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UNIVERSITY FOR DEVELOPMENT STUDIES

FACULTY OF INTEGRATED DEVELOPMENT STUDIES

DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL, POLITICAL AND HISTORICAL STUDIES

MPHIL THESIS

CHIEFTAINCY SUCCESSION DISPUTES IN GONJALAND;

*A STUDY OF THEIR MANIFESTATIONS IN BOLE TRADITIONAL AREA IN THE NORTHERN
REGION OF GHANA*

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(UDS/MSA/0073/13)

UNIVERSITY FOR DEVELOPMENT STUDIES



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FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENT FOR THE AWARD OF A MASTER OF
PHILOSOPHY DEGREE IN SOCIAL ADMINISTRATION.

NOVEMBER, 2017.

DECLARATION

Student

I hereby declare that this dissertation is my own original work and that no part of it has been Presented for another degree in this university or elsewhere.

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(CANDIDATE)

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I hereby declare that the preparation and presentation of the thesis were supervised in accordance with the guidelines on supervision of thesis laid down by the University for Development Studies

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ABSTRACT

There has been several chieftaincy succession disputes in Gonjaland in the last two decades. There were disputes at Buipe, Yapei and Daboya. At the moment, Bole Traditional Area is sitting on a timed bomb. Violence could flare up anytime. What is intriguing about these succession conflicts is that there is a constitution in place which stipulates how chieftaincy skins should rotate among the different gates who are heirs to any thrones. This situation push the researcher to try to find out the sources of the chieftaincy succession disputes in Gonjaland and their manifestations in Bole Traditional Area.”To arrive at this, the study adopted a mixed method design. About 160 respondents were randomly selected through a stratified sampling technique and 25 key respondents were added through purposive sampling technique.

The data gathered through survey and interviews revealed that the main sources of the conflicts were commodification of thrones, desire to control resources and political influence. It was also revealed that most of the conflicts were violent in nature except Bole whose pot is yet to explode.

It was further revealed that the effects of the chieftaincy succession dispute in Bole Traditional Area were division among the people, avoidance of social functions like funerals and naming ceremonies, disloyalty to the Yagbonwura. The Committee of Elders, the Council of Elders, Oath

Taking and Smoking peace pipes are the major conflict resolution mechanisms in Bole Traditional Area.



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DEDICATION

To the memory of my late parents Alhaji Yakubu Idriss and Hajia Sanjari Wurche Yakubu.
Gone too soon to see the exploits of your son. Your memories shall forever remain in my heart
and your principles I shall abide by.



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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

BNI Bureau of National Investigation

CID Criminal Investigation Department

CPP Convention People Party

FGD Focus Group Discussion

GLYA Gonja Land Youth Association

GTC Gonja Traditional Council

NHC National House of Chiefs

NPI Nairobi Peace Initiative

NPP New Patriotic Party

RHC Regional House of Chief

SPSS Statistical Package for Social Science



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CHAPTER ONE

1.0. INTRODUCTION

1.1 BACKGROUND

The Gonja ethnic group is one of the groups that have had their history recorded by Muslim scholars who accompanied them to modern Ghana. According to an Arabic manuscript, *khitabGonja 1751* cited in (Braithwaite, 1967), the Gonjas who were originally Mandingo (Gbonyo Dingo-ebi) or Mandinka, migrated from the country of ancient Mande that is from the Songhai Empire at the height of its power many years before the Hijra year 1000. The Mandingo forces that entered modern Ghana with all the other allies like the Sakpari, Mmara and many others arrived under the leadership of the Mandingo expeditionary forces from old Songhai Empire in 1546 (Jawula 2010). According to *Khitabgonja(1751)*, oral tradition has it that internecine activities would have led to the movements of some groups from the center of power or conflict to other new places. Also, the great Askia Mohammed had been on the throne for thirty years by 1528 and owing to his ill health and infirmity, his son Musa and his nephew Askia Bankouri and yet another son Askia Ismail fought over power and created civil unrest in the kingdom (Braithwaite 1976). Instability in Songhai continued until the reign of Askia Daud which restored normalcy in the kingdom around 1581 (Jawula 2010).

In the course of the turbulent times at the centre of the empire, the breakaway group in the diaspora was establishing itself firmly in the present Gonjaland with the reign of Landa from 1546 to 1576 (Braithwaite 1972). After Landa, Wam reigned for nineteen years from 1595 to 1615 then followed Amoah, 1615 to 1634 and then Lanta Limu 1634 to 1675, the father of Ndewura Jakpa who abdicated in his (Ndewura Jakpa) favour. Ndewura Jakpa reigned from 1675



to 1697(Braimah 1972).Ndewura Jakpa led the troops and expeditionary forces in various battles with Safalba,Brifor and Vagla in the Bole area where he first entered and emerged victorious. He moved east wards and confronted the Dagombas in Daboya area and conquered them and expanded his jurisdiction to the present day East Gonja where he is said to have established a camp and conquered the inhabitants such as the Konkonba,Nawuri and Chumburu(Jawula2010).

As Sumaila Ndewura Jakpa the founder of the Gonja Kingdom embarked on the conquest of the current vast Gonjaland and beyond, he is said to have cultivated the practice of installing his sons in what has come to be known as divisions. These divisions which have survived conflicts, European rule and even modern governance are Wasipe, Kpembe, Bole, Tulwe, Kong, Kandia and Kusawgu. The Gonja kingship system started with seven ruling divisions but circumstances have reduced them to five. Kong and Kandia were expelled from the kingship because Yagbonwura Nyantakyi who is from Kong with the help of his (biological) brother Kandia wura employed the services of Samori a slave raider and his forces to fight the people of Bole and its surrounding villages when the former had a misunderstanding with the chief of Bole. That therefore reduced the divisions from seven to five. That is, Wasipe, Kpembe, Bole, Tulwe and Kusawgu in order of seniority (Jawula 2010). To this day, the paramount chiefs who head these divisions refer to the YagbonWura as their father and over lord of the Gonja kingdom.

The chieftaincy institution since its inception have led the development process of their areas of jurisdiction and settled disputes among their subjects any time such issues arise. Due to the firm control and the respect the institution had, the colonial authorities used it as the vehicle to establish their rule in West Africa. In modern days, chiefs act as mouth piece between their subjects and governments and excise maximum control over land under their jurisdiction



(Odotei2010).The traditional and political history of the Gonja people have it that, the Yagbon skin should at all times be filled in rotation by heads of the various territorial divisions of the Gonja kingdom who descended patrilineally from Ndewura Jakpa.

Chieftaincy is indeed important to most societies in Ghana. The position of chiefs is guaranteed under the fourth republican constitution (1992). Article 270(1) of the 1992 constitution upholds the institution of chieftaincy, together with its traditional councils as established by customary law and usage. Article 277 of the 1992 constitution defines a chief as a person who hailing from the appropriate family and lineage has been validly nominated, elected or selected and enstooled, enskinned or installed as a chief or queen mother in accordance with the relevant customary law and usage. Chiefs in Ghana wield a lot of powers. They have great control over the people and resources within their jurisdiction. It is therefore no surprise that people fight to get installed as chiefs.

The Gonja kingdom is federated with the various divisions being semi-autonomous. Matters are handled in the various divisions and where people are dissatisfied; they are free to seek appellate jurisdiction of the paramountcy. However, between 1878-1900, Gonja kingdom faced bouts of instabilities such as the Samori attacks and evasion of the Bole area (Jawula, 2012). The yagbong seat also became unpopular because the chief could only depend on the help of his house hold for his farm works as the sub chiefs from the five divisions neither became non cooperative and neither supply food to the king nor supply him with labor. Taxes collected were not also sent to the Yagbonwura as it used to be. One would wonder why the Yagnonwura suddenly lost the support of his sub-chiefs from the five divisions. It was simply because the Yagbonwura at that time was not supposed to be there. He became the Yagbonwura because of



the refusal of chiefs from Kpembe, Kusawgu, Wasipe and Tulwe to ascend to the Yagbon skins when it was their turn to do so. They never wanted to leave the comfort of their homes and areas of jurisdiction to settle in Nyange which is a very small village. The Yagbon throne remained unpopular until YagbonWuraMahamaDangbonga during whose reign Gonja came out from a confederacy into federacy (Brimah *etal*, 1969).On ascension of office in 1912, YagbonWuraMahama moved to Zugu near Kusawgn which is virtually centrally placed in Gonja and worked hard on Gonja unity.

Two conferences were held in Yapei in 1923 and 1930 under the auspices of the British colonial administration. These meetings gathered momentum and gave it its modern constitution entitled “enquiry into the constitution and organization of the Gbanye kingdom (Government press, 1932).Present at the conference were Mr. A.C. Duncan Johnson, British Commissioner for Southern Province, Mr. A.W. Cardinal, District commissioner for Western Gonja and 24 principal chiefs of the Gonja kingdom. This document for the Gonjas has been the alpha and omega of chiefly succession in modern times (Jawula 2010). The “constitution” was kept in the memory of drummers who recited it on state occasions such as the enskinment of a king or important chief or important festivals like Damba. It also spelt out who qualified to be king or chief, which gate the nominee to the skin is from, who the king makers were, who qualified to participate in what ceremony, who qualified to enskin a chief and lastly the processes the chiefs to be go through (Brukum 1997).

There are some physical tests a person must qualify before he is considered eligible for the chieftaincy titles. For instance, the candidate to be installed must have both eyes in their



natural position, and must not be affected by blindness of any kind. He/she must be married and must be a person of sound health (Brukum 1979).

Further, an agreement on the list of chiefs qualified to mount the paramountcy was reached and the chiefs as well agreed to unite under the YagbonWura. It determined the hierarchical sitting positions of various chiefs in Gonja land, which helped to establish a strict system of rotation that has helped Gonjas through peaceful successions both at the centre and at the periphery. The constitution of the Gonja kingdom has indeed withstood the test of time. Since it was adopted peace and unity at least at the Yagbon level was achieved. Furthermore, embossed in the 1930 constitution were the 9 kingmakers who are Sonyowura, Damongowura, Choriwura, Debrewura, Mankpanwura, Kulawwura, Kpansheguwura, Busunuwura and Nsuawura who assist the Yagbonwura to adjudicate cases and settle disputes within the kingdom. These people have helped to settle chieftaincy succession issues right from the demise of Yagbonwura Mahama with a typical example being that of 1975 after Yagbonwura Awusi Ewuntomah of Wasipe (1943 – 1975). Owing to the Yapei agreement, when the skins became vacant, Kpembewura Jawula Ababio II put up claims for the skins but the king makers were not supportive because he was infirm at the time. It was however, agreed then for the skins to be taken by Kurabaso of Bole with the provision that if a vacancy was created in the future, Kpembe would have the first shot, and provided the chief was healthy enough to handle the affairs of the state. Kurabaso reigned between 1975 – 1982 (Jawula, 2010). As fate would have it, when the skins became vacant, Kpembewura Timu I (J.A. Braimah) became Yagbonwura. The rotation continued thereafter to Tulwe, Kusawgu, Wasipe, Bole, Kpembe and now Kusawgu which also would have been the turn of Tulwe Wura according to the Yapei agreement. But due to his infirmity some



consultations took place among the kingmakers where an agreement was reached to shift the throne to the present Yagbon wura Tutumba Boresa(1) who was the Kusawgu wura.

Nonetheless, this arrangement which has worked perfectly to ensure peaceful succession in the Gonja kingdom has taken a dramatic twist of installing two chiefs for communities such as Buipe, Jinapor and Lebu gates, and Mandari the Bole area. Again, same situation exists within the Safope gate in the Bole traditional area where AbuduLansa and AbuduSeiduSamson both children of Yagbonwura Abudu Kurabaso are enskined as chiefs of Tinga. Quite apart from these, there are two chiefs for Sonyo, and two chiefs for Kalidu. These show that all is not well.

This mishap of having more than one chief in a community or division, which is not the norm, emanates from varied sources. One of the reasons for this anomaly is because of the division among kingmakers over who has the right to install chiefs in Bole communities; Yagbonwura or Bolewura? Some are on the side of the Yagbonwura and others are on the side of the Bolewura. This and many other reasons have brewed so many unsettled chieftaincy disputes in Gonjaland where most of these cases are filed in the court instead of using the traditional, customary lay down mechanisms in adjudicating chieftaincy succession matters and disputes in the kingdom. This sends a signal that the traditional systems might not be working which makes the examination of the factors undermining the traditional chieftaincy succession procedures and indigenous mechanisms for settling disputes in the Gonja kingdom with specific emphasis on the Bole traditional area crucial.



1.2 PROBLEM STATEMENT

Northern Ghana has the greatest share of intra and inter-ethnic violent social conflicts. These mostly emanate from either chaotic chieftaincy succession or a feeling of exclusion from access to participation in the traditional political system or control of land. The Gonjaland has not been free from either of these situations, with chieftaincy succession disputes dominating in the intra ethnic-based conflicts in the area. Although the Gonja Kingdom constitutes one of the *centralised* traditional political systems with a well organised hierarchical structure and succession procedures, the apparent prevalence of chieftaincy succession disputes in the area poses a question of the relevance of cultural arrangements for the prevention of the menace.

In the Gonja traditional kingdom, after the demise of one king or sub chief it leads to his succession by the next in-coming chief from the next gate, following a gate rotating system. This system is one of the oldest known traditional political arrangements in the history of Ghana and has over centuries, worked successfully in all the five traditional areas of the kingdom of Gonjaland (Jawula 2010). In their recognized order of succession, the gates are Wasipe, Bole, Kpembu, Tulwe and Kusawgu (Jawula 2010). However, there have been several instances of disharmony over chieftaincy succession within the kingdom. This generates the need to probe into the causes of the situation as well as determine whether the cultural machinery for addressing chieftaincy succession problems still has any relevance.

In the Bole traditional area, chieftaincy succession disputes are becoming quite dramatic, characteristically taking the form of duality of authority to the royal skins. A typical example is the division among kingmakers over the selection of the Mandari Wura, after the previous one ascended to the position of the Bole Wura. The incumbent Bole Wura, is said to have enskinned



one Abdulai Issahaku as the MandariWura, while the YagbonWura (King of Gonjaland) also enskinned Alhaji Abubakar Abudu as Mandari Wura by the Bole Wura and YagbonWura respectively. This double chief for communities within the Gonja Kingdom has now become the order of the day as the situation pertains to almost all the five (5) traditional divisions in the kingdom with the worst hit being the Bole traditional area. Thus, presently, apart from the Mandari case, there are two chiefs for Sonyo, two chiefs for Tinga and two chiefs for Kalidu and Konjugma. This syndrome has created factions in the onetime peaceful kingdom, basically due to divergence of interests between the Bole Wura and theYagbonWura. It is obvious that something is not right. Why does the Bolewura refuses to be submissive to the decisions of the Yagbonwura? The chieftaincy institution is supposed to meet the needs of the local people however nowadays chieftaincy has become commercialized and skins are being auctioned to the highest bidder because of anticipated gains. Besides, political interference has made the institution of chieftaincy less viable. The Yagbonwura has lost control of the Bolewura because both seem to be pursuing a personal interest rather than pushing for a common course which is the interest of Gonja people especially those with the Bole Traditional area (Jawuala, 2012. This therefore, makes it worthy toinvestigatethe sources of chieftaincy disputes in Gonjaland and the implications of such disputes on the social life of the people of Bole



1.3.1 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

What are the sources of chieftaincy succession disputes in Gonjaland and their manifestations in the Bole traditional area?

1.3.2 Specific research questions

The study seeks to answer the following specific questions:

1. What are the sources of chieftaincy succession disputes in Gonja kingdom?
2. What are the manifestations of these succession conflicts in Bole traditional area?
3. In what does the succession disputes/conflicts undermine social and cultural coherence of the people in the Bole traditional area?
4. What traditional mechanisms can be employed to address the disputes?

1.4 RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

1.4.1 Major Objective

The major objective of this study is to ascertain the sources of chieftaincy succession disputes in Gonjaland and their manifestations in the Bole traditional area

1.4.2 Specific Objectives

1. To ascertain the sources of chieftaincy succession disputes in Gonja kingdom.
2. To know the manifestations of these succession conflicts in Bole traditional area
3. To investigate how the succession disputes/conflicts undermine social and cultural coherence of the people in the Bole traditional area.



4. To identify the traditional mechanisms that can be employed to address the disputes in Bole traditional area.

1.5 SIGNIFICANTS OF THE STUDY

This study aims at finding out the sources of the chieftaincy disputes in Gonjaland and its manifestations in the Bole traditional area. It also seeks to identify the cultural mechanisms that are put in place to resolve chieftaincy succession conflicts in the Bole traditional area. The findings of this study be useful to conflict experts and anyone who is involved in the issues of conflict and its resolution. It will further inform policy makers and institutions responsible for ensuring peace and stability in the country as to the appropriate actions to take in order to ensure that the chieftaincy institution meets its established aim. Finally, the findings of this study will add up to existing literature on chieftaincy succession conflicts and may serve as a reference text for students.

1.6 SCOPE AND LIMITATION OF THE WORK

The study takes a critical review of chieftaincy conflicts in Gonjakingdom with particular emphasis on the Bole traditional division in the Northern Region of Ghana. Since chieftaincy has a historical and cultural underpinning that are particular to chieftaincy, the study therefore threw more light on chieftaincy succession as well as factors that undermine the cultural arrangements for a peaceful succession in the Bole division thereby triggering duality of authority in Mandari, Sonyo, Tinga, Kalidu, Konjugma and Kabilma communities that cause the civil unrest in the Bole traditional division of Gonjaland. The study also looked at the socio-



cultural mechanisms that are put in place to resolve chieftaincy succession conflicts in the Gonja kingdom.

Theoretically, the study was guided by two theoretical perspectives; Conspiracy theory of conflict and the zero sum power game.

Conceptually, the study adopted ethnicity, chieftaincy, succession, conflict and indigenous conflict resolution mechanisms as the main concepts to guide the study. However, in view of the sensitive nature of the issues involved and the stretch of time it has travelled, this study might raise more questions than it can answer. Also much academic works and researches have not been carried out on chieftaincy and chieftaincy conflicts in Gonjaland to harness as literature for the study hence the researcher has to depend on oral narrations in most cases.

1.7.Operational Definition of Concepts

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

1.7.1 Ethnicity

Ethnicity refers to expression of the primordial attributes of an ethnic group as a mark of demarcating one ethnic group from the other. In other words, it is the consciousness that arises out of the shared characteristics and its expression by the group members to define themselves in



relation to the significant others (Asefa, 1996). Ethnicity comes from the word ethnic, meaning a person or a large group of people who

share a national, racial, linguistic, or religious heritage, whether or not they reside in their

country of origin (Encarta Dictionaries, 2009). Almost all African states are made up of

multiple ethnic groups. Ethnicity, in this study, is used to refer to the various heritage and

linguistic groupings in Gonjaland.

