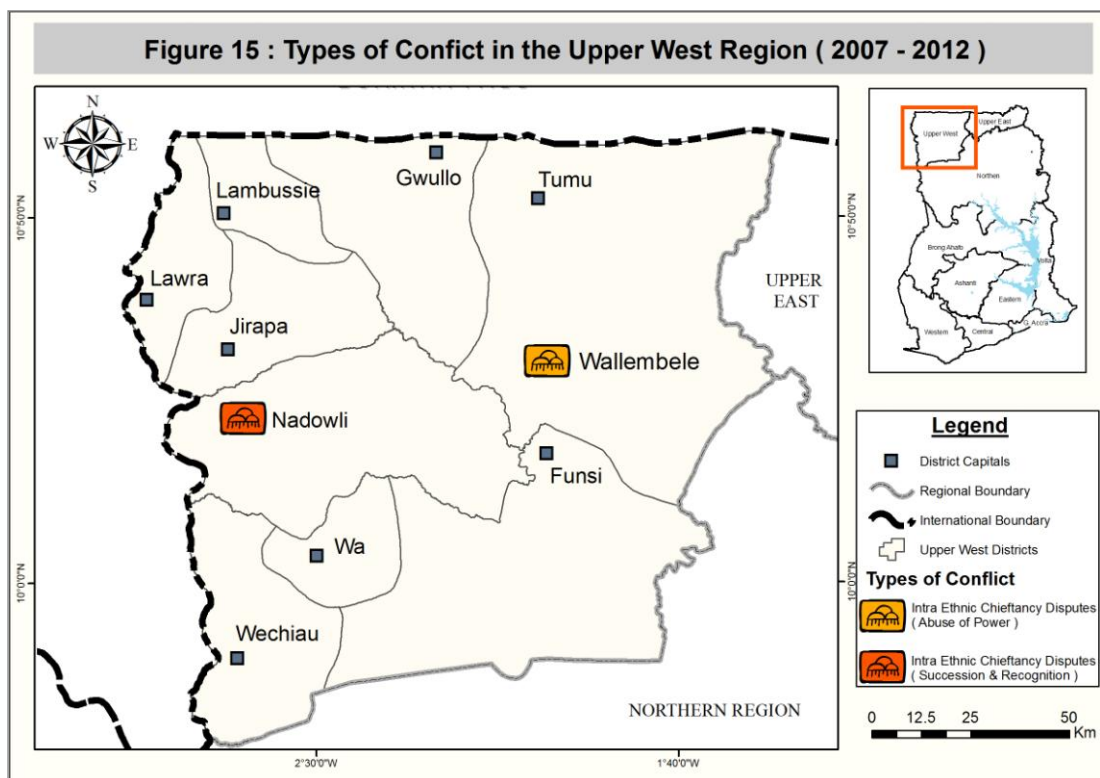
The Upper West region is the most peaceful of all the regions of Ghana; yet on all indicators of socio-economic progress, it is the poorest. Our review of violent conflicts in the region from 2007 to 2012 did not reveal any such incidence. As illustrated in Figure 13, two skirmishes were uncovered, both relating to chieftaincy. Although there are several other chieftaincy problems in the region, these have been contained. The poor road network connecting the region to the other regions of Ghana has ensured her isolation, with negative implications for investment. The high rate of migration from the area derives principally from the lack of economic opportunities due largely to this isolation. It should be noted however that the region has large tracts of fertile soils with opportunities for irrigation agriculture but which are yet to be developed. The actors and the types of conflict in the two cases found in the review are presented in Figures 14 and 15 respectively. The causes of the two conflicts are next discussed.



Source: Fieldwork, 2012



Source: Fieldwork, 2012



Source: Fieldwork, 2012

Nadowli skin affairs: analysis of key conflict causal factors

From 1999 to date there has been a long standing chieftaincy dispute in Nadowli. This occurred when the then Nadowli chief Naa Daplaah Dasaah died. Since then Nadowli has not gotten a substantive chief. This conflict was also documented by Awedoba (2009) and relates to resistance to a non-native becoming chief even though the records show that that particular family had produced chiefs in the past. One respondent explained the cause of the conflict as follows:

The cause of the dispute is that the non natives who are neither princes nor Tindaanba are trying and agitating to rule and are rather condemning those who are coming from the ruling class. In fact we all know that they were brought to this place by Kondaayiri the largest gate. We have document in the palace here which could be made available for you people to read and ascertain the facts and truth for yourself. There is not even a single evidence to show that they have ever ruled this community before.

That is one side of the story, but the evidence is available to the contrary. The case is with the courts for resolution. According to one respondent:

We have lived for thirteen years now without a substantive chief. For the sake of peace and respect for the constitution of Ghana, we have decided that we would go through the court process. So we took the case to court. But the court is delaying the process. We do not want to destroy our properties by taking arms to fight if not by now the truth would have come.

The delay in bringing the case to finality has become a bother to the people and, in all the interviews there is genuine expression for the need to settle the case out of court. According to a respondent:

The court should give chance to the traditional authority to resolve the case. This is going to be simple because we have regalia and some practices the king makers would perform and wear you the regalia. If you are not a prince and you are not the right person and they forced it on you, you are going to die. You would fall sick immediately after the occasion. So we suggest that the court should allow the case for the local people to solve.

Wallembele skin affairs

This is also a long-standing dispute between the chief on the one hand and the people of Wallembele on the other hand. According to the elders, the chief has consistently refused to perform certain rituals as required by custom. He is also accused of greed and misuse of power. The people and the king-makers decided to deskin him. The chief sued the people and the king-makers in court and won the case. However, the people and the king-makers have refused to recognize him as chief and do not pay allegiance to him. This is the case of people wanting accountable and transparent rule against a chief who thinks that power must go with servitude. Wallembele now has a chief recognized by the courts of Ghana but not the people. What caused the conflict was the insistence of the chief to have his son-in-law, who does not come

from the area nominated by then President Kuffour as DCE when the people all wanted a native of Wallembele to be nominated.

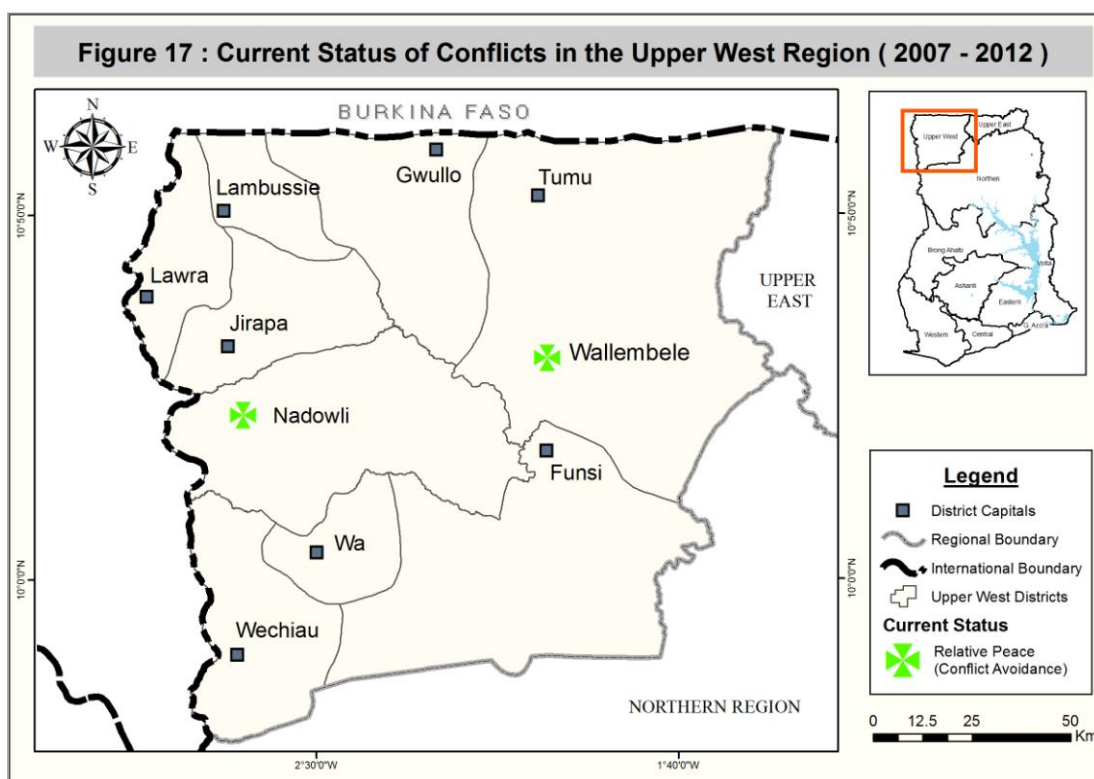
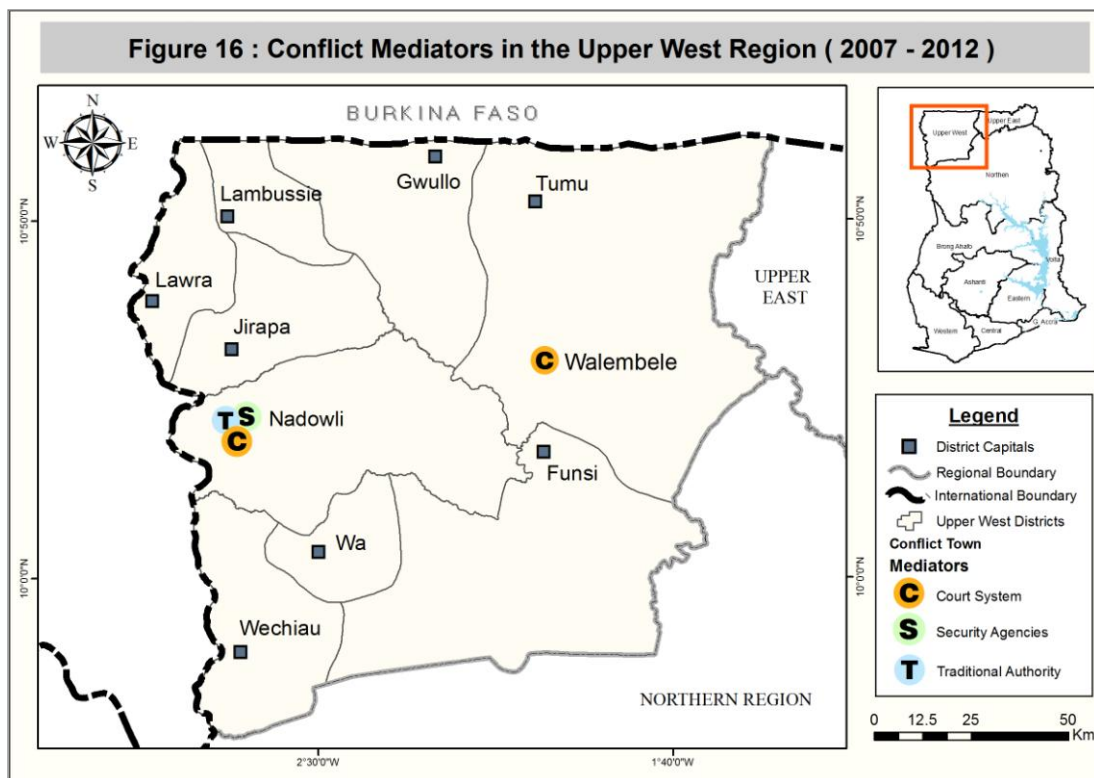
Initially, traditional methods were employed, but these did not work because the chief was not cooperative. Peace prevails in the area and work goes on as normal. The chief himself has come to accept the 'figure head' status by referring public officials that pay courtesy calls on him to the *tortina* (earth priest in the Sissala language). The community has solved the problem in a democratic manner – the chief remains but does not perform any function, the *tortina* having assumed all the duties of the chief in addition to those of the earth priest. The people have resolved not to install a new chief (as this will contravene the court's ruling) until this 'chief' passes on. Figure 16 presents a map of conflict mediators in the Upper West region.