1.7.2 Chieftaincy

Chieftaincy could be defined as the office and the institution of which the chief is the

Principal operator and stakeholder. It may comprise among other things: the personnel

holding offices such as chiefs, queenmothers, counselors and staff; rituals, symbol and other

paraphernalia (Awedoba, nd). Chieftaincy is also said to be traditional political institution

headed by a chief whose title is ascribed and holds the authority to lead his tribal society and

exercise control and jurisdiction over the people and land (Agyeman-Duah 2007). Article 277 of

the 1992 Fourth Republican constitution of Ghana defines a chief as a person,

who, hailing from the appropriate family and lineage, has been validly nominated, elected or

Selected and enstooled, enskined or installed as a chief or queenmother in accordance with

the relevant customary law and usage. According to (Awedoba, nd), the term chieftaincy is

derived from the word chief and refers to the office and the institution of which the chief is



the principal operator and stakeholder. Chieftaincy, in this study, is used to mean the law, custom, practice and process of electing or selecting and installing chiefs in Ghana as well as the legitimacy and exercise of power of the chief so installed.

1.7.3 Conflict

According to Frempong (1999), Zartman used conflict to describe the underlying issues in a dispute and crisis to refer to the outbreak of armed hostilities. To Frempong therefore, crisis is the violent expression of conflict. In this study however, both terms, conflict and crisis, are used interchangeably to describe the open hostility of intra/inter gate conflicts in the Gonja kingdom triggered by duality of authority to skins in the kingdom with particular emphasis on the Bole traditional area. Violence connotes the use of force to effect decision against the will or desires of others. It constitutes a violation of the basic human rights of the person through physical actions like beating, burning of property, rioting, shooting and killing. In brief, it is physical attack on another person. It is employed with the intent of injuring, damaging or destroying opponents (Marck & Snyder 2009). It is the manifestation of conflict or conflict behavior at the highest point. In this study, violence is used to qualify all acts that resulted in physical injury, destruction of property, loss of lives and any other form of human sufferings.

1.7.4 Indigenous Conflict resolution

Indigenous Conflict resolution in this work essentially refers to a set of mechanisms adopted to bring the conflict situation in the Gonja kingdom to an end. These range from such peaceful means as negotiation, mediation, arbitration, sacrifices and libation to deities, to violent confrontation – war. In the context of this study, conflict resolution refers to all the efforts made and the actions



taken to resolve all social conflicts including chieftaincy succession conflicts in Gonjakingdom. Indigenous traditional conflict prevention and resolution processes are well structured and embedded around fundamental values and norms which are time proven social systems geared towards reconciliation, maintenance and improvement of social relationships which guide behavior and regulate relations so as to avoid such a destructive collision of interests or positions.

These methods, processes and regulations are deeply rooted in the customs and traditions of the people of Africa (Kwaku et al, 2008). The importance and utility of the processes lie in the fact that they strive to restore a balance to settle conflicts and minimize disputes (Choudree 1999). Traditional processes are relatively informal and less intimidating and if people observe the principles of normative code, which they generally do, the normal pattern would be one of relative co-operation and mutual accommodation even in a competitive frame work. Hence the role of chiefs, elders, family heads and others is not only to resolve conflicts but also anticipate and stop or intercept conflict (Choudree 1999).

1.8 Organization of the Study

For purposes of analysis and easy comprehension of issues, this study is divided into five chapters. Each chapter deals with a series of relevant themes. Chapter one offers an introduction to the study. It provides information on the main themes of the study and significance for the research problem. The chapter will also look at the objectives of the study. It also encompasses the scope and limitations of the study and as well provide definitions for the key concepts in the study and the relationships between these concepts.



Chapter two discusses the literature review and theoretical explanation of conflict and harness on literature on chieftaincy and chieftaincy succession conflicts in Bole traditional area.

The third chapter will present a profile of the study area, its geographic, political, and economic characteristics. It also entails methodological discussion of the study. It will discuss and justify the choice of methodology employed and describe the sources of data, data collection techniques, Methods of data presentation and analysis and finally outline the challenges encountered on the field.

The fourth chapter will be used for the presentation of empirical data. It will discuss the demographics of the respondents and the effect of the conflicts on such issues as security, nature of the conflict, causes of the chieftaincy succession conflict, the effects of the conflict on the social relations of the people in the area as and delve into the expenditure of the District Assembly on security as a result of the chieftaincy succession disputes in the Bole traditional division of Gonjaland.

Chapter five focuses on analysis of the empirical data. The first part of the chapter presents a model that illustrates the correlation between the cycles of violence, insecurity, and underdevelopment in the study area. Part two gives a detailed account of the effects of the conflict on the socio-economic development and social relations of people in the Bole traditional area.

The final part of chapter five will make a summary of the research findings and present various recommendations as to how the conflict can be resolved or managed successful to put an end to the occurrences of such deadly chieftaincy succession conflicts.



CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 Introduction

Ghana though often hailed as a peace loving country and a beacon of democracy within the African continent south of the Sahara, it is still vulnerable to internecine and intermittent communal violence which underplay and harm governance and security structures of the country (Carscieous2013). This chapter reviews literature on Ethnic conflicts, Conflicts in Northern Ghana, Theoretical explanation of conflicts, Chieftaincy in Ghana, Chieftaincy in Gonjaland, chieftaincy succession in Gonjaland, chieftaincy conflicts in Gonjaland, chieftaincy conflicts in Bole and indigenous chieftaincy conflict resolutions mechanism in Gonjaland.

2.1 Ethnic Conflicts

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

The term “ethnic” can be interpreted in two different ways. In the narrower understanding of the term, “ethnic” groups mean “racial” or “linguistic” groups. This is the sense in which the term is



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

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

Conflict on its part, depicts a situation in which two or more parties pursue incompatible, but from their individual perspectives, entirely just goals (Wolff, 2006, p. 2). Wolff asserts that ethnic conflicts are those in which the goals of at least one of the parties are defined in absolutely ethnic terms, and in which the primary fault line of confrontation is one of ethnic distinctions.

Whatever the concrete issues over which conflict erupts, at least one of the conflict parties will explain its dissatisfaction in ethnic terms—that is, one party to the conflict will claim that its distinct ethnic identity is the reason why its members cannot realise their interests; why they do not have the same rights; or why their claims are not satisfied.



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

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

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

The Dagbon chieftaincy dispute for instance has prolonged and travelled over centuries (Ahorsu & Gebe, 2011).

The bigger question for analysis is the motivation for groups to engage in violent ethnic conflict. It is important to bear in mind that ethnic conflicts do not just exist or come into being. They are the product of deliberate choices of people to pursue certain goals with violent means. Neither



ethnicity nor nationalism in itself causes ethnic conflict. Rather, the stakes in ethnic conflicts are extremely diverse, ranging from legitimate political, social, cultural, and economic grievances of disadvantaged ethnic groups to predatory agendas of states and small cartels of elites, to so-called national security interests, to name but a few. As organized ethnic groups confront each other, minorities and majorities alike, with and without the backing of state institutions, an important question is to what extent ethnic conflicts are actually about ethnicity and to what extent ethnicity is merely a convenient common denominator to organize conflict groups in the struggle over resources, land, or power (Wolff, 2006).

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

Modernization may also cause conflict as economic and social changes can accelerate and intensify group competition for scarce resources. This explanation may be particularly relevant where class cleavages and ethnic cleavages overlap. Finally, ethnic conflict may be the result of



mobilization of ethnic groups by ethnic entrepreneurs or elites pursuing private interests and capitalizing on the availability of ethnic networks –i.e. ethnically defined groups that reduce transaction costs and uncertainty with respect to the enforcement of contracts.

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

The nature of contemporary violent ethnic conflict is increasingly dirty. From Algeria, Sri

Lanka, to Rwanda, the principal weapon of war is terror. Not only do warriors target civilians, and especially children, systematically, but they employ control through the creation and manipulation of fear. Their strategies include scorched earth tactics to starve populations and destroy infrastructures; sexual torture and mass rape, ethnic and social cleansing, and even genocide. Once violence becomes fuelled by hyper-politicized identity, an insidious logic kicks in. This raises the stakes beyond the more negotiable issues such as territorial control or the redistribution of political and material resources. In identity-based conflicts, the very existence of a community is thought to be under threat. An opposing

identity group is labelled as the source of the threat and the battlefield expands to include

homes. An individual comes to be targeted because of his or her membership in a particular

community. The physical, psychological and moral violence inflicted on individuals is meant



to affect the community as a whole – specifically, the identity group of which that individual is a member (Bush & Saltarelli, 2000).

As groups are mobilized on the basis of identity, such traits as ethnicity, religion, language and caste become organizational resources in the political and economic arenas (Bush & Saltarelli, 2000). Bush and Saltarelli note that this process of mobilisation is facilitated by the permeative character of ethnic identity, which is described by the foremost scholar of ethnic politics, Donald Horowitz, as having a tendency to ‘seepage’. The ethnicization of social, political and economic life coincides with the politicization of ethnicity, which together serve to crank up the tensions between identity and conflict, and raise the stakes sharply in all confrontations. It adds volatility to every social, political and economic interaction across identity boundaries.

One may therefore ask whether identity politics is the key to deciphering disorder in Africa. In some cases, it is clearly central, as in Rwanda, Burundi, and Sudan, where there is an underlying war of visions pitting sharply different imaginings of the virtuous polity against one another. Even in the many cases where ethnicity or religion is not per se the precipitant of disorder, violence inevitably incorporates discourses of difference. Ethnicity armed escalates mutual fears, anxieties, and insecurities; communally targeted violence inscribes memories of ineffable loss of kin and fellow ethnics, and inspires dreams of vengeance. Thus the dangers of protracted disorder should not be underestimated (Young, 2002, p. 556). This study focuses on the cause(s) of the chieftaincy succession disputes in and factors that undermine the traditional laydown procedures of chieftaincy succession as enshrined in the 1930 Gonja constitution thereby triggering duality of authorities across all the five traditional divisions of the Gonja kingdom. (as an ethnic conflict) and examines why it has been so protracted. The discussion above, vis-à-vis



the issues and nature of the conflict, provides a fertile ground for understanding the cause(s) and the protracted nature of the conflict.

2.2 Chieftaincy conflicts

One of the main features of the institution of chieftaincy in the post-colonial era is the manifestation of inter and intra-ethnic conflicts, fuelled and perpetuated by the institution. Although there were pockets of inter-ethnic conflicts during the pre-colonial era, resulting from attempts to extend the territories of one ethnic group at the expense of another, the post-independence intra/inter-ethnic conflicts have been disquieting which as considerably affected the membership of the Regional Houses of Chiefs by creating vacancies.

It must be stressed that within the institution, there have been succession disputes following the death of an incumbent chief, some of which defied solution and lingered on in various forms to date (Awedoba, 2009; Bofo-Arthur, 2003). Hagan (2006) elucidates three critical factors that may account for litigations and disputes with respect to stools and skins:

Affluent personalities in society with ambiguous claims to royal stools and skins fiercely contesting the position with the poorer royals who refuse to succumb to the illegitimate contenders, thereby generating perpetual litigation in the selection of occupant to the stool or skin.

Legitimate royals have increased in number over the years, as well. Hence the competitive-claims have become highly intense among the families and lineages. Consequently, some royal members are prepared to use fire-arms in the settling of disputes regarding election of occupants to stools and skins.



The tenure of a chief terminates only at death: life-long and this generates a lot of anxiety among legitimate royals who are potential candidates to the stools and skins. This leads to frivolous and wasteful litigations and strife in the communities.

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

The third source of chieftaincy conflict adduced by Larbi is that most of the disputes in chieftaincy occur in Ghana due to lack of documentation on the mode of selection of chiefs.

He argues that the wealth and dignity that go with the chieftaincy institution in Ghana has attracted many young aspirants to contest the stool/skin. On the demise, abdication or destoolment of the incumbent, there emerge various competing groups with their candidates for the stool (Larbi, 2009). Ironically there appears to be enough documentation on

chieftaincy and chieftaincy succession in Gonjaland. However, recent mishap of duality of authorities in all the five traditional divisions of the Gonja kingdom raises the multiple questions of the relevance of the traditional laid down procedures and the 1930 Gonja constitution which is a comprehensive document of alpha and omega chiefly succession in the Gonja kingdom.



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

Boafo-Arthur, (2003) indicates that new forms of succession challenges have also emerged.

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



Kingmakers, including queen mothers and learned elders in some traditional areas have sought refuge under the customary law to unduly fuel conflict; yet, the State is completely barred from interfering in the traditional succession customs of the people.

The tabulation below demonstrates the extent of disharmony that exists within the Regional Houses of Chiefs. A total of 64 vacant seats, out of 263 or 24% of the national total of chiefs as a result of litigations that require state intervention, but each traditional area seeks to protect its customary law on chieftaincy and succession and therefore, they insulate themselves from State intervention.

Table 1: Distribution of vacant seats in Regional Houses of Chiefs in Ghana

REGION	Number of seats per regional house	Disputed seats per regional house	Percentage% disputed seats per regional house.
Ashanti	39	4	10.3
Brong Ahafo	49	16	32.6
Central	34	3	8.8
Eastern	11	3	27.2
Greater Accra	22	3	13.6
Northern	20	12	60
Upper West	17	4	23
Upper East	17	5	29
Volta	32	8	25



Western	22	6	27.2
TOTAL	263	64	24

Source:Northern Regional House of chiefs (2014)

2.3 Conflicts in Northern Ghana

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

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





Figure 1.0: A Map of Northern Ghana



Source: <http://www.ghanadistricts.com>

The three northern regions are unified by shared history, culture and language; ecology and geography and are the least developed of the regions in Ghana, even if they are not the least endowed. Much of the area which is drained by the Volta River and its tributaries is dry savannah; rainfall is erratic, and without irrigation facilities, the traditional grains and some tuber

crops could only be cultivated seasonally. Fertile and arable land is not evenly distributed in the North and in some parts the topography is rocky and the soil is lateritic.

This arguably explains the perennial conflicts in that part of the country since conflict arguably stems from competition over scarce but valuable resources (Awedoba, 2009). A disturbing phenomenon in the political landscape of Northern Ghana during the last several decades has been the intermittent eruption of either intra- ethnic or inter-ethnic conflicts.

Indeed, there have been twenty-two such conflicts between 1980 and 2002. Within the period under review, Gonja attacked and destroyed a Battor village at Kafaba in 1980 and again destroyed Tuna in that same year. Gonja was involved in wars with the Nawuris and

Nchumurus in 1991, 1992 and 1994. Gonjas fought among themselves at Yapei and Kusawgu in 1992 and at Daboya in 1994. Nanumbas fought against Konkombas in 1980, 1994 and 1995. In 1991, Dagombas fought among themselves at Voggu and Zabzugu and fought

Konkombas in 1995. Between 1980 and 1986 Mamprusis and Kusasis fought three times in the Bawku area. In 1988 and 1994 the Bimoba also went to war with the Kombas. Between 1999 and 2001, the Kombas fought twice among themselves. In March 2002, Dagombas fought among themselves at Yendi during which Ya-Na Yakubu Andani II, the overlord of Dagbon, together with some 40 others, lost his live. (Brukum, 2006).

Even though the immediate causes of these conflicts differ, the remote ones are similar if not the same. (Brukum, 2006) remarks that they stem from several decades of relegation of certain ethnic groups, so called “minority groups” to second rate citizens in the traditional



and political administration of the Region or attempts to by-pass some “gates” in the system of rotation to the chiefship.

As stated earlier, the three northern regions are the least developed of the regions in Ghana, even if they are not the least endowed. Awedoba observes that poverty and economic and social deprivation engender despondency and desperation and invariably call for coping and survival strategies of various kinds, including those that are questionable. It makes the poor resentful of the property owning sectors, while at the same time, paradoxically subject to the control of the wealthy. Thus for a pittance, youth and others in not too favourable circumstances can be induced to break custom and law rather than listen to reason. They may indulge in behaviour risky to themselves and their neighbours because with very limited prospects, there is not much to live for anyway. The result may be real, such as death, injury, poisoned social relations, increased poverty and the like; or perceived such as spiritual mishaps. Whichever is the issue, the deprived arguably feel they have nothing to lose (after all, life is like been dead and death cannot be worse than living) and sanction, whether secular or spiritual, could not perceptibly be worse than one’s current unhappy existence. Thus people who are not oblivious to the fact that their claims fly in the face of traditional norms and the canons of justice have nevertheless had no fear of consequences of their unjustified or even sacrilegious behaviours or actions, so long as there is an immediate benefit, however minute, in sight (Awedoba, 2009).

Chieftaincy conflicts have been one of the main sources of communal conflicts in northern



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

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

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

Apart from chieftaincy and land, Awedoba, (2009) identifies religious differences, partisan politics and disagreement between communities about 'Order of Precedence' and abuse or



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

The tolls in terms of lives lost, injuries to residents, destruction of property including the loss of critical social and economic infrastructure that the conflicts have caused has been

staggering. What is more, scarce national resources have been used to maintain peace. For

instance in 1994 alone, the government of Ghana claims to have spent six billion cedis (C

6,000,000,000) or six hundred thousand Ghana cedis (600,000) in maintaining peace when

the most devastating of the conflicts broke out (Brukum, 2006). Although much has been said



about ethnic conflict in the North, little has been done to bring about lasting peace and security to that part of the country.

Table :2 Ethnic conflicts fought in the Northern region

ETHNIC GROUPS FIGHTING	BATTLE FIELD	YEAR	ISSUES
Gonja against Vagla	Tuna	1980	Land
Gonja against Battor	Kafaba	1980	Land
Gonja against Nawuri	Bonjai	1991-1994	Land
Dagomba against Dagomba	Vogu/ Yendi	1991 2002	Chieftaincy sucession
Nanumba against konkomba	Bimbila	1980-1994	Land
Gonja against Gonja	Yapei/Kusawgu Wasipe/Daboya Buipe	1998-2007 1994-1995 2010	Chietaincy sucession
Mamprusi against kusasi	Bawku		chieftaincy
Bimoba against konkomba	Bunkurgu		Land
Kokomba against Dagomba	Zabzugu		Land

Source: Adapted from Brukum, 2006



2.4 Theoretical Explanations of conflicts

Social scientists in their quest to understand why certain phenomena occur and the environment, in which they exist, use tools such as theories, models and concepts.

Silverman, (2005) distinguished theory from other research terms like model, methodology and concept. He defined theory as “a set of concepts used to define and explain some phenomenon”. However, there are a number of theoretical explanations from the onset of violent conflicts. The most commonly used are the political, social, the psychological and the economic theories of conflict.

The study will dwell on two theories namely conspiracy theory and relative deprivation theory of conflict to explain the chieftaincy succession conflicts in Bole traditional area of Gonja kingdom.