Summary of Upper West region conflicts

Northern Ghana has been described as plagued by various inter and intra-ethnic conflicts for several decades now. The first major ethnic conflict in terms of severity and duration was the Konkomba-Nanumba war of 1981 (Brukum, 2001) referred to as the 'Pito War' because of the spark that generated the conflict. These two ethnic groups went to war again in 1994, and 1995. The February 1994 conflict referred to as the 'Guinea Fowl War' was particularly devastating and had strong implications for inter-ethnic relations in the Northern Region. The conflict which engulfed seven districts saw at least 2,000 people lose their lives, 441 villages destroyed and over 178,000 people displaced (Jonsson, 2007). The government declared a state of emergency in the seven districts that lasted until August 1994. The deaths in this localised conflict surpassed the civil war definition threshold of 1000 battle-related deaths used in the Armed Conflict Dataset (a joint project between the Department of Peace and Conflict Studies, Uppsala University and the Centre for the Study of Civil War at the International Peace Research Institute, Oslo) to categorise wars (Mba, 2010).

Bawku in the Upper East Region has been a flashpoint of violent conflict between the Kusasi and the Mamprusi since 1980. The Kusasi-Mamprusi conflict and the fratricidal Andani-Abudu conflict in Dagbon have been the most intractable in Northern Ghana. Mba found rather sadly that "since 2008, the Kusasi-Mamprusi conflict has added new dimensions to how inter-ethnic conflicts are waged. It has seen the involvement of children, ethnic combatants using regular-style military uniform to confuse both peacekeepers and opponents, targeted killings and the use of sophisticated weaponry that often dwarfs that used by government soldiers on peacekeeping duties" (Mba, 2010:3).

In all these findings and discourses on violent conflict in the north of Ghana, no mention is made of such incidences in the Upper West region. Refer to Figure 17 for a spatial presentation of the status of conflicts on the Upper West region. Whatever has come close to violence has had to do with isolated chieftaincy succession disputes and religious conflicts especially in the Wa municipality.