Barash and Webel(2002) assert that, conflict occurs in human societies when different groups are rivals or when they are in competition with each other. Lewis Coser cited in Frempong (1999) also defines conflict as a struggle over values or claims to status, power and scarce resources in which the aim of the conflicting parties are not only to gain the desired value but also to neutralize, injure or eliminate their rivals. To Frempong, this definition emphasizes the destructive nature of conflict as parties try not only to neutralize, but also to injure and even eliminate opponents. Brecher (1993) also noted that, conflict phenomena are the overt, coercive interactions of contending groups. This means that conflict is characterized by incompatibility of purposes as well as by parties engaged in mutually hostile actions and the usage of coercion to injure or control opponents.



Psychologists and philosophers also explain conflict as an inherent nature of man. The psychologist, Sigmund Freud, believes that, the genetic material that codes the chromosomes of human beings makes them prone to conflict. So he writes “there is no likelihood of our being able to suppress humanity’s aggressive tendencies” (Bloomfield and Moulton, 1997).

Similarly in his “Leviathan” Thomas Hobbes argues that man by nature is violent, seeking power upon power. He notes:

So that in the nature of man, we find three (3) principal cause of quarrel.

First, competition; secondly, diffidence, thirdly, glory. The first maketh men invade for gain, the second for safety; and the third, for reputation. The first use violence, to make themselves masters of other men’s persons, wives, children and cattle, the second, to defend them, the third, for trifles as word, a smile, a different opinion and any other sign of undervalue, either direct in their persons or by reflection in their kindred, their friends, their nation, their profession, or their name(Hobbes1651).

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

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



In general, conflict theory seeks to scientifically explain the general contours of conflict in society: how conflict starts and varies, and the effects it brings. The central concerns of conflict theory are the unequal distribution of scarce resources and power. What these resources are might be different for each theorist; but conflict theorists usually work with Weber's three systems of stratification: class, status and power. Conflict theorists generally see power as the central feature of society, rather than thinking of society as held together by collective agreement concerning a cohesive set of cultural standards, as functionalists do. Where power is located who use it and who doesn't are thus fundamental to conflict theory. In this way of thinking, power isn't necessarily bad; it is a primary factor that guides society and social relations. (Coser2003).

This general assessment of different views of conflict therefore make it imperative to adopt more specific theories to analyze the emergence and persistence occurrence of communal conflicts such as chieftaincy succession conflicts in Bole traditional area of Gonja kingdom.

2.5 Conspiracy theory

A conspiracy theory is an explanatory proposition that accuses two or more persons, a group or an organization of having caused or covered up, through secret planning and deliberate action, an illegal or harmful event or situation (Charles, 2007). People formulate conspiracy theories to explain for example, power relations in social groups and perceived existence of evil forces (Obed, 2005).

Conspiracy theories have psychological or socio-political origins. Proposed psychological origins include projection; the personal need to explain "a significant event with a significant cause" and the product of various kinds and stages of thought disorder, such as paranoid disposition, ranging in severity to diagnosable mental illnesses. Some people prefer socio-



political explanations over the insecurity of encountering random, unpredictable or otherwise inexplicable events (Michael 2003). The effects of a world view that places conspiracy theories centrally in the unfolding of history have been debated with some saying that it has become “the dominant paradigm of political action in the publ(Yong2010) writes that “every real conspiracy has had at least four characteristic features: groups, not isolated individuals; illegal or sinister aims, not ones that would benefit society as a whole; orchestrated acts, not a series of spontaneous and haphazard ones; and secret planning, not public discussion” (Yong 2010).

On 19th April, 2013, the sub-chiefs and royals of the Safope Gate gathered at the Bolewura's Palace. The Bolewura put a question to them as to whether they were finally able to select someone within the Gate for his consideration. As expected there was an argument among members of the Safope Gate gathered. While some said "Yes" others said "No". The Bolewura therefore nominated Bugewura Abdulai Issahaku as the new Mandariwura. On the day the Bolewura invited sub-chiefs and royals of the Safope Gate and nominated the Bugewura Abdulai Issahaku as Mandariwura elect, a Senior Chief of the Gate Nyinyagewura Yahaya said at the Palace that the Bolewura had taught them a great lesson. Nyinyagewura Yahaya is said to have laced his statement with a proverb that "If two dogs in a house are fighting over a bone, it is definitely an outsider dog that will succeed in getting the bone". Meaning Bugewura Issahaku got nominated because "grandfathers" and "fathers" of the Gate were fighting over the Mandari Skin. The Bolewura associated himself with the statement of Nyinyagewura Yahaya and added: "I am a Politician and do what pleases me". The word "Politician" he used was interpreted by some social commentators to mean he is an "NPP Politician" and therefore nominated Bugewura Abdulai Issahaku as Mandariwura elect



because he is also an NPP member. A close source to the Bole wura who pleaded anonymity stated that Abdulai Issahaku's nomination was as a result of conspiracy between him and the Bole wura to try every means possible to make things difficult for the safope gate to nominate a candidate among the elders who showed open interest in the mandari skins so to give the Bole wura the sole opportunity to nominate his own nephew from the safope gate to help him rule without any heckling and spiritual battles that have always in the course of history ensued between the Bole wuras and mandari wuras because the later is eager to eliminate the former and occupy the Bole skins which is the dream of every Bole royal to sit on in his life time. The Bole wura and Mr Abdulai Issahaku were also said to have conspired with the NPP party to appoint an NPP member as the Mandari wura to give them political advantage that the NDC enjoyed during the reign of the late Bole wura Gbeadese. The current Bolewura was a former Progress Party (PP) MP for West Gonja (now Bole/Bamboi and Sawla/Tuna/Kalba, Damongo and Daboya/Mankarigu) in 1969. The Mandariwura elect on the other hand was a staunch Popular Fron Party (PFP) member and later an NPP member. He is married to Madam Ajara Yakubu daughter of Tolon-Naa Yakubu Alhassan Tali (the 1979 running mate of Victor Owusu of the PFP) and a direct sister of the current Tolon Chief, Tolon Naa Major Abubakari Sulemana, a former security capo in President Kufour's government (Mahama, 2016). Again the fact that then NPP running mate now vice president and other NPP stalwarts attended the coronation speaks volume of the Bole wura's NPP affiliation and the perceived political manipulations to make political gains from the back yard of former president Mahama.



2.6 Game Theory

Game theory is the formal study of conflict and cooperation. Game theoretic concepts apply whenever the actions of several agents are interdependent. These agents may be individuals, groups, firms, or any combination of these. The concepts of game theory provide a language to formulate structure, analyze, and understand strategic scenarios. The earliest example of a formal game-theoretic analysis is the study of a duopoly by Antoine Cournot in 1838 (Nasar, 1998). The mathematician Emile Borel suggested a formal theory of games in 1921, which was furthered by the mathematician John von Neumann in 1928 in a “theory of parlor games.” (Nasar, 1998). Game theory was established as a field in its own right after the 1944 publication of the monumental volume *Theory of Games and Economic Behavior* by von Neumann and the economist Oskar Morgenstern. This book provided much of the basic terminology and problem setup that is still in use today (Rasmusen, 2001). In 1950, John Nash demonstrated that finite games always have an equilibrium point, at which all players choose actions which are best for them given their opponents’ choices. This central concept of non-cooperative game theory has been a focal point of analysis since then. In the 1950s and 1960s, game theory was broadened theoretically and applied to problems of war and politics (Rasmusen, 2001). Since the 1970s, it has driven a revolution in economic theory. Additionally, it has found applications in sociology and psychology, and established links with evolution and biology. Game theory received special attention in 1994 with the awarding of the Nobel Prize in economics to Nash, John Harsanyi, and Reinhard Selten. At the end of the 1990s, a high-profile application of game theory has been the design of auctions (Myerson, 1991).

Applying Game theory to the Bole succession conflicts, the source and intensity of the conflict emanates from the zero-sum power dynamics. The enskinment of any of the parties in the



succession conflict is conferment of power and authority on the beholder that will not be accessible to those denied the chance. It thus becomes a zero sum power game in which the values that are conferred and transferred to a chief cannot be exercised by another person contemporaneously.

2.7 Chieftaincy in Ghana

The chieftaincy institution in Ghana is an age long system dating back to several centuries and have survived manipulations of colonial rule, independence and modern governance yet it continues to be the centre of the cultural heritage of the Ghanaian people (Nyaaba 2009). Traditionally, chieftaincy is revered and held in awe and reverence as it is characterized by the embodiment of the spirit of the ancestors as well as the living community (Brukum 2007). In the traditional Ghanaian setting, chieftaincy institution is a powerful catalyst for social cohesion, harmony and development that mirrors the society over generations.

It is against this backdrop that the 1992 Republic constitution of Ghana clearly states in Article 270(1) the institution of chieftaincy together with its traditional council as established by customary law and usage is hereby guaranteed and (2) parliament shall have no power to enact any law which (a) confers on any person or authority the right to accord or withdraw recognition to or from a chief for any purpose whatsoever, or (b) in anyway detracts or derogates the honour and dignity of the institution of chieftaincy. Not only does the constitution guarantee the chieftaincy institution, it also defined who a chief is.

Article 277 states “in this chapter unless the context otherwise requires, “chief” means a person, who hailing from the appropriate family and lineage, has been validly nominated, elected or



selected and enstooled, enskined or installed as a chief or queen mother in accordance with the relevant customary law and usage.”

In spite of the explicitness of who a chief is as defined in the constitution of Ghana (Bayart 1993) argues that the concept of chieftaincy often leads to confusion, as most of various traditional areas in Ghana are bedeviled with one form of chieftaincy dispute or another. The problem of succession to skins or stools (as the authority is defined) abounds in all the traditional areas of Ghana which had dented the image and reputation of the institution as one that serves to provide social cohesion and development. (Bayart 1993) however was quick to add that although the rotation of conflict often comes about through chieftaincy, it brings together dominant categories that were previously heterogeneous in the end.

Chieftaincy could also be defined as an organized system of rule in African traditional society with the chief as the political and symbolic head who rule based on the total consent of the people (Dankwa 2004). The Ghanaian traditional chief has a great deal of power invested in him/her. The authority of the chief fused in a single person all elements of power, judicial, legislature, executive and administrative (Braathenet *etal* ,2006). However, during the colonial era in Africa, coupling with the indirect rule system of political structure, the duties of the chief were reduced to cultural matters (Dankwa 2004). Dankwa has also noted that, “among many tribal groupings in Ghana, the paramount reasons for organizing under a common leader/chief was necessitated by communal living, promotion of law and order and protection from external aggression.

Chieftaincy in Ghana is normally ascribed status from particular families or ethnic groups. Among Akans in southern Ghana, ascension to the stool is through maternal lineage whilst tribes



in Northern Ghana ascend to the skins from the paternal lineage though some skins are categorically reserved for people who trace their lineage matrilineal to the royal family.

In the past, an important role of a chief was to lead his people to war and defend, protect and extend their territories(Odotei2000). The nature of warfare for the chiefs in contemporary times has changed. The enemy is now poverty, hunger, diseases, squalor, illiteracy, crime, injustice, environmental degradation, depletion of resources, greed, ignorance and conflicts which are the challenges of the new millennium. This explains why acephalous societies which were not organized under the domain of a chief now have and revere them, (Dokurgu 2011).

2.8 Chieftaincy in Gonjaland

Chieftaincy is said to be part and parcel of the Gonja ethnic group who are said to have migrated from the ruling dynasty of the Songhai Empire under the leadership of their founder NdeWura Jakpa (Bramah, 1972). They are said to have broken away due to internecine activities that engulfed the empire many years before the Hijra year 1000 (Bramah et al, 1967).NdeWura Jakpa whose father abdicated in his favour reigned from 1675 to 1697 (Bramah 1972). During his reign, Jakpa is said to have embarked on the conquest of the current vast Gonjaland and beyond to establish the Gonjakingdom.(Jawula 2012) recalled that, as NdeWuraJakpa engaged in battles and conquered the(Nnyamase) indigenes of the land, he is said to have installed his sons as chiefs and overseers of what has become known as divisions. These divisions were seven in number namely, Kong, Kandia, Wasipe, Bole, Kpembu, Tulwe and Kusawgu. NdeWura Jakpa fought his way across Gonja from West to East and by the end of his death in a battle across the Black Volta in 1675, between Gonjas and Asante warriors,the Gonja Traditional kingdom was



established fully as a centralized state under his leadership with the afore mentioned divisions (Jawula, 2012). These divisions are ruled by chiefs who are given the title “Wura”. The YagbonWura is the king and over lord of the Gonja traditional kingdom and often referred to as the father of all the divisional chiefs (Brukum 2007). He is the power broker and spiritual head of the entire kingdom. Entitlement and legitimacy to chieftaincy “skins” in Gonja kingdom is specifically limited to persons who descend patrilineally from NdeWura Jakpa. However, there are some skins like Seripe, Wakawaka, Kulmasa and many others in the various divisions which are left entirely for persons who trace their genealogy matrilineal to Ndewura Jakpa (Brukum, 2007). It is however clear that, such people cannot occupy bigger skins or rise to the paramountcy in the kingdom though a senior chief like the Seripe wura is given a lofty position and help the divisional paramount chief (BoleWura) in adjudication of cases and settlement of disputes in the Bole division.(Jawuala, 2012)

Through passage of time characterized with the polygamous nature of Royal families and chiefs in Gonja kingdom, the Gonja royal population expanded to greater numbers therefore increasing the number of eligible candidates to vacant skins. This situation brought internal wrangling among the grandchildren of Ndewura Jakpa which necessitated succession to the royal skins according to seniority (Goody, 1967). Thus considering grandfather first before children and then grandsons any time a vacancy is created as a result of either death, promotion or demotion of a chief (Brukum,2007). As the kingdom became stratified and populous amidst many chieftaincy succession disputes this succession arrangements metamorphosed into the gate system of succession in a rotational order (Goody, 1967). The inter gate succession system which is widely practiced among most centralized states in Northern Ghana is peculiar to Gonja, Dagbon, Nanum, Wala, Mamprugu etc. In Gonja, this became the first point of succession from the



various divisions to Yagbon and promotion to other senior positions in the various divisions when it fell vacant (Goody 1967). The number of “gates” eligible to the paramount skins in the various divisions has varied with the course of time.

Currently, there are 31 gates eligible to various divisions (paramount chiefs) in the Gonja kingdom (GLYA, 2013). The breakdown of the number of gates in the various divisions according to the survey conducted by the Gonja Land Youth Association is as follows:

TULWE DIVISION

Latepe Gate

Jewupe Gate

WASIPE DIVISION

Tampulma Clan

Asiepe Gate

Takorape Gate

Hanga Clan

Tikpirpe Gate

Jakpape Gate

Anyamepe Gate

Kankrakope Gate



BOLE DIVISION

Sarfope Gate

Jagape Gate

Denkeripe Gate

Tokotobiri / Jobodipe Gate

KPEMBE DIVISION'

Singbung Gate

Lepo Gate

Kanyaase Gate

KUSAWGU DIVISION

Gbeadese Gate

Adamape Gate

Wayope Gate

Jakpape Gate



Per the 1930 Yapei conference agreement during the reign of YagbonWura Mahama Dagbonga succession to various skins within the kingdom rotate among the various gates within the five traditional divisions whose geographical boundaries and jurisdictions are clearly spelt out (Brukum, 2007). The main aim of this arrangement is to curtail and eliminate succession related conflicts in the various divisions of the kingdom. This has made it possible to tell which gate is next to the other when a vacancy is created right from the Yagbon through the five divisions

(Jawula 2010). The agreement however remained mute on intra-gate struggle for who ascends the throne. Intra-gate contentions are part of the chieftaincy conflicts as various claimants emerge among brothers and uncles etc as to who should be appointed to the position.

According to (Jawula 2010) it was necessary for a replacement of a king or a paramount chief within seven (7) days of the demise of a ruling king or divisional paramount chief. This was as a result of belligerence of the olden times and in order that the system would not be overtaken by attacks from neighboring states or internal schism. The rules for the process and rites for the funeral and nomination of the deceased chief and the in-coming one are clearly spelt out and imbibed by all Gonjas young and old, as well as chiefs and elders of the kingdom. Also at the Yagbon level, through the paramountcies, there is an established council of elders otherwise known as king makers of the Yagbon skins who assist the king or divisional paramount chiefs in adjudication of cases of various forms including chieftaincy successions.

The nine (9) king makers are:

1. SonyoWura (head of kingmakers)
2. DamongoWura
3. ChoriWura
4. DebreWura
5. MankpangWura
6. KulawWura
7. KpansheguWura
8. BusunuWura
9. NsuaWura



On the demise of the YagbonWura who is the king and overlord of the kingdom, the SonyoWura who is the head of the kingmakers assume the position of the YagbonWura until a successor is elected and enskined then he hands over to him(Jawula 2010). Among the duties of the SonyoWura as a caretaker of the Yagbon royal skins are leading the funeral process of the late overlord and summoning and chairing a meeting of the kingmakers to arrive at a successor to the YagbonWura. On the death of the YagbonWura, the SonyoWura firstly informs the Nlusah (Diviners) of Mankuma a village under Bole Wura to perform certain secret customary rites before the funeral of the deceased YagbonWura is formally announced. After which the Sonyo Wura then sends the deceased YagbonWura's horse unsaddled, together with his staff and sandals to Buipe to officially announce the death of the Yagbonwura to the BuipeWura (Mahama 2013).

On seeing the horse, the BuipeWura is made aware that the king has gone to the "Bush and has not returned home" meaning he is dead. It should be noted that by Gonja tradition, the YagbonWura and the BuipeWura never see each other whiles they hold those positions, so as soon as the YagbonWura appoints a BuipeWura, that ends physical contact with the BuipeWura. They however attend meetings together but a partition is usually put between them.



According to(Jawula 2010) cited in GLYA (2013), from 1930 to date, the Gonja kingdom has witnessed peaceful successions of Yagbon wura's without any infringement on the laid down rules of succession as culminated in the agreement of the Yapei conference which has been the alpha and omega of chieftaincy succession in modern times in Gonja kingdom. With the demise of YagbonWura Mahama Dagbonga in 1937, KpembeWura Isanwurfor declined ascension to the Yagbon skins with the excuse that he was happy to remain in Kpembe. Iddi Bambaga (1937-

1942) of Tulwe as the next according to the rotation system took over the reigns and thereafter Soale Lanyo of Kusawgu (1942-1943) then Awusi Ewutomah of Wasipe (1943-1975).

Owing to the Yapei agreement, when the skins became vacant in 1975 following the death of Yagbonwura Ewuthomah, Kpembewura Jawula Ababio II put up claims for the skin, but his request was turned down by the king makers because he was infirm at the time; (Burkum 2006).

It was then agreed for the skins to be taken up by Kurabaso Abudu of Bole with the proviso that if a vacancy was created in the future, Kpembe would have the first shot provided the chief was healthy enough to handle the affairs of the kingdom (Jawula 2010). Abudu Kurabaso therefore reigned between 1975 and 1982. He was later succeeded by Kpembe wuraTimu I (J.A. Braimah) as Yagbonwura after Kurabaso passed away. The rotation continued thereafter to Tulwe (Kanyiti, 1987-1990) who was also succeeded by Biawarbi (1990-1992) from Kusawgu, then Alendengi of Wasipe (1992-1993) followed by Bore Enyi Nече of Bole (1993-1998). Bore Enyi Nче was also succeeded by Bawah Doshie from Kpembe between 1999-2010 and now Sulemana JakpaTuntumba Boresa I from 2010 to date (Jawula 2010).

It is however imperative to recall that over the years, the various divisions ascended to the Yagbon skins by rotation from Wasipe and ending at Kusawgu and with the demise of the

Kusawgu candidate, the rotation begins again from Wasipe and goes down the line. It is however important to recall that, per the Yapei agreement on rotation, Tulwe division comes after Kpembe which shifted in favour of Abudu Kurabaso of Bole in 1975-1982 due to the infirmity of KpembeWuraAbabio. In the current circumstance, the late TulweWura Iddi Saaka who should have succeeded Yagbonwura Doshie of Kpembe after his demise in 2010 was also infirmed hence the king makers with adequate consultation with the Gonja traditional council and all



relevant stakeholders and entire “kigbanye” skipped him and nominated the present Yagbonwura Sulemana Jakpa Tuntuma Boresa I to the royal skins with the proviso that Tulwe will be next to ascend to the royal skins when a vacancy is created in the future(Jawula 2010).

Within the divisions too, there are sub-chiefs which also have a system of rotation mirrored on the rotational system at the divisions and the kingship. In the rotationary order, the sub-chiefs are nominated and enskinned by the divisional chiefs with the consultation and help of the kingmakers of the division, head and elders of the gate on whose turn it is for the candidate to be chosen from. Where there is difficulty in arriving on a candidate among the various contenders from that particular gate, either the divisional paramount chief or the aggrieved contenders may seek the appellate jurisdiction of the Yagbonwura who is the president of the Gonja traditional council (GTC 2006). The Council asserts that even before the onset of colonialism, the Gonja kingdom had an unwritten constitution spear headed by the Yagbonwura who is the final adjudicator of all forms of issues of misunderstanding in the kingdom. However, in order to prevent the Yagbonwura from becoming autocratic he is expected to consult the seven kingmakers and the following important chiefs who serve as the members of the judicial committee of the kingdom; BuipeWura, Kongwura, KandiaWura, and Kafaabawura. While the BuipeWura and KafaabaWura play certain important traditional roles in the kingdom, the Kongwura and Kandiawura once ascended the Yagbon skins but are no longer eligible as of now as a results of their connivance with the Samori slave raiders who fought the people of when Yagbonwura Nyantakyi of Kong had a misunderstanding with then Bole wura(Mahama 2014).

From 1675 to date, 28 persons from the ruling dynasty of Jakpa ascended to the Yagbon skins(GLYA 2013).The list is as follows:



2.8.1 Chronology of Yagbonwuras

1. Sumaila Ndewura Jakpa (1675-1698)
2. Yagbon wura Limu (1698-1698) he ruled for a few months after Jakpa
3. Yagbon wura SulemanaJakpa (1698-1709)
4. Yagbon wura Abass, (February 1709-May 1709)
5. Yagbon wura Mahama Labayiru (1709-1712)
6. Yagbonwura Bur Lanyo
7. Yagbonwura Kankanga
8. Yagbonwura Safu
9. Yagbonwura Kali
10. YagbonwuraJakpa (- 1858)
11. Yagbonwura Nanyantachi (1858-1873)
12. Yagbonwura Jaiu (1873-18)
13. Yagbonwura Kpirku
14. Yagbonwura Kurban
15. Yagbonwura Pontomprong (1896-1907)
16. YagbonwuraLanyo (1907-1909)
17. Yagbonwura Mahama Dagbonga (1912-1937)
18. YagbonwuraBambanga (1937-1942)
19. Yagbonwura Singbom Lanyo (1942-1942)
20. YagbonwuraEwutuma (1942-1975)



21. Yagbonwura Mahama Kurabaso (1975-1982)
22. Yagbonwura J.A .Brammah Timu (1983-1987)
23. Yagbonwura Kanyiti (1987-1990)
24. Yagbonwura Bi-Awurbi (1990-1992)
25. Yagbonwura Ale Adengi Tikpiri (1992-1993)
26. Yagbonwura Amantana Bore Nyi-nche (1993-2000)
27. Yagbonwura Bawa Doshie (2000-2010)
28. Yagbonwura Sulemana Jakpa Tuntumba Boresa I (2010-date) (GTC, 2010)

Until 1912, the kingdom experienced some bust of instabilities leading to interregnums especially after the reign of Buri Lanyo and again after Yagbonwura Kurban in 1891. And after Yagbonwura Lanyo from 1907 to 1909 another interregnums ensued until 1912 when Yagbonwura Mahama Dagbonga of Bole (Safope gate) agreed to occupy the vacancy that was created after several attempts to escape it that led to a dispute between him (Yagbonwura Dagbonga) and Bole wura Yahaya Osumanu Jamani who was Mandari wura waiting to shift to Bole per the rotation system. This situation led to the exile of the latter to Kumasi as he was deemed as troublesome and causing so much confusions in the Bole divisional area whilst his nephew who showed bravery and courage in the defense of Bole wura Jamani was appointed and enskinned as Bole wura Juabedi who ruled for 10 years (Amitagi cited in Goody 1976).

Per the narrations of (Tomilson, 1954; Jones 1962; Goody 1967; Braimah & Iliasu 1965), the interregnum occurred at these points in time in the kingdom due to the fact that the paramountcy

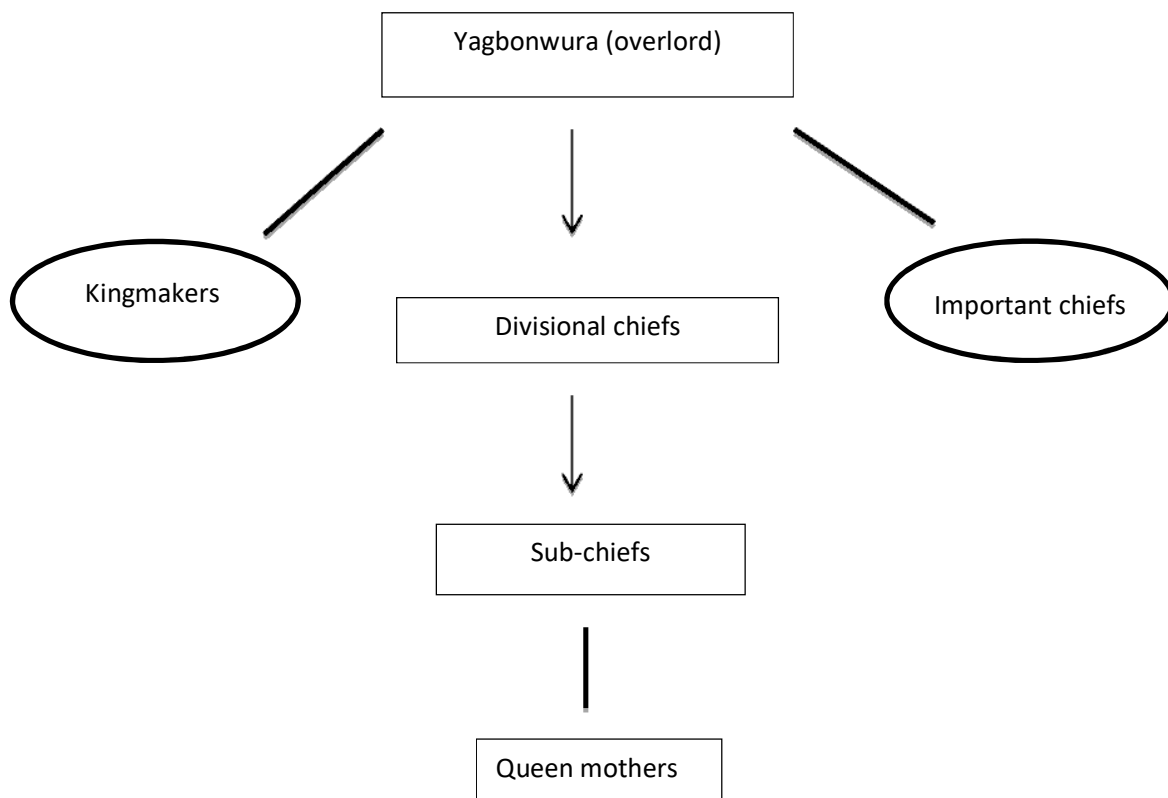


was not only a ritual and judicial office, but also located in a distant and small village of Nyange. The Yagbonwura who moves far from his division to Nyange totally becomes a stranger who only depends on the labour and services of his own kin folks. Most of the kings do not last on the throne as they died in series few years after ascending to the Yagbon skins. These situations made certain chiefs from the divisions on whose turn it was per the rotation system to ascend to the throne reluctant to leave the palace they knew best in order to take up the burdens of the overlord.

As indicated in figure 3.0 the Gonja kingdom has an overlord who is the Yagbonwura, and the final adjudicator in disputes resolution in the kingdom. He is often supported by 9 kingmakers, the 5 divisional chiefs and the Buipewura and his cohorts who are often referred to as important chiefs in the kingdom. There are also sub-chiefs under the top notch of decision making body who assist them to rule the divisions and their respective areas of jurisdiction. The sub-chiefs who are overseers of villages within the kingdom are also supported by queen mothers who also descend partilinearly from Jakpa and enskined alongside their male counterparts (GLYA 2013).



Figure 3:0 structure of chieftaincy institution in Gonja kingdom.



Source: Author's construct

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2.9 Chieftaincy and succession conflicts in Bole traditional division



Bole was the first division to be established by Ndwura Jakpa when he first entered the present gonjaland through Ntereso(Sakara 2010).

As he fought and defeated the Vagla group, he settled his son called Safo and his immediate brothers there to be rulers of the people. Some of his children he settled there included Kwaja, Issifa, Wayo, Kiapewura Mahama, Alungu and Ajiramua (Mahama 2015).

Today succession is rotational among four gates (Safope, Jagape , Denkeripe and Kotobiripe). Essentially, the Bole skin is reached through Mandari in rotation. All gates would have to select someone to go to Mandari as Chief and he is always next in line to the Bole skin making Mandari the gateway to Bole and the most sought after skin, anytime it becomes vacant.

The Chief of Mankuma (Mankumawura) a village near Bole is usually acting Bolewura if for any reason the Bolewura is unable to physically perform his functions either due to absence from town or illness or death. The Makumawura who according to Bole tradition can never ascend the Bole Skin and who by the traditions of Bole becomes Acting Bolewura usually leads the council of elders for all processes leading to the enskinment of a new Bolewura. Other elders of the Bolewura are the Seripewura, Kajumowura, Kademawura, Chief Imam of Bole and heads of the four royal gates in the Bole Traditional Area(Mahama 2015).

The type of Chieftaincy Administrative system mostly practiced in the Bole Traditional Area is the Ambassadorial or High Commissioner system. The Ambassadorial or High Commissioner system is where a royal is appointed a chief and is posted to head the community or traditional area. It is Ambassadorial when the natives leaving in that Community are principally not Gonja Speakers and High Commissioner when they are Gonja Speakers (Mahama 2015). If they are non Gonja Speakers, there will almost invariably be having their own social organisation and leadership within which their social lives revolves around but subservient to the ambassador who is appointed by a superior Chief (Mahama 2015). The chieftaincy system in Bole allows the superior chief (Bolewura) to appoint, move or shuffle chiefs around communities in the area(Bi-Awurbi 2016). This is the reason controversies of Chieftaincy in the area always involves Bole indigenes.



Unlike other Traditional Areas such as Kpembu in which every gate knows who succeeds to the entry gate, it seems all sub-Chiefs within a gate are usually qualified raising the stakes. This has resulted in controversies or struggle which centers on competition for the skin of Mandari since the days of Yagbonwura Mahama.

Similar chieftaincy succession disputes occurred in some other parts of the Gonja Kingdom. Examples include the 1992 Kafaba chieftaincy succession conflicts between the Attape gate and the Kankanpe gate, the 2001 Yapei conflict between the Jakpape and Solape gates and the 2011 Buipe conflict between the Jinapor and the Lebu gates.

2.9.1 Chieftaincy controversies over the Bole and Mandari skins since 1929

Selection of a successive candidate to the Mandari skins has brewed controversies and led to succession disputes for the past 87 years after the demise of Bolewura Nathoma Jobodi. Indeed Tunawura Tokoro from the Safope gate was appointed as Bolewura in 1929 instead of Mandariwura Kibelge by the District Commissioner of Western Gonja Mr Bruce Hall (Mahama 2016)..

This is captured in the report of the Gonja Chiefs Conference on the 17th to 19th day of May, 1930, a meeting that gave birth to the famous Gonja constitution of 1930 (Wilks 1966).

"...In the case of BOLE it was discovered that the then Chief of BOLE was not eligible for election to KAWUL PUTI (Chieftaincy Skin) for the reason that the chief ought to be chosen from the village of MANDARI, WULASI or JUNTILLIPE and the holder of the office was appointed from TUNA by the then District Commissioner, Western Gonja, Mr. Bruce Hall in defiance of native custom and against the wishes of the Yabumwura. This irregularity was



afterwards excused by the Yabumwura when the District Commissioner informed him that he wanted a strong man to be the chief of BOLE..."(Wilks 1966).

Fast forward, one of the smoothest transitions from Mandari to Bole was after Bolewura Tokoro passed on. Indeed Mandariwura Mahama Dramani Amankwa (Awusi) from the Denkeri gate ascended the Bole Skin with the title Awusi without much controversy. The only issue was where his enskinment rituals were to take place. The people of Balpe inside Bole who are the indigenous people and who are responsible for the enskinment of every Bolewura at Balpe for some spiritual purposes declined to enskin Bolewura Awusi but his enskinment did take place at the outskirts of Bole and he had a successful reign till 1952 (Mahama 2016).

Yagbonwura Ewuntoma Awusi from Wasipe (Daboya) in consultation with Bolewura Awusi (of Denkeri gate of Bole) gave Mandari to Abutu Mahama (later Yagbonwura Kurabaso) in 1952 even though it was not the turn of Safope gate. It happened because of a controversy within the Jaga gate over who was the right person to take over Mandari.

In 1952, the Mandari skin became vacant after the death of Mandariwura Suropanyin Adam of the Safope gate. Suropanyin was a Jentilpewura before moving to Mandari and during his reign; a hippopotamus killed someone at Mandari; a madman stabbed a woman to death at Mandari and two servants of Mandariwura Suropanyin fought at Mandari leading to the stabbing of one of them to death. A taboo was put in place by the people of Mandari that forbids any chief from Jentilpe from ever becoming Mandariwura.

After the death of Mandariwura Suropanyin of Safope gate, it was the turn of Jagape to ascend the Mandari skin and the senior most eligible candidates were Jentilpewura Mbabeso and



Karizanwura Asumah but both could not ascend the Mandari skin. Two issues disqualified Jentilpewura Mbabeso; first is the taboo by the people of Mandari that forbids any Chief from Jentilpe to ascend the Mandari skin. The people of Mandari said there would be more calamities for the village if another Chief from Jentilpe was enskined as Mandariwura just like the previous Mandariwura Suropyin. The second reason was confusion within the Jaga gate. Jentilpewura Mbabeso felt some chiefs of the Jaga especially the Karizanwura Asumah was against his ascending of the Mandari skin and vowed that if he does not go to Mandari, then no Chief or individual from the Jagape will also go to Mandari(Mahama 2015).

In the case of Karizanwura Asumah; first he was said to be too told. Secondly the British colonialists were not comfortable with the role he played during the days leading to the exile of Bolewura Yahaya, his brother. In fact Karizanwura Asumah then a young man was sacked from office as a court interpreter and exiled with his brother Bolewura Yahaya.

In the mist of this confusion and uncertainty over who becomes Mandariwura from the Jaga gate, Bolewura Awusi refused to enkin any one from the Jaga gate as Mandariwura.

Abudu Mahama later, (Yagbonwura Kurabaso) who was a literate then lobbied both Bolewura Awusi and Yagbonwura Awusi Ewuntomah and took over the Mandari skin with an agreement that after him the Jaga gate takes over Mandari again. Since one must be a sub chief before becoming Mandariwura, Abutu Mahama was enskined Kananipewura and Mandariwura on the same day in 1952 because by tradition,an eligible chief for the Mandari skins must have previously been enskined as a chief before he is qualified to be a Mandari wura.



After Bolewura Awusi passed on in 1962, Mandariwura Abudu Mahama moved to Bole and Kiapewura Kipo from the Jaga gate took over as Mandariwura.

It must be noted that after Yagbonwura Awusi Ewuntonmah passed on in 1975 and Bolewura Abutu Mahama ascended the Yagbon skin as Kurabaso making Bole vacant, there was a little confusion within the Jaga gate.

Yagbonwura Kurabaso after moving from Bole to Yagbon in 1975 endorsed the sidelining of the then Mandariwura Kipo and enskinned Tunawura Braimah as the Mandariwura and Bolewura (Kabange) on the same day. This means Bolewura Braimah Jaga never even went to Mandari again before becoming Bolewura.

The story was that Mandariwura Kipo who was to ascend the Bole skin was rejected by the elders of the Jaga gate based on his old age, ear deformity and his alleged maternal links to Kong whose people are believed to have betrayed Gonja by requesting for the assistance of Samori whose sofas came to destroy Bole and its surrounding villages.

Mandariwura Kipo was subsequently tricked to allow his nephew Tunawura Braimah Kabange to ascend to the Bole skin. He was told to allow Braimah to ascend the Bole skin so he could continue occupying the Mandariwura skin because there was a precedence in which Bolewura Tokoro moved from Tuna to Bole without the then Mandariwura Kibelge being diskined. However by the rotation order of Bole Chieftaincy, Braimah Kabange could not be at Bole while his uncle Kipo remained at Mandari. Kipo from the Jaga gate was as a result dispossessed of the Mandari skin by Yagbonwura Kurabaso and the Mandari skin given to Denkere gate. This paved



the way for Gbenfuwura Mahama Dramani Amankwa (Awusi) of the Denkere gate to ascend the Mandari skin and subsequently Bole.

Again it is narrated that the late Bolewura Amankwa Gbeadese did not have it easy moving from Dabori to Mandari in 1989 because the late Balewura Adam and late Nahariwura Abutu were all interested but at the Bolewura's palace, Bolewura Amantana Safo (Borenyinche) told them that even though they were both older than Gbeadese, he is their father in terms of their family arrangement and so he was the right person to move from Dabori to Mandari. It is also explained that the late Somawura Diabor Saaka challenged Bolewura Pontonpron for the Mandari skin after Yagbonwura Borenyinche from the Safope gate ascended the Yagbon skin and the late Bolewura Gbeadese Amankwa from Denkere moved from Mandari to Bole making Mandari vacant. The matter went to Yagbonwura Borenyinche and he made it clear to Somawura Diabor that he cannot compete with his father (Bolewura Pontonpron) for a title. Yagbonwura Borenyinche therefore gave Mandari to the Dagbiguwura Mahama (Bolewura Awuladese Pontonpron) in 1994 because he was the "father" (uncle) of the late Somawura Diabor Saaka who competed with him for the Mandari skin.