The coincidence between the glaring poverty of the North and the myriad of conflicts often leads to the spurious conclusion that poverty is the cause of conflict. Poverty by itself does not cause conflict (Mba, 2010; Kendie, 2010). Conflicts may stimulate poverty and underdevelopment among the warring parties and the communities they inhabit but poverty per se, does not cause conflict. The Upper West Region according to Ghana Poverty Reduction Strategy paper is the second poorest in the country, yet it has not witnessed the violent outbreaks of conflict recorded in the Upper East and Northern Regions. Even in the Upper East Region, the Bawku East District is the biggest economy in terms of the volume of intra-regional and international trade and revenue generated to the District Assembly. Its inhabitants have relatively more income generating options than say, Bongo district which has very little arable land for farming, yet Bongo has not exploded in violent conflict in recent memory (Mba, 2010; Akudugu and Kendie, 2010).

Policy makers and academics who continue to insist that colonialism has no place in Northern Ghana's current state of underdevelopment need to rethink their conceptualisation of the historical underpinnings of current situations. The official marginalisation of the North of Ghana by the colonial government has been extensively documented. The fact that post-colonial governments continue to see the North of Ghana with the same lenses as the colonial governments is incontestable. The recent attempts to direct productive investments to the area (through SADA) have become half-hearted. Social protection policies exclusively designed for the North such as subsidized Senior High School Education have also become heavily politicised. The Upper West region is peaceful; yet poor, isolated and neglected.

Tables 11, 12 and 13 provide the summaries of the causes of the conflicts, the actors, the mediation efforts and the current state of the conflicts.

Table 11: Wallembelle and Nadowli skin affairs: analysis of key conflict causal factors`

Type and form of conflict	Location	Proximate	Structural
Chieftaincy but not repetitive	Wallembelle	Refusal to perform customary practices by the chief of the community	Greed on the part of the chief
Chieftaincy dispute (succession)	Nadowli	The death of Nadowli chief (Naa Daplaah Dasaah)	Relations between indigenes and migrants

Table 12: Wallembele and Nadowli skin affairs: actor analysis

Type and form of Conflict	Location	Actors	Motivation	Interests	Hidden agenda
Chieftaincy dispute (succession)	Nadowli	Kondaayiri, Gbierung, and Begho against Dambah, Da, and Nawuli	Desperate to become the ruling class in the community	To have access to the throne and get the benefits in it	To become the ruling class in the community in order to get recognition and prestige
Chieftaincy but not repetitive	Wallembele	Quest for power and recognition	To rule the community	The chief and the youth and elders of the community	To get access to and control of land and resources in the community

Table 13: Wallembele and Nadowli skin affairs: capacity for peace

Type and form of conflict	Location	Type of mediation efforts	Efficacy of the mediation process	Outcome	Current status
Chieftaincy dispute (succession)	Nadowli	Elders and king makers	Was successful based on their objective because they wanted to have an acting chief before a substantive chief is gotten	Was successful in getting an acting chief for the community	Can be said to be relatively calm but can be volatile since there is no a recognised substantive chief in the community to preside over issues
		Legal court system	Has not been able to give verdict over the case	Not successful because the case is still pending in the court	No violence but because there is no chief certain issues are not well dealt with and can lead to violence
		REGSEC	Not satisfactory to the interest of the people	Failed because one of the parties felt they were biased and questioned their credibility	Though peaceful in terms of violence but the people are doubting each other behaviour which is not a good condition for peace
Chieftaincy but not repetitive	Wallembele	Legal court procedures	It is not in the best interest of the people since it is not in line with their tradition and custom	Not successful because the people refuse to recognize the chief as the community chief against the rulings of the court	Calm and peaceful but things cannot be taken for granted since there is no recognised chief in the community now
		Indigenous methods	Chief did not cooperate	Not successful	Peace in the community, but chief not recognised and he has accepted the situation

Section Four

Conclusions and Recommendations

Conclusions

The study sought to understand the spatial dynamics of conflicts, their current status and management strategies focusing on northern Ghana in the first instance. These have been documented in Tables and maps to show densities of occurrences in space and the outcomes of mediation efforts. From the analysis, it emerged that the conflicts in the northern region are far more complex and varied in their causes and management strategies than those in the other regions. Conflicts in the northern region have to do mainly with chieftaincy and identity and have deep seated historical roots. From the literature, it is clear that cultural conflicts or conflicts that border on identity are far complex and become intractable and therefore difficult to manage. This is the case for most of the northern region conflicts where formerly a-cephalous societies that were put under the centralised states during colonial times and who have in the post-colonial era continued to pay allegiance to the chiefs of the centralised states are asserting their differences and identities and the right to rule themselves. This is applicable also to the Bawku conflict in the Upper east region. Mediation efforts have largely been state led, either using the security agencies, the court system and commissions of enquiry. These have ensured peace, which is only ephemeral so long as the long standing grievances of the other parties are not fully addressed.