The Safope Gate of Bole whose turn it was to select a new Mandariwura after Bolewura James Adam Mahama Awuladese Pontoprong II (from Jagape gate) vacated the Mandari skin and moved to Bole in 2013 could not do so after about eight indoor meetings and so much controversy within the gate. The Gate had four grandfathers who are Chiefs one of whom should be selected but three expressed interest. Later almost all the recognised sub-chiefs of the gate, numbering about ten (10) subtly or openly expressed interests and so the Gate could not settle on anyone.



Bolewura Mahama Awuladese Pontoprong II was therefore left with the authority and in accordance to the traditions and practice of Bole to help select a Mandariwura for the Safope Gate. He therefore invited the Elders of the Safope Gate two times for a discussion on the stalemate but there was no solution. The Safope Gate Elders then gave the Bolewura the go ahead to select someone from among them as the next Mandariwura. The Bolewura selected Bugewura Issahaku Abudulai as Mandariwura on 19th April, 2013. Other Chiefs from the Safope gate protested to the Yagbonwura on the grounds that, the Bolewura's nominee is a grandson hence the Yagbonwura subsequently on 20th September, 2013 reversed the Bolewura's decision on the Mandari skin and nominated Nahariwura Bukari Abudu as Mandariwura and this escalated the current Chieftaincy controversy over the Mandari Skin of Bole Traditional Area. This phenomena has led to the duality of authority in the Mandari skins, one installed by the Bolewura and the other installed by the Yagbonwura as the overlord insisted that the Bole defied tradition by selecting a grandson among the many "grandfathers and fathers" who expressed interest for the skins whilst the Bolewura and his supporters maintained that the Yagbonwura is usurping his powers and authority over the selection of the Mandariwura as the family on several attempts could not nominate a candidate for the position of a Mandariwura. The ensuing controversies and tension created between the two factions over who is the truly recognized chief of Mandari led to a decision by the Northern Regional Security Council to ban both chiefs from going to Mandari. This has compelled chief Issahaku Abudulai to file an impending suit against the action of the Yagbonwura at the Judicial committee of the Northern Regional House of Chiefs.



2.9.2 The aftermath of the demise of the Bolewura Awuladese Pontompron(11)

Bolewura Awuladese Pontonpron (II) the divisional paramount chief of the Bole traditional area died on the 31st May, 2017 after a short illness and as expected, there was tension in the Bole town as the two factions in the Mandari skins dispute lased their boots to perform the traditional funeral rites and subsequently enskin as the next Bole wura as Mandari is the gate way to Bole. This situations many thought would have been the last straw to break the camel's back and plug the Bole traditional area into another deadly chieftaincy succession conflict similar to that of Daboya in 1994, Yapei/Kusawgu in 2007 and Buipe in 2010 as the Bole traditional area is already sitting on a time bomb which is yet to explode as a results of duality of authority to the mandari skins. (Dailyguide,2017).

The Mandari skin according to the tradition of Gonja and the Bole Traditional area is the entry skin to the Bole Paramountcy and therefore any person or royal who is enskined as Mandariwura is a potential Bolewura awaiting. The genesis of the Mandari Chieftaincy Affair in the Bole Traditional Area started when Bolewura Gbeadese whose saddened demise occurred on 10th February, 2013. This situation necessitated the promotion of Bolewura Awuladese Pontonprong II then Mandariwura from the Mandari skin to the Bole skin. The Yagbonwura as the sole legitimate kingmaker of the Bole Paramountcy as per the tradition, pronounced the immediate passed Bolewura Awuladese Pontoprong II as Bolewura elect after the funeral rite of the then Bolewura Gbeadese at the Jakpa Palace. However, the selection of his successor to the mandarin skins after the succeeding safope gate could not select a candidate among themselves due to various misunderstandings triggered a division of king makers on the sides of the late Bolewura and the Yagbonwura who were in power struggle as to who has the power to install a chief of



Mandari after Chief Issahaku and Chief Abubakari were installed as chiefs of mandari by the late Bole and the Overlord respectively.

The Gonja Traditional Council hence convened an emergency meeting on thursday 15th June, 2017 on the Bole Chieftaincy controversy and after deliberations arrived at the following decisions.

At the emergency traditional council meeting in Damongo at the Jakpa Palace resolved and informed the contesting parties of Mandari skin, the people of the Bole Traditional Area and the entire Gonjaland to exercise restraint and calm as the traditional authority and all stakeholders should maintain calm and order as the matter is yet to be determined by the Judicial committee of the Northern Region House of Chiefs which is revered, honoured and backed by law and tradition to carry out its mandate independently in its course.

The Yagbonwura and members of the council also directed Mankumawura Wayo to be acting as Bolewura and has authority to run the traditional administration of Bole and supported by traditional heads of Bole Traditional Area thus, Seripewura Mumuni Abubakari, Soomawura Adamu, Bole Chief Imam Mallam Mohammed, Nangbewura and Nsuawura Kotomah of Bole until the Mandari skin affair is resolved by the Judicial Committee of the Northern Region House of Chief.

The Gonja traditional council also established that all traditional laydown procedures in the performance of the late Bolewura's funeral should be followed strictly and the regent after the seven days funeral rite per the tradition seizes to become the acting Bolewura and have no any responsibility to perform any traditional functions.



The remaining funeral activities of the late Bolewura should be suspended until the mandarin issue is resolved and a successor to the Bolewura named who shall lead the remaining funeral proceedings according to Gonja tradition.

The council concluded that any other person who shall self- style himself as Bolewura or acting Bolewura aside the Mankumawura shall be handed over to the law(GTC,2017).

Mahama,2017, also reported that members of the Gonja Traditional Council including Kpembewura, Tulwewura, Kusawguwura, Kongwura, Danyapewura, Tejeipewura and Registrar of the Gonja Traditional Council moved to Bole on 16th June, 2017 to meet with the District Security Committee (DISEC), the two contesting parties to Mandari, and selected Chiefs of the Bole Traditional Area at Bole under heavy security. Before the members of the Gonja Traditional Council arrived at Bole the town was tensed with rumours of some people threatening to disrupt the meeting with the reason that RESEC has issued a letter on the Bole Chieftaincy issue which supercedes any decision by the Gonja Traditional Council.Perhaps anyone that made an attempt would have been on the wrong side of the law with the heavy presence of well armed soldiers and police at the venue of the meeting (Bole District Assembly).At the meeting the decisions of the Gonja Traditional Council was conveyed to DISEC, the factions, selected Chiefs Bole Traditional Area and all stakeholders.

The Northern Regional Minister and Chairman of the Regional Security Council (REGSEC) swiftly summoned the Chieftaincy factions at Bole to Tamale on Monday 5th June, 2017 and passionately appealed to them to give peace a chance. A road map was drawn to ensure there is no disturbance at Bole (Ghanaweb,2017).



Star fm, a local radio station based in Tamale also disclosed that because of the confusion over the legitimate person to be enskinned as Bolewura, the Northern Regional Security Council (REGSEC) invited the two potential chiefs on 5th June, 2017 and that after discussions with them, both parties came to a conclusion that the matter be settled by the judicial sub-committee of the Regional House of Chiefs hence, the halting of the final funeral rights for the late chief.

REGSEC has also decided to suspend all the final arrangements to appoint the Bolewura's successor.

A follow up letter dated 6th June, 2017 from the Regional Security Council (REGSEC) titled "Bole Chieftaincy Affairs Restraining Order" signed by the Chairman of REGSEC and copied to the factions and other stakeholders reads;

"In the wake of the demise of the late Bolewura Awuladese Pontonpron II, the Regional Security Council (REGSEC) has taken notice of the emerging issues and tensions surrounding the succession to the skin.

REGSEC in its effort to secure the needed peace and prevent any disturbances in the area, engaged the two factions on the Mandari skin disagreement who have direct relationship with the emerging confusion over the Bole skin on 5th June, 2017 in Tamale.

REGSEC noted the fact that Mandari skin has been pending before the Judicial Committee of the Northern Regional House of Chiefs for some time now.

Following from the above, REGSEC directs the suspension of the performance of the funeral of the late Bolewura and also any activities related to the enskinment of the Bole- Wura until the



determination of the case pending before the Judicial Committee of the Regional House of Chiefs.

On Wednesday 7th June, 2017, the Regional Minister also visited the King and Overlord of Gonja, Yagbonwura Tuntumba Boresa (I) for a discussion on the way forward for Bole. The Minister entreated the Yagbonwura as the King and Overlord of Gonja and as the President of the Northern Regional House of Chief to ensure there is peace at Bole.(Mahama,2017).Coupling with the above efforts by the traditional council and the Northern Regional Security Committee,Bole became peaceful and calm with everyone waiting on the decision of the Judicial Committee of the Northern Regional House of Chiefs until another petition on 16th November,2017 popped up from the Gbondape sect of the safope gate led by Yirpalawura Yahaya Mahama questioning the legitimacy of the two candidates in the mandari controversy.The petitioners called for the annulation of the appointments of the two chiefs and appoint Yirpala wura Yahaya Mahama the only surviving son of Yagbonwura Mahama Dgbona as the Bolewura. This situation angered the two disputed chiefs and their supporters who also held press conferences on different occasions sending strong warnings to the third force for the distasteful wording of their petition.



2.9.3 Conflict Resolution Mechanisms in Ghana

2.9.3.1 Introduction

Traditional conflict resolution mechanisms in Ghana are part of a well-structured, time-proven social system geared towards reconciliation, maintenance and improvement of social relationships. The methods, processes and regulations are deeply rooted in the customs and traditions of the people of Africa (Hwedie et al, 1998). The importance and utility of the processes lie in the fact that, they strive to restore a balance, to settle conflict and eliminate dispute (Choudree 1999).

Similarly in this analysis of theoretical perspective on conflict transformation, Reimann (nd) identifies three distinctive but interrelated approaches to conflict management: Conflict settlement, conflict resolution and conflict transformation.

He argues that for a proper understanding of this three approaches, it is crucial to realize that they should never be seen as distinct, single and all comprehensive theoretical systems.

He wonders whether such isolated systems would even be attainable given multi disciplinary and heterogeneous understanding of all three approaches. Rather, they are more fruitfully understood as interrelated.

Reimann defines conflict settlement as out oriented strategies for achieving sustainable win-win solutions and/or putting an end to direct violence, without necessarily addressing the underlying causes of the violence remain largely unaddressed.

Moreover, conflict settlement approaches typically focus on mediations between “top level” leaders such as political, traditional (chiefs), military and high profile representatives of the



warring factions. By assuming that peace occurs when top leaders can negotiate an agreement that will trickle down to the warring population, conflict settlement approaches engage in “top level” peace building strategies (Lederach 1997).

To reach settlement, mediated agreements are achieved by employing problem-solving techniques that ranges from coercive measures, such as arbitration, sanctions and power mediation to non-coercive measures such as negotiation, facilitation and mediation(Kaye and Beland 2009).

Based on the ideology of management, most research in the sense of conflict settlement defines conflict as a problem of political order and of the status quo: violent protracted conflict is thus deemed the result of in compatible interest and/ or competition of scares resources.

While such a definition indeed implies that conflict is a zero-sum game, conflict settlement need not necessarily follow this same line of thinking. Depending on the particular interests of the actors involved and the stages of escalation, conflict settlement may easily transcend the zero-sum game, and lead to a non zero-sum if not to a positive –sum outcome Reimann(nd).

Conflict resolution according to Reimann(nd) refers to all process oriented activities that aim to address the underlying causes of direct and structural violence. Structural violence defines the social, political and economic structure of a conflict situation. When unequal power, domination and dependence are perpetuated, while cultural violence refers to the social and cultural legitimization of direct and structural violence.

Drawing on John Burton’s influential “human needs theory”(Kaye and Beland 2009) emphasizes that conflict resolution seeks first to identify the needs of conflicting party and then



transform the destructive potential of this needs into constructive non- violence interests and requests. Thus strategies for peace typically include non-coercive measures, such as consultation and facilitation.

In addition, numerous actors are involved in the conflict resolution process be they individual actors, professionals, academics, civil society or N.G.Os.

Conflict transformation to Reimann refers to outcome, process and structured oriented long-term peace building efforts which aim to outcome revealed forms of direct cultural and structural violence. Citing Burton and Dukes, Remann opines that conflict transformation moves beyond the aims of both the previous approaches, while at the same time taking up many of the ideas of conflict resolution and particularly John Burton’s notion of “conflict prevention”.

Conflict prevention means deducing from an adequate explanation of the phenomenon of conflict, including its human dimensions, not merely the conditions that create an environment of conflict and the structural changes required to remove it but more importantly, the promotion of conditions that create ‘cooperate relationships (Reimann,nd).

Based on the discussion above(Kaye and Belan 2009) access state initiative vis-à-vis the role of Non- Governmental Organization (N.G.Os) resolving the konkomba-Nanumba inter-ethnic conflict in the Northern Region of Ghana. They point out that once the state troops had suppressed the initial violence, the local government set camps for displaced persons in the region. Meanwhile the military Task Force collaborated with N.G.Os to facilitate the distribution and escorts into violated areas.



Besides, Kaye and Beland (2009) note that in addition to its peace keeping initiatives and relief efforts, the state also sought to engage in further peace building activities. In April 1994, the Ghanaian government formed a Permanent Peace Negotiation Team(P.P.N.T) whose mandate was to delve into the root causes of the conflict and make recommendations to the government. Situating government efforts in revolving the 1994 Konkomba-Nanumba conflict in the normative theories of conflict management thus (conflict settlement, conflict resolution and conflict transformation), they argue that state- initiated peace building efforts reflect conflict settlement strategies.

State strategies focused on the suppression of violence targeted a limited number of actors and sought to achieve a cease-fire agreement. However, state peace building efforts, particularly the PPNT adopted a top-down approach and thereby focused their initiatives on high profile leaders in the region hence could not resolve the conflict.

Contrary to the states approach, NGOs caught up in the 1994 Konkomba – Nanumba inter-ethnic conflict employed extra ordinary measures to deal with the extra ordinary circumstances and formed the inter – NGO Consortium. The consortium emerged as a loose network of NGOs that pooled resources, collectively requested funding assistance, oversaw the coordination of NGO relief efforts and ultimately facilitated the mediation of peace accord between warring factors. By identifying ethnic- moderates, individual NGO representatives paved the way for the formal peace building process that would take place under the guidance of the Kenya- based Nairobi peace initiative (NPI), an organization committed to the principles of conflicts transformation and reconciliation in Africa. As a result, NGO peacebuilding initiatives surpassed settlement approaches and resembled conflict resolution and transformation strategies which seek to



identify and address the underlying grievances of conflict communities in order to provide a catalyst for social change (Kaye and Beland, 2009).

Awedoba (2009) on his part notes that, there exist several conflict resolution mechanisms in Ghana. He opines that even through cultural values and nature of the conflict dictate which mechanisms will best deal with each conflict, there resemblances and that lessons learnt from one context might provide education on good practices and suggest strategies for dealing with conflicts in the three Northern Regions of Ghana. His work covers the state security Agencies and services, traditional institutions that incorporate in to the state governance system. State security agencies and services such as the Criminal investigations Department (CID) and Bureau of National Investigation (BNI) gather intelligence on chieftaincy disputes that are likely to degenerate in to violent conflicts. The police and the military have more often been used in conflict management and settlement in Ghana. They are deployed to protect lives and property whenever conflicts explode or threaten to explode over entrenched positions or disputes over valuable but scarce resources. Their presence often bring temporary end to violence in conflict areas.

There are also Regional and District Security committees that focus on security matters that have the potential to disturb the peace and security within their jurisdictions. He however cautions that potential local mechanisms that could be put in place to contain the conflicts and secure peace should not be ignored (Awedoba 2009).

Another set of conflict resolution mechanisms put forward by Awedoba are African (Ghanaian) traditional institutions and practices that serves as conflict resolution procedure in the North and other parts of Ghana. These institutions have been integrated in to the state governance system.



He cites the Traditional councils which have the mandate under section 12 of the chieftaincy Act 971, Act 370 to settle chieftaincy disputes ranging from the position of head man to divisional chief. Beyond the traditional councils, Awedoba highlights the place of the Regional House of chiefs (RHCs) in the three Northern Regions in resolving conflicts in the North and Ghana as a whole. Like all other regions in Ghana, the RHCs in the three Northern Regions are composed of paramount chiefs. The houses elect presidents from among their members and are assisted by registrars in running their business. A number of chieftaincy disputes have been sent to the RHCs of the North for redress. While some have been settled, others are still pending. Since the RHCs of the North are relatively close to chiefdoms they serve, they are better placed in handling chieftaincy disputes in the North. Their decision may carry much weight and enjoy considerable respect. However, he observes that given the proximity traditional and historical ties of the chiefdoms, not all cases of the houses are acceptable to the contestants. Consequently, some cases sent to the RHCs have had to travel all the way to the National House of Chiefs and the superior courts of Ghana.

At the Apex of state- traditional institutions in Ghana is the National House of Chiefs(N.H.Cs) which is tasked to manage chieftaincy issues including the resolution of disputes in the institution itself and in allied domain. The N.H.C is composed of five (paramount) chiefs each elected from all R.H.Cs (Republic of Ghana, 1992). The constituent chiefs are often experienced persons who have track records of managing disputes in their various chiefdoms and traditional areas. They are reputable and often beyond partisan considerations. Their mediation is therefore likely to be accepted by parties to disputes (Awedoba 2009). Though Awedoba perceived the diverse ethnic composition of NHC as a problem to its effective functioning as conflict resolution institution, this researcher is of the view that member of the National House of chiefs



(NHC) are mostly enlightened personalities who are/or should be conversant with the norms and procedures in other chiefdoms either than theirs.

Apart from the traditional institutions stated above, Awedoba also alludes to traditional practices that play significant role in conflict resolution in Ghana. He asserts that in many traditional areas in the north. It is customary to put a disputed issue to the test by making contesting parties submit to super natural arbitration through oracles, sworn statements and oaths. The fear for the sanction that comes from oracles and oaths deters disputants who know their claim is unjust and thus abandon their assertions. Kendie and Guri (2006) Also opined that, it is also common to invoke an oath during conflicts. A litigant may swear an oath to support his/her claim. When that happens, it is expected that the other party, if innocent will also swear an oath against that claim. In that case, the contending parties having sworn the oath have to go to the paramount chief, fetish or river, etc to perform the necessary rituals and settle the dispute. However, failure to respond to an oath is perceived to be admission of guilt until reversed by the custodian of the oath (eg. chief/fetish priest). They also added that most chieftaincy Conflicts have spiritual dimensions which involve incantations, curses, witchcraft and oath-taking, among others, are brought before the traditional and spiritual leaders including the fetish priests, custodians of deities, herbalists and soothsayers. For example, one party may invoke a curse by using the name of a river or a deity to harm another person for perceived wrong doing. Once the afflicted party realizes through divination that they have been cursed, the accused is requested to reverse or remove that curse by performing the necessary rituals at the appropriate fetish/shrine and going through the necessary cultural processes. Traditional festivals also provide the avenue for reconciliation among members of communities engaged in a feud.



In addition, Awedoba (2009) pinpoints Ghana's legal system as an important mechanism for conflict resolution in the country. He stresses that in times of conflict, government uses executive/legislature instrument Acts or Decrees to limit the movement of contestants through the imposition of curfews. In the past, the government had given recognition to, or withdraw some from some chieftaincy in the bid to restore order and sanity(Awedoba 2009).This confirms Yakubu,(2005) assertion that CPPs LI 59 of 1960 reduced tension among claimers to the Ya-Na skins. Similarly, he notes that the NRC made the Yendi skins Decree 1974,NRDC 299 in November 1974 to consolidate the power of the new king,Naa Mohammed Abdulai (iv).Yakubu also observed that more chieftaincy disputes are being sent to courts. Nonetheless, he is of the view that the litigants and their community's lack of understanding of the legal principles accounts for unwillingness to accept court rulings. This he attributes to the perceived foreign principles that apply at the law courts,unfamiliarity of customary laws of the various communities by court officials, lack of interest or bias on the part of some court officials, the frequent and long adjournments, fear and anxiety on the part illiterate witnesses among others (Awedoba 2009).

Despite the setbacks, Awedoba contends that the court still retain a role in the management of chieftaincy disputes in Ghana.

Another legal means of conflict resolution in Ghana are committees and commissions of enquires set up by government take evidence and make recommendation for resolving a conflict. Awedoba argued that these committees/commissions are post-dated in the sense that it is after the conflict has taken place and the damage has been caused that they set up to do post- mortem.



They rarely find the solutions to the problem, some never come out with any report and if they do their report is never made public (Awedoba 2009).

It must be added that sometimes too the government chooses which recommendation(s) to accept or implement. In the case of the Dagbon conflict, a number of committees and commissions have been set up since independence with the most recent one been the Wuaku commission and committee of eminent chiefs. The findings of these committees have however not been able to resolve the conflict.

Awedoba discusses other conflict resolution mechanisms in Ghana such as associating the role of prominent personalities and formal (jogging) relationships among others. Those mechanisms have been applied to conflicts in the North including chieftaincy conflict in Bole traditional division of Gonjaland though there still exist a number of conflicts pending in the area and in Ghana as a whole. In the particular instance of dual authority of chieftaincy in Mandari and Tinga in the Bole traditional division, there seem to be no end in sight to end the chieftaincy succession dispute in the area. The gap which this study seeks to fill is; what could have gone wrong with the traditional lay down procedures of chieftaincy succession and the factors that are currently impeding the indigenous mechanisms for settling chieftaincy succession disputes is the Gonja kingdom with specific emphasis on the Bole traditional area.



2.9 CONCLUSION

This chapter has discussed literature on Ethnic conflicts, Chieftaincy conflicts, Theoretical explanations of conflict, chieftaincy in Ghana, Chieftaincy conflicts in Northern Ghana, chieftaincy and succession conflicts in Gonjaland and conflict resolution mechanism in Ghana. It has been argued that though Ghana, unlike her peers in Africa Sub of the Sahara has to a large extent been spared violent conflict at the national level. She has nonetheless, experienced violent communal conflicts in various parts of the country since independence. The underlying causes of these conflicts are mostly chieftaincy and land disputes, political and religious fanatics and ethnocentrism. It has been argued that although Ghana as a whole is disposed to command conflicts, the northern part of the country has been the battle ground for most of these conflicts. Finding a lasting solution to the conflicts through security interventions, the legal system and state traditional institution has proven largely futile. Certainly, the information, gathered from this chapter provides an in valuable source of data to this study.



CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY

3.0 Introduction

This section discusses the research model employed in this research project, which encapsulates the geophysical characteristics of the study area, the research methods in question and the overall methodological framework employed (Sarantakos 1996). The section concerns itself with the various methods used for obtaining accurate and meaningful data that helped the researcher to understand the phenomena under study (Twumasi 2001). It discusses the research design, the sampling techniques used and the tools of data generation and analysis (Sarantakos 1996). It is concerned with how the entire study was conducted from the beginning to the end, while indicating the flexibilities introduced when necessary and the justification for the use of each methodological procedure (Kumar 1999). The ensuing sections present the various aspects of the proposed methodology.

3.1 Geophysical Characteristics of the Study Area

3.1.1 Location and Size

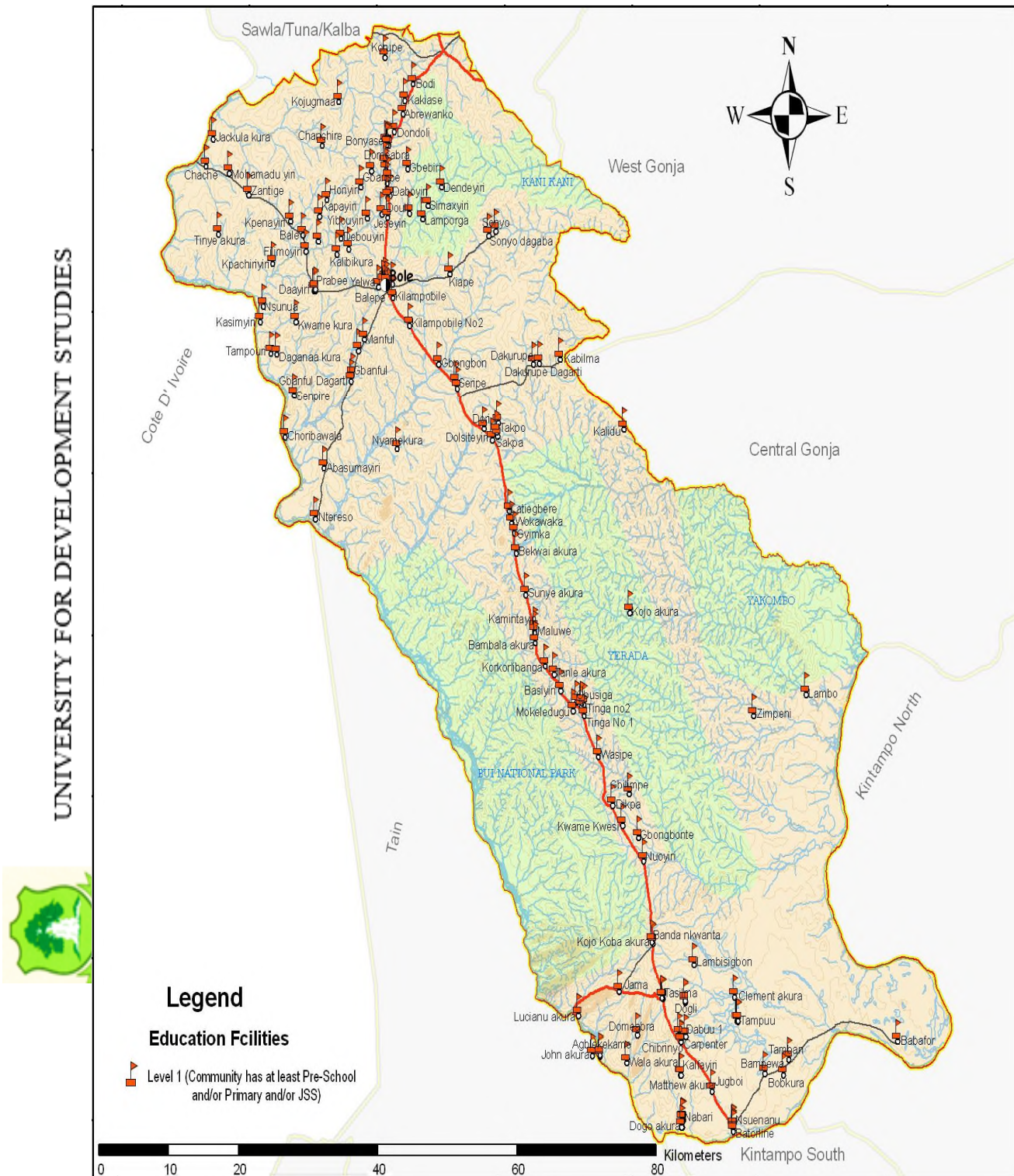


The Bole District used to be part of West Gonja District with Damongo as the Capital. The Bole District was carved out of the then West Gonja district in 1988 by the Legislative Instrument, LI 1447 but now LI 1786. The District has Bole as its capital. Both Districts still remain part of the Gonja Kingdom established in the 17th Century by Ndewura Jakpa. It is also the cradle of Gonja culture with its traditional capital at Nyange which is located in the present day Sawla Tuna Kalba District.

Until recently the Sawla Tuna District used to be part of the Bole District, The boundaries have therefore been changed and now lies between latitude 8'10.5 and 09' and longitude 1.50 E and 2.45 W. It is located at the extreme western part of the Northern Region of Ghana. The District is bounded to the North by the SawlaTuna Kalba District, to the West by the Republic of Cote Divoire with the Black Volta River being the boundary between the two neighbouring countries, to the East by the West Gonja District, to the south by the Wenchi and Kintampo Municipal in the Brong Ahafo Region. The District extends from Bodi to the North and Bamboi to the south. However, the Bole Traditinal Council covers the two administrative districts of Bole and Sawla-Tuna-Kalba Districts.



Figure 3.1 shows the map of Bole District



3.2 The Research Design

The study depended largely on **qualitative research** approach with a little blend of **quantitative** aspects in data collection and analysis. The two approaches differ in many ways but complement each other (Neuman 2006). The nature of the data determines the differences between the two approaches. Quantitative research often relies on interpretative or critical social science. They emphasize on measuring variables and testing hypothesis that are linked (Neuman 2006). Qualitative research allows researchers to get an inner experience of participants and to determine how meanings are formed through culture and to discover rather than testing variables, depending largely on narrations, descriptions and explanations (Corban and Strauss 2008). In this study, the use of Focus Group Discussion (FGD) and key informant interviews and case histories facilitated the acquisition of qualitative data to aid qualitative analysis, through detailed verbal explanations of the thematic or empirical issues of this study.

On the other hand, quantitative research approach involves the use of numerical and statistical procedures in a manner that facilitates the quantitative measurement of the research results (Kane 1995). Quantitative research is facilitated by the use of tools such as questionnaires and structured interviews to obtain data that can easily be expressed in numerical and statistical forms such as absolute numbers and percentages, tables and charts, arithmetic means, modes, medians and other measures of central tendencies and dispersions (Kane 1995; and Twumasi 2001).

The justification for the use of both qualitative and quantitative data in this study, according to Osuala (2007), is that one approach cannot answer all questions and provide



insights on all issues. In fact, whereas quantitative data expresses the findings in mathematically impressive forms as in numbers and graphs, qualitative data complements and enriches the analytical process by providing detailed interpretations and explanations that add more meaning to the results and discussions. However being more social behaviorally inclined, that aims at explaining culturally related behaviour, attitudes and perceptions, the findings of this study could be better expressed in more qualitative forms than quantitative for case study analysis.

Target Population

The target population for the study was all adults above the age of 18 years who reside in the three main towns of Bole Traditional Area: Bole, Mandari and Sawla

3.2. Determination of Sample size

Statistics from EC revealed that those above 18 years in the selected areas sum up to 33600

Using De Vaus (2002) formula, a total of 160 respondents were selected as follows:

$$n = \frac{N}{1+N(1-a)^2}$$

Where n = sample size;

N = the population;

1 = constant

a = confidence level at 95 per cent.

In this study N=33600,



Therefore $n = \frac{33600}{1 + 33600(1 - 0.4801)^2}$

$$1 + 33600(1 - 0.4801)^2$$

$n = 160$. therefore sample size = 160

3.3 Sampling Technique

It was not possible to collect data from everyone in Bole Traditional Area due to the large population size. A combination of both qualitative and quantitative sampling strategies were used to collect primary data. Stratified sampling was used. Bole Traditional Area was stratified into four; Bole north, east, south and west. The setting of Bole is such that members of a particular gate settle close to one another. So in the four strata, one of the gates dominated each of them. For instance Bole-North was dominated by the sarfope gate members, Bole-East was dominated by the Denkeri gate members, Bole-South was dominated by members of the Jagape gate and Bole-South was dominated by members of the Kotobiri/Jododipe gate. I then assigned a quota of 25 to each zone. I then constructed a sampling frame using the voting registrar of each zone. Each of the zones was a polling station. I then used a simple random sampling to select 40 persons from each zone. My sample size was therefore 160 respondents.



3.4 Purposive Sampling

Some people were purposively selected to be part of the final sample. This is because they were perceived to have proper knowledge about the subject matter. They were thought to be familiar with the protracted conflict and have either been victims or directly involved in efforts to resolve the conflict. Five chiefs were selected from each of the four gates. In all twenty chiefs were

selected as key informants in addition to these the National Disaster Management Coordinator for Bole district was selected, the Police Commander and three Executives of the Gonja Land Youth Association were also added. This brought the total number of key informants to 25.

3.5 Tools of data collection

3.5.1 Questionnaires

Questionnaires were administered to about one hundred respondents. The exercise lasted for about three weeks. I used about four researched assistants. I picked one each from the four gates. Each went to his gate members to administer the questionnaires. This was to gain trust and reduce the suspicions of respondents. We started data collection from 25th February and ended on the 17th of March 2017. I had already contacted my research assistants before going so they were ready to be trained the next day. I used two days in training them, the last training day ended with a piloting of the questionnaire administration process. They were made to administer questionnaire to at least ten persons each on a pilot basis. After the piloting, I addressed some of the difficulties faced by some of the research assistants and on the 25th February, the main data collection started. An average of 15 persons were administered with the questionnaire. To ensure that data was not fabricated, I did a follow up. I re-administered the same questionnaires to some of the respondents that were administered by my research assistants from all the gates. I randomly selected the already completed questionnaires and compared the responses on the questionnaires to those I personally administered. Of the 12 questionnaires I randomly selected, responses were the same as those I personally administered. Over all the strength of the survey was high, we were able to recover all administered questionnaires, those that contained some



ambiguities or were half-completed were followed up for clarification and completion respectively. In the end we had 100% response rate.

3.5.2. In-depth interviews

In-depth-interviews were used for obtaining data from the 25 key informants who were purposively selected from chiefs, Security agencies, Executives of the GLYA, and Assembly members whose activities relate to ensuring peaceful coexistence in chieftaincy succession in the Bole Traditional Kingdom of Gonjaland. The justification was to seek in-depth knowledge on the broader perceptions of chieftaincy, succession and its ensuing conflicts as well as the cultural mechanisms in maintaining peace and resolving conflicts. (Kumar 1999). About 20 sub-chiefs and five other persons were interviewed.

3.6. Documentary review

Unpublished materials such as , reports and minutes of the annual Gonja traditional council conferences, GLYA report on the inquiry into the conflict in Gonjaland, seminal and workshop presentations on the chieftaincy and its ensuing conflicts in Gonjaland by the GLYA were also used. Secondary data for the study was collected from such secondary sources as books, journals articles, and newspaper publications on the chieftaincy disputes in Gonjaland, conflict in general, ethnic conflicts, conflicts in Northern Ghana, and conflict resolution mechanisms in Ghana. Electronic sources such as Google Scholar, JSTOR, Sage publications and other website were also used.



3.7 Data Analysis.

Data analysis refers to combining the information gathered from respondents to determine emerging trends, themes, categories and relationships that emerge from the combined data. The Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) was used for data analysis because of its clarity in constructing frequencies, bar charts, pie charts and other graphical devices used for data presentation

Fidelle (2007) says data analysis is a process of inspecting, cleaning, transforming, and modeling data with the goal of discovering useful information, suggesting conclusions and supporting decision making. Data which was gathered during data collection was cleaned and edited to make it more intelligible, meaningful, legible, relevant and precise. Responses were numerically codified and entered immediately after returning from the field. Entries were crosschecked regularly to ensure that errors or wrong entries are corrected. Record matching was done to prevent duplication. Textual data spell checkers were used to correct mistyped words.

Tables and charts were used to present data and to get a brief overview of emerging trends with regards to the research question. To help focus the interviews in terms of reflecting the main objectives of this study and simplify the analysis of the qualitative data, the interviews were structured according to themes. These themes reflected the overall aim – why the conflict remains unresolved – and objectives in this study: causes of the conflict; identification and assessment of the conflict resolution mechanisms adopted; examine why the conflict remains unresolved despite the various efforts made to resolve it; and the way forward. Each themed group of questions was then compared and contrasted with respondents' answers. However,



respondents' answers to different questions were also cross-referenced in order to build up a fuller picture of what the data is telling us.

3.7.1. Data Management

All hard copies that were used for the research were photocopied, labelled and kept in folders. Soft copies were saved on the computer and copied to external drives as back-ups. Recorded interviews were properly filed and stored in a safe cabinet.

3.8 Validity and Reliability of the study

Validity entails ensuring that research instrument measure exactly what they are supposed to measure so that findings would commensurate with on-the-ground reality. Validity is the property of a research instrument that measures its relevance, precision and accuracy. Validity tells whether an instrument measures what it is supposed to measure and whether this measurement is precise.

I ensured that each of the research instruments I used measured accurately and precisely what it was supposed to measure. For instance interviews consisted of only questions which tended to find out about the causes of the Mandari chieftaincy succession conflicts, why is being sustained, the conflict resolution mechanisms applied and how the conflict could be resolved completely and these were what the researcher set out to uncover. I ensured that the interview questions cover all the dimensions of the research topic in the best manner. My sample were as representative as possible and only necessary and needed tools were used, these, I am sure made my work as valid as possible..



Reliability refers to the capacity of an instrument to produce consistent results when used at different times by different people. A method can be said to be reliable if it produces the same results whenever it is repeated and it must not necessarily be done by same researchers or respondents. (Sarantakos, 2005).

The research was conducted in such a coordinated and organised manner according to acceptable research procedures so that if repeated by a different researcher, to different respondents and under different conditions, the findings would still be the same, thus reliability.