The other conflicts in the Upper east region border on the use of land and the roles of chiefs and the earth-priests in the traditional governance systems. Land prices are increasing due to high demand in urban areas: the ensuing conflicts are experienced in all large urban areas in Ghana. Land titling has to be stepped up by the state to establish boundaries to reduce such land related conflicts as encountered in the Bolgatanga suburbs. The mining conflicts are another issue altogether. Complicity of state and traditional authorities to give out large concessions of land to foreigners impoverishes local populations that depend on the land in peasant agriculture. Openness and transparency in land transactions is required to deal with land requests for mineral extraction.

The study did not encounter serious conflicts of any type in the Upper west region. Whatever exists relates to minor chieftaincy succession disputes – one is with the courts and the other has been solved democratically by the people of Wallembele accepting not to deskin their chief as ordered by the court. However, nobody in the community pays allegiance to him. The fact that social, political and economic activities are carried out smoothly under the leadership of the earth-priest and the clan elders in this town demonstrates the irrelevance of chieftaincy in a-cephalous societies.

Recommendations

From the discussions, a number of issues stand out that need to be focused on to maintain the peace. These are presented in relation to the stakeholders in the peace process.

The Government

The government has a major role to play in managing conflict by the resources it marshals. The current 'fire-fighting' of curfews and the stationing of a military garrison in Bawku for example have been effective in keeping the peace. But the military have to be perceived as neutral and it is perhaps this perception in recent times that has ensured that no major violence has been experienced even during the 2012 elections. Furthermore, while it is human for politicians as human beings to take sides, under conditions of violent disputes, neutral and cool heads are required to restore peace. Politicians in recent times have also refrained from politicising issues in the disputes, and this has also contributed to the peace.

However, so long as the economy does not provide the opportunities for gainful employment, young men may fall prey to conflict entrepreneurs and take up arms at the least provocation. We note however, that the youth in the north are resisting these attempts and some have become informants to the military and police. Nevertheless, government efforts in growing the economy to create jobs, needs to be stepped up in the north. Peace as justice requires that the state caters for those who are least able to fend for themselves and who will be short-changed in a free-for all contest for access to resources, that is the poor, the vulnerable and the marginalised. There is also imperative to ensure equal and unfettered access to justice for all by creating strong institutions that can manage conflict. Government must invest in institutions for non-violent conflict resolution, by strengthening the judiciary and promoting alternative dispute resolution. The long delays in adjudicating disputes and perceptions of political interference in the justice system weaken the confidence of feuding parties in the system of justice. This encourages self-help which breeds further conflict (Mba, 2010).

Chieftaincy succession is a major source of conflict in the north of Ghana. Especially for societies that were a-cephalous, the gates that can ascend to the skin are often contested. Yet not much effort has been done by government to codify customs, practices and usages in all the traditional areas, including who is or can become chief, kingmaker or *tendanba* (*earthpriests or landowners*) and their respective roles. This is the responsibility of the National House of Chiefs (NHC) as stipulated in Article 270 of the 1992 Constitution. Government has to provide the resources for this codification to be carried out as a matter of urgency.

Land disputes are becoming a major source conflict in the north of Ghana. Ghana is currently implementing a land title registration programme ostensibly to make clear ownership of land. Yet as land gets scarce with population growth and urbanisation, land disputes are bound to increase, not decrease. Government has a role to ensure the speedy completion of land titling to curb the spate of these conflicts. When all lands are clearly demarcated and boundaries and ownership patterns established, there will no more contested lands to spur disputes.

Traditional authorities

Indigenous ways of resolving conflicts have existed in the various societies. Studies in the Bongo district of the Upper East Region found that the traditional methods of conflict resolution were more preferred in the settling of disputes than the formal court system (Kendie and Akudugu, 2010). Yet many of the conflicts are now in the

courts principally because the indigenous mechanisms are not allowed to work. Chiefs do not respect the position of the earth-priest and prefer the courts to settle disputes.

For northern Ghana, customs relating to the earth have played major roles in maintaining the peace. It is believed that those who shed human blood jeopardise the wellbeing of the entire community as their crime provokes the earth into withdrawing its benevolence – such as good rainfall, good harvests, absence of locusts, disease and mishaps, such as snake bites etc. In ecologically precarious contexts, such as those found in the Northern savannahs, a community's survival was dependent on the earth. Those who are guilty of bloodshed must therefore atone for their crime through punitive sanctions and ritual reparations that are costly. Such crimes could not therefore be condoned, not even by kith and kin. However, the new religious configurations now frown on these beliefs.