3.8.1 Ethical Issues in the Research

The research used the most appropriate methodology in conducting this study in order to ensure that conclusions drawn will be valid. The researcher ensured a conscious effort to avoid bias in reporting the findings of the study. This was done by presenting the findings as they are. The information that was obtained from respondents on causes of chieftaincy disputes, socio-economic effects and the indigenous cultural arrangements that are put in place to prevent chieftaincy succession conflicts in the study area will not be used in any way to harm participants. In my research, the most important challenges in following the “do no harm” imperative were to ensure that those I interviewed and the organizations I observed had given me their informed consent to my research project, to protect the politically sensitive data that I gathered, and to decide what material to include in the thesis. In short, I sought to ensure that those who participated in the project did not run any greater risk as a result and that potential research subjects made their own informed decision to participate. I discuss each in turn, along with some lesser challenges and dilemmas. I did not work with research assistants or “key informants” whose security might require particular consideration.



For field research to be ethical, research subjects must consent to their participation in full understanding of the potential risks and benefits. In the context of my field research, this norm of informed consent meant that those I interviewed should understand the purpose of my research and the potential risks that they ran in talking with me as well as any potential benefits so that they could make a fully informed decision as to whether they wanted to speak with me. The challenges of implementing this norm were numerous: what were the risks and benefits of participation? Would illiterate and marginally literate rural residents understand the informed consent process or would it alienate potential participants? The consent procedure that I used with rural residents was oral, not written, as any written record would link participants to my project and would comprise a risk to participants.

A secondary reason was that the majority of civilians interviewed in the case-study areas were at most semi-literate. The stated purpose of the project was the unearthing of the sources of the chieftaincy succession disputes in Gonjaland and their manifestations in Bole traditional area and. I presented myself as an academic researcher working for an academic degree at the University for development Studies Wa campus.

Another ethical issue was the extent to which I would include sensitive field materials in thesis. Some decisions were simple as they were essentially dictated by the conditions given by research subjects. Some material was excluded from publication by the interviewee



3.9 Challenges of the study

3.9.1 Difficulty in Getting targeted respondents to respond within Time Schedule

Time management was a major challenge faced in this study. The ability to carry out the various activities on schedule can only be met by appropriate timing. This aspect was addressed through the adoption of a work schedule. Also the ability to obtain data from the target respondents depended on the right time to meet them, at which they shall be willing to cooperate with the researcher. The calendar of the various categories of respondents was identified and this helped us determined the most suitable period for meeting them.

3.9.2 Resource constraint

Financial and material resources obviously constitute an essential component of a research activity. For instance if inadequate funds and logistical bottlenecks occur, problems like inadequate and shoddy tools may be constructed, some research locations may not be covered, data may not be well recorded and stored, and research assistants may not be well motivated. These could affect the quantity, quality and validity of the data, and the accuracy of the research findings would be questionable as a result (Twumasi 2001). These problems were minimized through the adoption of a research budget that catered for the financial and material requirements and the sources of financing the budget at the proposal stage.



CHAPTER FOUR

PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS OF DATA

4.0. BIO DATA OF RESPONDENTS

This chapter analyses both the primary and the secondary data that was collected for the study. Emerging and common themes were noted. Discussions and observations were made and tied up to the conceptual and theoretical frameworks used for the study. The researcher puts up the data through rigorous analysis to establish the causes of conflicts in Gonjaland and their manifestations in the Bole Traditional Area.

4.2 Development of Succession Dispute in Bole Traditional Area

- February 2013 - Bolewura Seidu Amankwah Gbeadese II, - dies
- March 2013, Mandariwura Mahama Awuladese Pontoprong II - enskinned Bolewura.
- Safope Gate's turn to elect successor to vacant Mandari skin
- After 8 meetings, Safope Gate fail to agree on a successor
- Bolewura invites elders of Safope Gate for consultations (twice without consensus)
- Safope Gate gave Bolewura the free hand to select a new Mandariwura from amongst them
- Yagbonwura Sulemana Jakpa Tuntumba Boresa I, invites Bolewura to be briefed on the stalemate

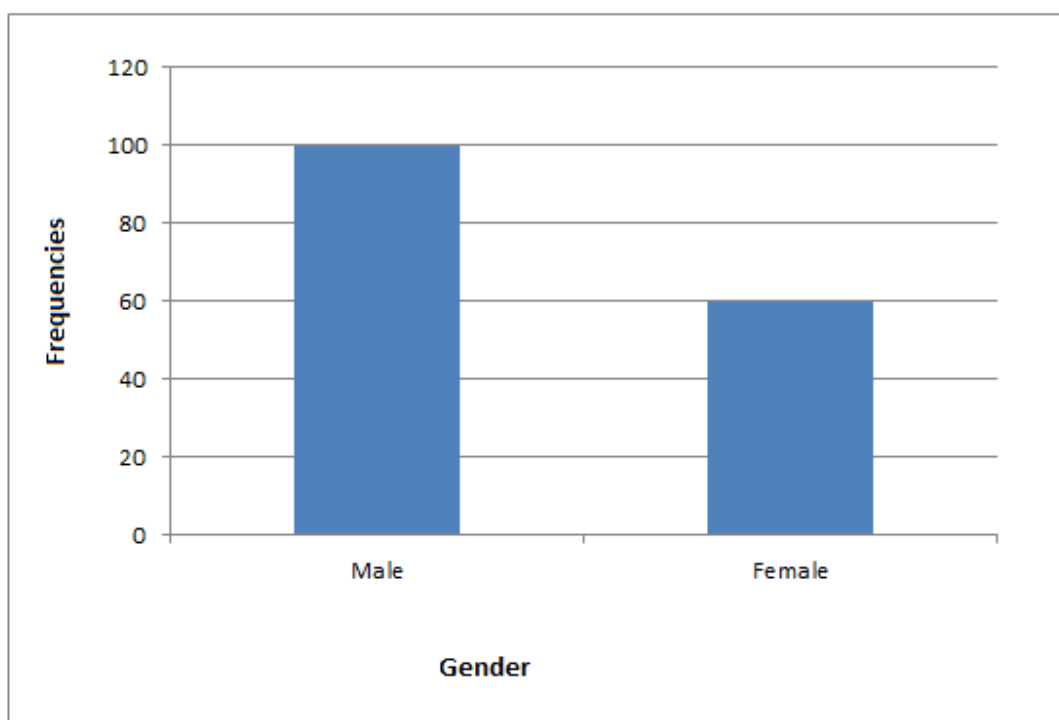


- Yagbonwura asks Bolewura to give the Safope Gate a third chance, failing which he should nominate a successor
- April 19 2013 - Safope Gate still fails to come to agreement
- Late Bolewura nominted Bugewura Issahaku Abdulai as the new Mandariwura
- Yagbonwura asked late Bolewura to suspend enskinment of chief Abdulai Issahaku as Mandariwura
- 10th May 2013 - Issahaku Kant enskinned Mandariwura by Bolewura
- 7th June 2013 Yagbonwura overrules the enskinment of Issahaku Abdulai
- 20th September 2013 – Yagbonwura nominated chief Bukari Abutu as Mandariwura
- RESULT – 2 chiefs for Mandari
- A- Issahaku Kant (recognized by Bolewura)
- B- Bukari Abutu (recognized by Yagbonwura)
- 24th September 2013 – Issahaku Kant petitions Regional House of Chiefs.
- Hearing delayed for over four year
- 4th May, 2017, Bolewura passed on
- 6th October, 2017, Judicial Committee of the RHC passes judgement on the Mandari case
- 9th Oct, Chief Bukari, Yangbonwura appointed Mandari Wura enskinned as Bolewura



- 9th Dec. Funeral rites of late Bolewura performed.
- 10th Dec. chief Abdulai Issahaku also enskinned as Bolewura
- 10th Dec. violent conflict between supporters of the two rival chiefs claimed a life and injured many
- 11th Dec. Dust to dawn curfew imposed on Bole township

Fig 4.1 Gender of respondents

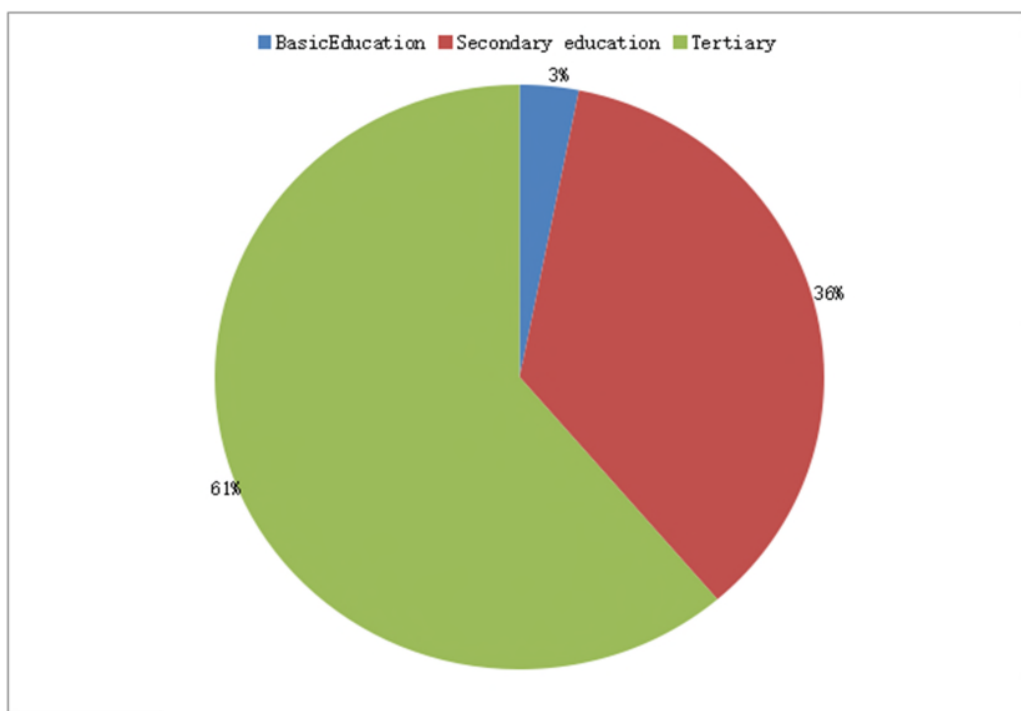


As indicated in Fig. 4.1 above, the total number of respondents was 160, out of this 100 of them were men and 60 were women. The unevenness in the gender distribution did not affect the



quality of data because basically, Gonjas are traditionally a patrilineal society so men are more exposed to chieftaincy, matters as compared to their women counterpart

Fig4.2 Educational Attainment

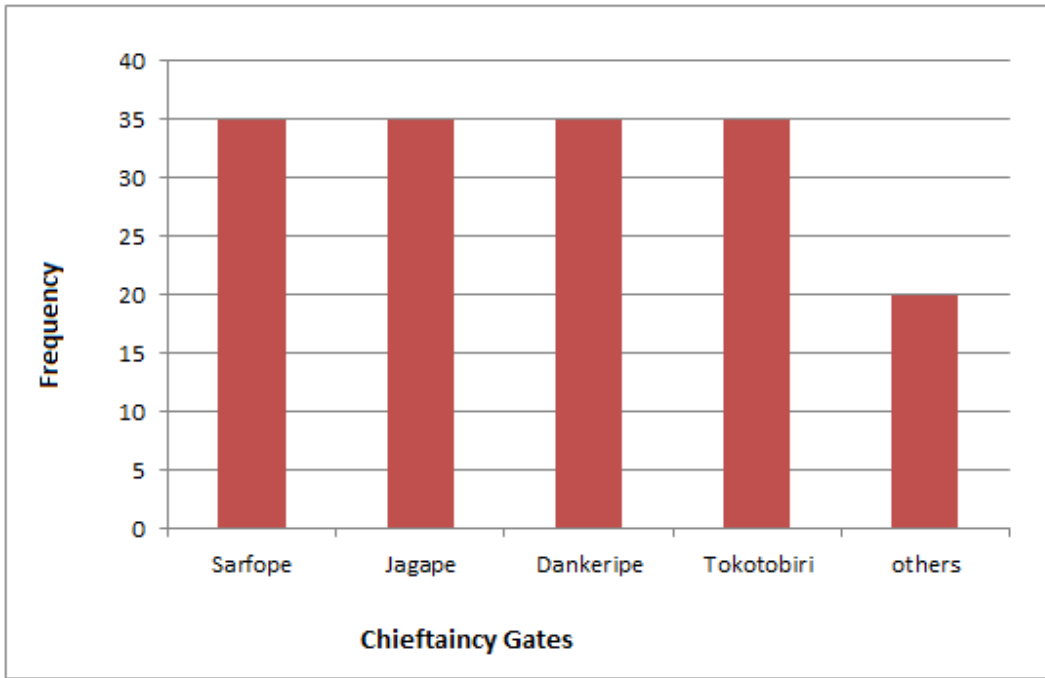


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All the respondents had had some levels of education. 98 people representing 61% of the total respondents had attended a tertiary institution, 57 people, representing a total percentage of 36% of total respondents had attended Senior High Schools, and only 5 people representing just 3% of the total respondents stopped schooling after basic school.



Fig 4.3 Chieftaincy Gate of Respondents

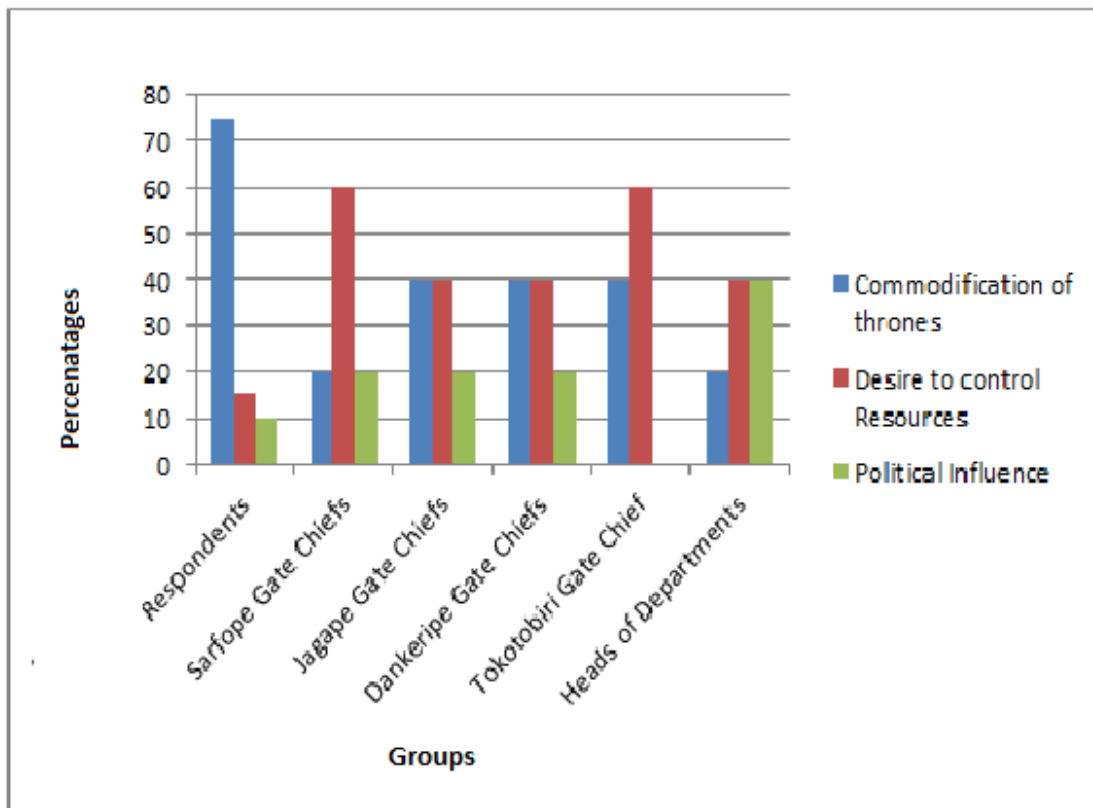


There are about four chieftaincy gates in Bole. These were fairly represented in the sample. 35 respondents came from the Sarfope gate, 35 from the Jagape gate, 35 from the Denkeripe gate and 35 from the kotobire gate and the other 20 were from various tribes who have come there to settle. This enabled the researcher to triangulate the responses from the people in the four gates to get a holistic picture of the conflict.



4.1. SOURCES OF CHIEFTAINCY SUCCESSION DISPUTES IN GONJA LAND

Fig 4.4 Sources of Conflicts in Gonjaland



4.1.1. Commodification of Thrones

When I asked what they thought were the sources of the various chieftaincy succession conflicts in Gonja Land, 75% of the respondents representing 128 of the total respondents mentioned the commodification of thrones as the main source of the various chieftaincy succession disputes in

Gonjaland. They said chieftaincy was a highly respected institution, however it has become a money making venture for kingmakers. They said whenever there is a vacant skin, people who are deemed qualified within the succeeding gate will begin to lobby. This lobbying, of recent, they claim, has taken a different trend. When those interested go to lobby they go with moneys for the king and the kingmakers and in most cases the highest bidder gets the throne, thus creating dissatisfaction among other people who are qualified but may not be well resourced to bid for the throne. 20% of the key informants from the Sarfope gate and the Heads of department group also mentioned this point. Another 40% of key informants from the Jagape gate and the Dankeripe gate respectively also felt that the situation where those who are interested in ascending the throne would have to go see the king and the Kingmakers amounts to selling the throne and most people are never happy with this situation. One of the key informants has this to say

“In the olden days, the chieftaincy institution was the preserved of honest and upright people who were role models in the society. The recent accusations over some chieftaincy matters in the Gonjaland perhaps points to one thing; our skins being ‘auctioned’ to the highest bidder because of monetary gains. It is increasingly becoming clearer that some of our most influential and powerful traditional rulers prefer to play the patently undignified role of co fusionists and working for their selfish and parochial interest..... How do you expect me to respect chiefs who are so neck deep into compensation issues and are allegedly taking bribes on traditional matters brought to them for adjudication?”

This man and a good number of the key informants from all the groups feel that the institution of chieftaincy has lost its aura because those who are supposed to be the custodians of that

institution have rather taken it to be a money making venture. This, therefore, mean that many chiefs including the paramount chief has lost the respect and loyalty of the Gonja people because they have traded that respect and loyalty for bribes. A key informant who I prefer to call Jakpa has this to say

"I really wonder why I should respect any chief. Some of our chiefs have turned themselves into compensation contractors. Some are more interested in environmental menace such as the cutting down of trees, galamsey etc and do not care about the consequences. Some even undermine the authority of their sub-chiefs by usurping their powers, taking unpopular and unwise decisions and breaking traditions and customs with the ultimate aim of filling their pockets with dirty money causing more confusions. Money has made us have two chiefs in most Gonja communities"

This confirms the view of Burukum (2013) when he says one of the reasons that the North is noted for a mirage of chieftaincy conflicts is because the chiefs have, over the years, ,rather than concern themselves with serious issues that affect their subjects, are busy selling lands and engaging in partisan politics at the expense of their dignity and loyalty from their subjects. These have made them lose the respect of their subjects to the extent that their pronouncements are no longer respected, thus a state of anarchy.