While the need for codification of traditional governance structures as discussed above will help to draw attention of all in the communities to the rightful procedures, this will amount to nothing if the practices are not respected by the duty holders. Sensitisation workshops are required sponsored by the state and civil society organisations to achieve the level of respect required for indigenous mechanisms to be effective.

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APPENDIX A: INTERVIEW GUIDES

In-depth interview guide for state institutions associated with conflict management such as Regional and District Security Committees, Peace Council, Security Agencies

- Respondent's status and role within institution
- Awareness of conflict (start, end) scope, perceptions of impact
- Is this conflict a repetitive one?
- Views on causes [probe for both immediate and remote]
- Effects [ask for documented evidence of casualties]
- Key protagonists in conflict and their contributions towards fuelling it or otherwise
- Forms in which conflict manifests
- Intervention efforts made so far [1. By interviewee's organisation 2. By other bodies]
- Principal agents of negotiation [aside statutory agencies]
- Degree to which conflict management efforts are credible to the protagonists [probe for in-depth insight]
- Efficacy of interventions (i.e. satisfaction with conflict management efforts so far)
- Identity of groups with vested interest in the conflict
- Presence of external factors (triggers) that further fuel the conflict? [Probe for external groups, politicians actions of state institutions and other known events]
- Current status of the conflict (presence of peace, imminence of eruptions)
- Perceived consequences of mediation processes
- Proposed solutions

In-depth interview guide for Protagonists

- Respondent's status and role within institution
- Awareness of conflict (start, end) scope, perceptions of impact
- What is the history of the conflict [probe for various interests and concerns that shape and inform the conflict]
- Views on causes [probe for both immediate and remote]
- Effects (casualties)
- Who are the other parties involved in this conflict?
- What conflict management efforts have been implemented and by whom?
- What have been the outcomes of these efforts?
- How efficient have they been in addressing your needs relative to the conflict?
- What mediation efforts have been implemented in this conflict and by whom?
- What have been the outcomes of these efforts?
- How efficient have they been in addressing your needs relative to the conflict?
- Current status of the conflict (presence of peace, immanency of eruptions)
- Are the conflict management efforts credible to you [probe for in-depth insight?]
- Under what conditions will you be willing to engage in a consensus building effort designed to address this situation?
- What have been (1) the areas of agreement
 - 2) the areas of disagreement (probe for perceived incompatible goals)
- Are there any forms of social relations between the feuding parties?

In-depth interview guide for CSOs in conflict management [including Chiefs]

- What attracted you to mediate in this particular conflict?
- Please mention other conflicts you are mediating
- What are the key issues shaping the conflict?
- Briefly outline the efforts your organisation has made to resolve this conflict
- Who are the protagonists in this conflict?
- What, in your view is the cause of the conflict?

- What have been (1) the areas of agreement
 - 2) the areas of disagreement (probe for perceived incompatible goals)
- Are there any real 'unseen' power brokers in this conflict [probe for interests and roles]
- What issues are important to those stakeholders?
- How do the protagonists contribute to fuelling the conflict?
- What will make your organisation withdraw from the mediation process even if it appears that your efforts are not yielding positive results?
- What other options have been explored for managing the conflict?
- Have attempted solutions become part of the problem?
- Have third parties been brought into the conflict? If so, what roles did they play and what was the impact of their involvement?
- Can you suggest other alternatives to solve this conflict? [Probe for who to implement those alternatives]
- Is the conflict repetitive? If yes what other instances have there been? Has it maintained the same form and pattern or these have manifested differently over time?
- Are there any forms of social relations between the feuding parties? [Probe about intermarriages, business relations, church, school, use of communal resources]
- What are the parties' incentives and willingness to negotiate?
- Please describe the methods/processes you have employed to mediate this conflict

APPENDIX B:

ANALYTICAL FRAMEWORK FOR CONFLICT ANALYSIS

First stage – conflict Analysis

A) Analysis of key conflict causal factors (look out for multi-causality and identify how they inter-relate/overlap)

-proximate

- security
- Political governance
- Economic
- Social

-structural factors

- what are the pervasive and long standing factors and differences that become built into the culture of a society and may create pre-conditions for violent conflict
- security
- Political/ governance
- Economic
- Social

B) Actor Analysis

1. Interests of the actors

- explore actor's motivation
- their expressed or stated interest
- Their hidden agendas
- Their relationship with other actors, at various levels and their perceptions of such relationship
- the resources that they have at present in order to realise their agenda
- The resources that they still require, in order to realise their agenda

2. Identify the potential/actual spoilers

- look out for conflict entrepreneurs especially those with interest to maintain the status quo and then probe whether the interest is for economic, political, social

C) Analysis of Capacity for Peace

- what are the structures, mechanisms, processes, and institutions that exist to manage the conflict peacefully and constructively
- informal approaches to conflict resolution
- Role of traditional authorities
- role of civil society groups/organisation
- the nature of tolerance among the conflicting parties

Second stage – Analysis of on-going responses

A) Map the ongoing responses

- identify all on-going responses to the particular conflict as undertaken by a wide range of actors (probe for complementarity, coherence and divergence)

B) Assess the impact of the on-going responses in relation to the conflict

- for each of the responses in A above identify how they sought to address the proximate and structural factors stated in the first stage.

	Proximate Factors	Structural Factors	Peace Spoiler	Capacities For peace	Working in/on/around the conflict
Intervention/Response 1					
Intervention/Response 2					
Intervention/Response 3					
Intervention/Response 4					

APPENDIX C

MAPPING CONFLICT ZONES IN NORTHERN GHANA NEWS PAPER REVIEW (2007-2012)

NO.	DATE	NAME OF CONFLICT	CAUSES/TRIGGERS	TYPE	LOCATION	COMBATANTS	CASUALTIES			MEDIATION EFFORTS		
							INJURIES	DEATHS	PROPERTY DESTROYED	POLICE	NGOs	T/A
1	12th Oct, 2007	NPP Pusiga Primaries clash	late filing of nomination by a candidate	Political	Pusiga-Upper East	two factions of the NPP	0	0	0	****		
2	17th Oct, 2007	Konkomba-Binmoba clash	location of a market/land	Inter-ethnic	Jimballi (Bunkpurugu-Yonyoo)	Konkombas Vrs Binmobas	0	6	300 (houses)	REGSEC		
3	26th Oct 2007	Moslems clash	construction of a mosque	Religious	Kpabuso/Mpa ha	Tijania Vrs Alsuna sects	0	0	0			****
4	26th Oct 2007	Kusawgu conflict	chieftaincy matters	intra-ethnic	Kusawgu/Yape i	two royal gates	0	0	0			****
5	1st Jan, 2008	Bawku skin affair	chieftaincy	Inter-ethnic	Garu	Kusasis Vrs Manpurisi	16	8	104	****		****
6	14th Feb, 2008	Bawku skin affair	chieftaincy	Inter-ethnic	Sabongida	Kusasis Vrs Manpurisi	0	3	23	****		

7	27th Feb, 2008	Bawku skin affair	chieftaincy	inter-ethnic	Natinga	Kusasis Vrs Manpurisi	0	0	4	****		
8	11th Mar, 2008	Bawku skin affair	chieftaincy (Rnew of curfew hours)	Inter-ethnic	Bawku	Kusasis Vrs Manpurisi	0	2	1	****		
9	6th May, 2008	Bawku skin affair	chieftaincy	Inter-ethnic	Bawku	Kusasis Vrs Manpurisi	15	4	12	****		
10	13th June, 2008	Buipe conflict	chieftaincy (right to royal skin)	intra-ethnic	Buipe (Central Gonja)	Jinapor Vrs Yaafa/Lebu gates	6	1	0	****		
11	30th July, 2008	Buipe conflict	chieftaincy (confusion over collection of tolls from Buipe market)	intra-ethnic	Buipe (Central Gonja)	Jinapor Vrs Yaafa/Lebu gates	2	1	0	****		

APPENDIX D

MAPPING CONFLICT ZONES IN NORTHERN GHANA

NEWSPAPER REVIEWS(2007-2012)

NO.	DATE	NAME OF CONFLICT	CAUSES/ TRIGGERS	TYPE	LOCATION	COMBATANTS	CASUAL TIES	MEDIATION EFFORTS
1	23rd August, 2007	wellembelle clashes	accusations of gross misconduct, abuse of power and refusal to perform annual rituals	intra-ethnic conflict	Wellembelle near Tumu	indegenes vrs chiefs	0	REGSEC
2	18th Sept, 2007	Komkonba Bimoba clashes	land/chieftaincy (misunderstanding over a girl)	inter-ethnic	Jimbale near Bunkurugu	Komkonba Vrs Bimobas	Several injured	REGSEC
3	4th Jan, 2008	Bawku skin affairs	chieftaincy (robbery incident resulting to death of 2 kinsmen of the kussasi)	inter-ethnic	Bawku	Kussasi Vrs Manpurisi	15	REGSEC
4	30th Jan, 2008	Bawku skin affairs	chieftaincy	inter-ethnic	Bawku	Kussasi Vrs Manpurisi	0	Police
5	26th Feb, 2008	Bawku skin affairs	chieftaincy (signing the peace accord)	inter-ethnic	Bawku	Kussasi Vrs Manpurisi	0	REGSEC
6	26th Feb, 2008	Bawku skin affairs	chieftaincy (signing the peace accord)	inter-ethnic	Misiga near Bawku	Kussasi vrs Manpurisi	1	Police
7	6th May, 2008	Bawku skin affairs	chieftaincy (shooting of a prominent businessman in a mosque by two assailants on a motor bike)	inter-ethnic	Bawku	Kussasi vrs Manpurisi	0	Police

8	6th May, 2008	Bawku skin affairs	chieftaincy (shooting of a prominent businessman in a mosque by two assailants on a motor bike)	inter-ethnic	Binduri near Bawku	Kussasi vrs Manpurisi	0	Police
9	6th May, 2008	Bawku skin affairs	chieftaincy (shooting of a prominent businessman in a mosque by two assailants on a motor bike)	inter-ethnic	Zabugo near Bawku	Kussasi vrs Manpurisi	0	Police
10	6th May, 2008	Bawku skin affairs	chieftaincy (shooting of a prominent businessman in a mosque by two assailants on a motor bike)	inter-ethnic	Nayoko near Bawku	0	0	Police
11	6th May, 2008	Bawku skin affairs	chieftaincy (shooting of a prominent businessman in a mosque by two assailants on a motor bike)	inter-ethnic	Pusiga near Bawku	0	0	Police
12	23rd May, 2008	Bawku skin affairs	chieftaincy	inter-ethnic	Widana near Pusiga	1	1	REGSEC
13	28th May, 2008	Manprusis, Bimobas clashes	land (struggle over a parcel of land	inter-ethnic	Yunyoo/Jimba li near Bunkurugu	Manprusi vrs Bimobas	0	REGSEC
14	11th June, 2008	NPP, NDC clashes	Not known	Political	Changli near Tamale	NPP vrs NDC youth groups	0	Police
15	16th June, 2008	Buipe chieftaincy clashes	chieftaincy (Jubilation by the Jinapor gate following a court ruling in their favour)	intra-ethnic conflict	Buipe	Jinapor vrs Yaafa gates	5	Committee of Northern region house of chiefs
16	23rd June, 2008	Bawku skin affairs	chieftaincy (loss of a horse)	inter-ethnic	Buabula near Bawku	Kussasi vrs Manpurisi	11	REGSEC
17	25th June, 2008	Bawku skin affairs	chieftaincy (not known)	inter-ethnic	Gingande/Kar yana near Bawku	Kussasi vrs Manpurisi	0	REGSEC

18	29th July, 2008	Buipe chieftaincy clashes	chieftaincy (collection of market tolls)	intra-ethnic conflict	Buipe	Jinapor vrs Yaafa gates	0	District Security Committee (DISEC)
19	4th August, 2008	NPP, NDC clashes	voter registration exercise	Political	Zogbeli/Nyohi ni near Tamale central	NPP vrs NDC youth groups	3	POLICE
20	2nd Sept, 2008	NPP, NDC clashes	Having parties activities the same day	Political	Kpatinga near Gushiegu	NPP vrs NDC youth groups	6	REGSEC
21	2nd Sept, 2008	NPP, NDC clashes	Jubilation of the arrival of the running mate of the NPP and a rally @ old market	Political	Tamale central/Dagbon-Dabafong	NPP vrs NDC youth groups	0	POLICE
22	10th Jan, 2009	Shirigu Yikene clash	land	intra-ethnic conflict	Yikene near Bolgatanga	shirigu vrs yikene clans	0	POLICE
23	5th Feb, 2009	Baaku, Tomoon clashes	chieftaincy (struggle over a piece of land)	intra-ethnic conflict	Nankpanduri	Baaku vrs Tamoon clans	0	REGSEC
24	19th Feb, 2009	NPP, NDC clashes	Not known	Political	Aboabo/Tamale central	NPP (Khandaha boys) vrs NDC (Azoka boys) youth groups	7	POLICE
25	19th Feb, 2009	NPP, NDC clashes	Not known	Political	Gumbehini	NPP vrs NDC youth groups	7	POLICE
26	6th March, 2009	Bawku skin affairs	chieftaincy	inter-ethnic	Bawku	Kussasi vrs Manpurisi	5	POLICE
27	2nd May, 2009	Bawku skin affairs		inter-ethnic	Bawku	Kussasi vrs Manpurisi	0	POLICE

28	2nd June, 2009	Bawku skin affairs	chieftaincy (granting of bail of four suspected persons by Bolgatanga court	inter-ethnic	Bawku	Kussasi vrs Manpurisi	0	Municipal Security Council (MUSEC)
29	3rd Oct, 2009	NPP, NDC clashes	By-election	Political	Chereponi	NPP vrs NDC youth groups	0	POLICE
30	9th March, 2010	Terma chieftaincy clash	enskinment of a new chief	intra-ethnic conflict	Terma	Two fueding families to the throne	several	Police