When I asked if the 1930 constitutional arrangement about the rotation regarding the order in which the respective gates would take up chieftaincy positions is still being respected. About 89% of the respondents mentioned that it was still in place to guide successions to thrones but whenever it contradicts the whims and caprices of the kingmakers, they push it aside. A key respondent replied me this way



“That is still the standard but as you know money is more powerful than any other thing. When money is involved, morality is at stake. Sometimes, the kingmakers bypass this constitutional arrangement and do what would fetch them cash....the kingmakers institutions as enshrined in the constitution is now largely irrelevant”

I further asked if the breakdown of the Yagbonwura’s authority over his subjects has anything to do with the conflicts. 56% of the respondents mentioned that since it appears Yagbonwura himself takes money and installs chiefs, there is a certain degree of mistrust between him and some of the divisional chiefs. And some too feel there is also mistrust between some of the subjects and some divisional chiefs. This lack of trust often results in insubordination where the divisional chiefs install their own chief and the Yagbonwura also installs his. This situation they said, had always created tension between the supporters of Yagbonwura installed chiefs and the supporters of the chiefs installed by the divisional chiefs.

4.1.2. Desire to Control Resources

Apart from the commodification of thrones a good number of the key informants from across the five groups and some respondents also mentioned the desire to control resources as one of the sources of the chieftaincy succession conflicts in Gonjaland. About 40% of the key informants from the Jagape and Dankeripe gates respectively, feel the conflicts arise from the fact that Gonjaland is endowed with a lot of natural resources like Gold, coal, fish and vast cultivable and grazing lands. Once one is made a chief, he has control over these resources. However, only one person can be a chief at a time. This then brings competition among individuals who are qualified to ascend the throne. This situation is best explained by the game theory; the source and intensity of the conflict emanates from the zero-sum power dynamics. The enskinment of any of



the parties in the succession conflict is conferment of power and authority on the beholder that will not be accessible to those denied the chance. It thus becomes a zero sum power game in which where one chief is enskinned, the powers and the values that are conferred and transferred to that chief cannot be exercised by another person contemporaneously. This also conforms to the findings of Coleman (2007) when he says conflicts surrounding who gets what are often difficult to resolve because if there is no plenty of a given resource or what is being competed for and no more can be found or created, it becomes a win-lose situation. Once the other gets, the other loses.

When I asked why there is so much interest in becoming a chief, a key informant replied me this way

“My son, people like power. Chieftaincy confers a certain authority in you. Apart from that, you get to benefit from a lot of things. You rent or sell lands to farmers, herdsmen, institutions and NGOs where you realize a lot of money. Politicians would always need you to convince your people to vote for them. They would therefore always grease your palms.....You will also have free labor, gifts and royalties from mining companies and a lot of other benefits I can't even mention.This make people want to go to any length to get enskinned as sub-chiefs”.

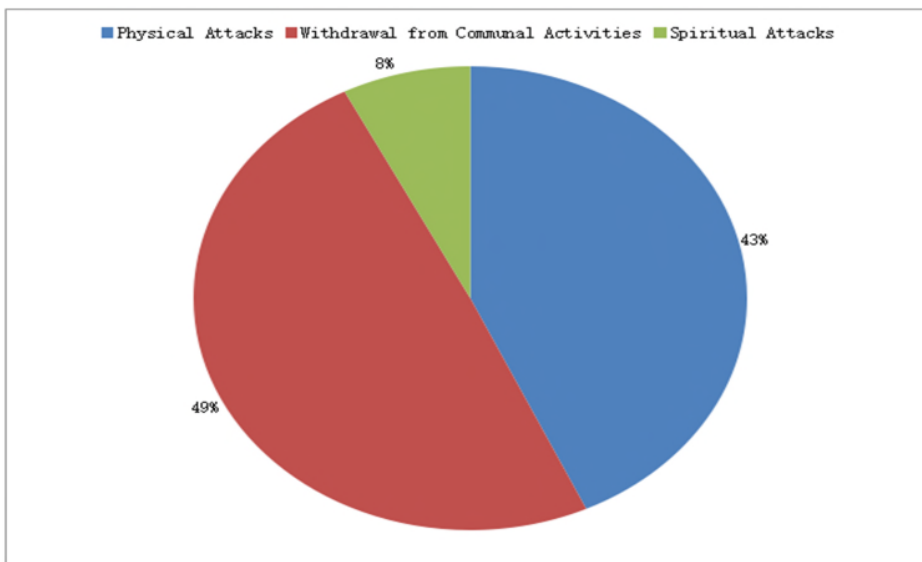


The researcher also observed that most of the areas where the succession conflicts often occur in Gonja land are areas where there is either gold or timber. Collier (2003) also spoke about the desire to control natural resources by groups as a major cause of conflict. He estimates that close to fifty armed conflicts active in 2001 had a strong link to natural resource exploitation, in which the desire to control helped to trigger, intensify, or sustain violence. In Pakistan and Bolivia, for example, violent protests have broken out over the distribution of water. In the

Middle East, disputes over oil fields in Kuwait, among other issues, led to the first Gulf War. It is not new that the desire to get access or control resources could bring about chieftaincy succession conflict in Gonja land because becoming a chief is the easiest way one can get to control some of these resources.

4.2. NATURE OF THE CONFLICTS IN GONJA LAND

Figure 4.5 Nature of conflicts in Gonjaland



Conflicts take different forms. Sometimes it is violent, where conflicting parties attack and kill one another, burn houses and other properties and then loot or steal. I asked how the chieftaincy succession conflicts in Gonja land manifest. As shown in figure 4.5 above, 79 respondents, representing 49% of total respondents mentioned that the conflicts are usually non-violent in

nature. They said what happens most of the time is that when a divisional chief installs a sub-chief and some people feel dissatisfied about the process, they have the right to register their grievance to the Yagbonwura who has the constitutional right to disregard the earlier decision made by the divisional chief. However, they insist he can only do so after an extensive consultation with the other divisional chiefs and the Council of Elders. Some further mentioned that if the Yagbonwura with his council of elders feel a sub-chief was wrongly installed, they can disregard that chief and the Yagbonwura would install the one who merits the throne. Many times, the dissatisfied party does not resort to violence but rather disassociates itself from any communal activities superseded by the disputed sub-chief. A key informant also has this to say,

“We the Gonjas hardly resort to arms to settle our disputes. That is always the last option, when there is a problem we go through due process. We believe in diplomacy, for instance when the chieftaincy succession bunter in the Kusawgu Traditional Area started in 2001 after the demise of YapeiWura Ibrahim Soale of the Soalepe gate. Per the succession arrangement, the Jakpape gate was next to Soalepe gate and should have selected a candidate there from. The current YagbonWura Tuntunba Boresa I happened to be the choice of the Jakpape gate at the time to ascend to the Yapei skins. His candidature was however vehemently opposed by members of Soalepe gate with the excuse that they have never had the opportunity to move to Kasawgu not to talk of Yagbon so they still want to present a candidate for the Yapei skins.

Though many chiefs and princes of the Gonja kingdom believed that their action is non Gonja and must not be tolerated under any circumstance, this never deterred members of the Soalepe gate. They still went ahead to pursue their agenda by nominating AsraWura from the Soalepe gate to ascend to the Yapei skins. The matter was reported to the Yagbonwura by members of the



Jakpape gate under the leadership of Sulemana Jakpa II where the YagbonWura and the entire traditional council rubbished the claim of AsraWura and his Soalepe gate and pronounced Sulemana Jakpa as the eligible Yapei Wura in 2002. The disputed AsraWura defied all odd and sort another hearing on the matter at the KasawguWura's palace with the argument that, Yagbon has no jurisdiction over the KasawguWura when it comes to appointment of sub chiefs within the traditional division. The then KusawguWura who was an in-law to AsraWura also ruled in favour of AsraWura and pronounced him the YapeiWura. This situation triggered duality of authority in Yapei as both chiefs were enskinned as Yapei Wuras respectively. They both had their palaces and adjudicated cases and performed parallel traditional roles while one was recognized by the YagbonWura, the other was recognised by the KusawguWura. This situation caused unusual tension within the Yapei Township and its environs especially during festive seasons. However you could see that the people did not resort to arms immediately, they had to go the over all chief of Gonjaland; the Yagbonwura who with his council of elders, appointed the right person even though the others were not ok with the judgement”

The researcher also observed that in Bole Traditional Area, there has not been any instance of violent clash even though there is a strong intra-gate struggle among the members of the sarfope gate over who becomes the next madariwura. According to Mahama (2012) Bole has never witnessed any violent conflicts since the days of the Bolewura Seidu Amankwah Gbeadese II. He insists the Bole Traditional Area has witnessed peaceful sucessions over the last hundred years but fears if this would be interrupted very soon since there is a disagreement over who becomes the next Madariwura, but per the traditional arrangements, the Mandariwura naturally succeeds the Bolewura whenever the Bolewura passes away.



Apart from those who feel succession conflicts in Gonja are mostly non violent, a good number; 69 persons, representing 43% of total respondents also mentioned that successions conflicts in Gonjaland are mostly violent. They mentioned that all the chieftaincy succession conflicts in Gonja land subsequently became violent apart from the Mandari case in the Bole Traditional Area. Some mentioned that even though at the beginning, due process is always followed by the people; subsequently the disputes often turn violent. A key respondent had this to say

“ I believe conflicts in Gonja land mostly end into violent attacks. They start off diplomatically unlike many other chieftaincy succession conflicts in the North, but as time goes on they end up bloody. For instance, In 1992 Kafaba located within the Kpembe division witnessed a violent succession conflict between the Attape gate and Kankanpe gate. Since time immemorial, the Kafaba skin rotates among three gates thus Attape gate, Jitape gate and Kankanpe gate respectively. However, following the demise of Kafaba Wura Seidu, who hailed from the Jitape gate, the skins originally should have gone to the Kankanpe gate but the overlord of the Gonja kingdom (YagbonWura) at the time intervened and the skins were rather given to the Attape gate which is a serious violation of the succession rules in Gonja as the YagbonWura did not do due consultations with the Kpembe Wura who is the immediate overlord of the division to arrange for a compromise solution. In a related development, the Buipe chieftaincy conflict that occurred as a result of a disagreement between the YagbonWura and the BuipeWura, who are the overlord and vice president respectively of the Gonja traditional council at a traditional meeting held in 2010 in the former’s palace at Damongo of which the later (BuipeWura, Abdulai Jinapor) fired warning shots ended in violent confrontation between the Jawupe gate and the Jinnapor gate. In Kusagwu/ Yapei, the struggle for the skin between soalepe gate and the Jakpape gates later turned violent where many got injured and over (100) hundred households were displaced

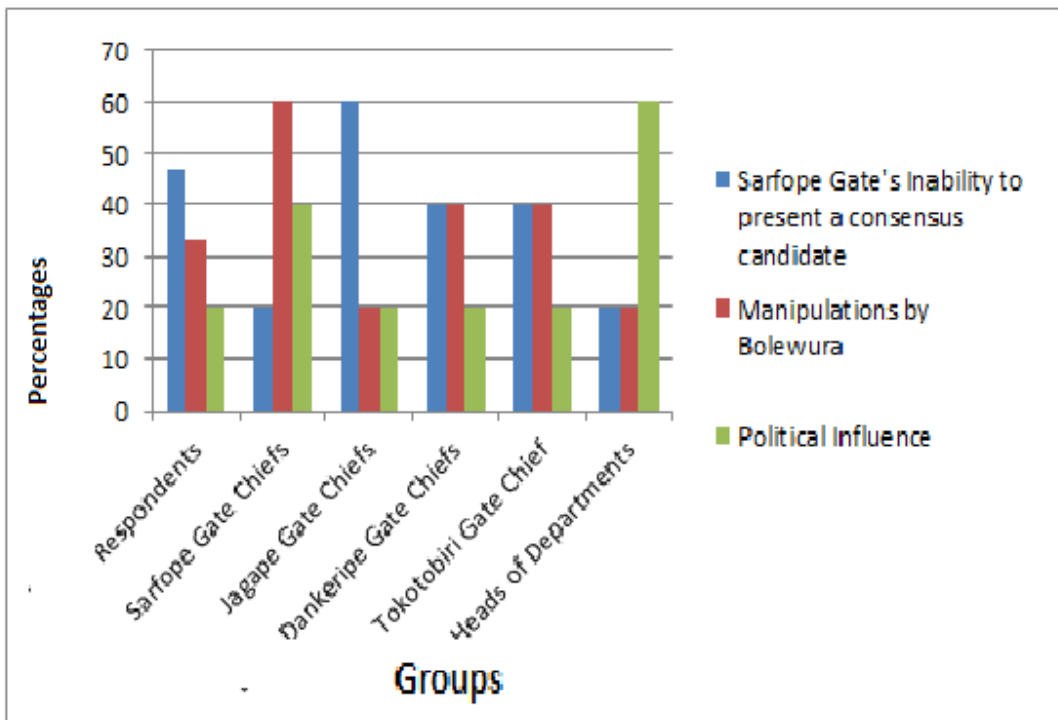


and many houses burnt to ashes.It is only in Bole that we are yet to see any violent confrontation but I assure you there is a boiling pot on fire”

The researcher also observed that most of the conflicts took a violent form but the respondents insisted on saying it was nonviolent just to justify the comparative claim that the Gonja people are more diplomatic and less violent as compared to other acephalous tribes in the Northern Region. Burukum (2004) says chieftaincy succession conflicts in Gonjaland do not start off with immediate confrontation. He insists they often go through the traditional process of conflict resolution, when all the traditional mechanism are exhausted but a party still feels dissatisfied, the legal system is explored first before violent confrontation.

4.3. Sources of Succession Conflicts in Bole Traditional Area





The researcher wanted to know how the Gonjaland succession conflicts manifest in Bole Traditional area. The researcher began by asking to know if the sources of the chieftaincy succession conflict in Bole Traditional Area are different from the other succession conflicts in the other parts of Gonjaland like Kusagu, Yapei and Buipe. When I asked what they felt were the sources of the chieftaincy succession conflict that are specific in Bole other than the ones that are general of Gonja land, as shown in figure 4.6, 75 persons respondents representing 47% of the total respondents mentioned the inability of the Sarfope gate members, whose turn it was to occupy the Mandari skin, failed to present a consensus candidate. Almost all the key informants from the Jagape gate and 4 and 3 from the Dankeripe gate and the Kototobiri gate respectively also shared a similar view, however only one person from the Sarfope gate chiefs' group shared in this view. The others felt it was the manipulations of the Bolewura and some influence from above which made it impossible for them to arrive at a consensus candidate. 40% of the key



informants from the Heads of Department Group also agree that the Bolewura has a hand in the Sarfope gate's inability to arrive at a consensus candidate for the Mandari skin. one of the key informants has this to say

“The Bolewura was weak, he knews he wouldl soon be unable to rule he wanted someone who will support him and eventually succeed him as the Bolewura. In the Bole Traditional Area, when a Bolewura dies, the Mandariwura is the one who will succeed him. The fear of the Bolewura now is that if he installs a Mandariwura who is over ambitious he would killed him spiurituallly so that he can ascend the Bole throne that is why he doesn't want such a person to be appointed as the Mandariwura, he wants his nephew to take the throne. The problem here is that the nephew is younger than the other members who are contending for the throne. He therefore connived with the elders and kingmakers from the Sarfope gate so that anytime they meet to select a Candnidade, they would be unable to arrive at a consensus. When this happens they would come to him, the Bolewura so that he can then appoint who he wants. That was what happened in Mandari, they were unable to arrive at a consensus candidate, not because they were unable, but the elders were told to do so by the Bolewura. They finally came to him, claiming they couldn't arrive at consensus candidate, at that moment , the Bolewura appointed his newphew as the Manderiwura.”

The researcher also observed that the Bolewura's appointed Mandariwura was very young as compared to the other people who were competing for the skin. The 1930 Gonja chieftaincy rotation constitution also states categorically that the eldest from the succeeding gate should be allow to occupy the skin. One is left to wonder why the Bolewura could not appoint the eldest of



the Sarfope gate members as the Mandariwura but rather settled for chief Abdulai Issahaku; his nephew.

This situation brings to mind the conspiracy theory of conflict. Yong (2010) writes that “every real conspiracy has at least four characteristic features: groups not isolated individuals. In this case the group consists of the Bolewura and the elders and kingmakers of Mandari. The second element of Yong’s conspiracy theory is illegal or sinister aims. In this case the illegal aim is for the Bolewura to appoint his nephew as the Mandariwura so that he will support him rather the hunt to replace him as the Bolewura. A third element in Yong’s theory is orchestrated acts, not a series of spontaneous and haphazard ones in this case, the elders tactically diffused any discussions that would have led to the people of Sarfope gate arrived at a consensus candidate. The final element of Young’s conspiracy theory is secret planning, not public discussion. The plan to prevent the emergence of a consensus candidate from the Sarfope gate by the Bolewura and the elders and kingmakers of sarfo gate was done in secret and still remains a top secret.

Another variable that came up strongly as one of the sources of the chieftaincy succession conflict in Bole Traditional Area was political influence. 52 persons, representing 40% of the total respondents mentioned that the appointment of the Mandariwura, chief Abdulai Issahaku was politically motivated. 60% of the key informants from the Sarfope gate and 60% from the Heads of Department group respectively mentioned political influence as the source of the succession conflict in Bole. Available literature also suggests a very strong link between the New Patriotic Party and the current Bolewura. According Mahama (2015) The current Bolewura was a former Progress Party (PP) MP for West Gonja (now Bole/Bamboi and Sawla/Tuna/Kalba, Damongo and Daboya/Mankarigu) in 1969.



The Mandariwura elect on the other hand was a staunch Popular Front Party (PFP) member and later an NPP member. He is married to Madam Ajara Yakubu daughter of Tolon-Naa Yakubu Alhassan Tali (the 1979 running mate of Victor Owusu of the PFP) and a direct sister of the current Tolon Chief, Tolon Naa Major Abubakari Sulemana, a former security capo in President Kufuor's government besides the attendance of his coronation by the late NPP chairman Jake Otanka Obetsebi Lamptey and Dr Mahmud Bawumia speaks volume of the Bolewura's NPP affiliation and the perceived political manipulations (Mahama 2015). When I asked how politics has influenced the succession confusion in Mandari, a key informant had this to say

“ In those days politics had no influence on our traditional matters, but of recent things have changed. When there was an intragate struggle for the Mandari skin among the elders of the Sorfope Gate, the NDC were quiet because all the contestants who showed open interest were NDC members. However, when the Bolewura appointed the current Mandariwura who is an NPP, the NDC became very much interested in the matter and influenced one of the contenders to take the case to the Yagbonwura, the paramount chief of Gonjaland. He did, and the Yagbonwura nullified the appointment earlier made by the Bolewura and appointed the complainant as a new Mandariwura. The NPP stalwarts in Bole also influenced the Bolewura's Mandari not to give up power, that is how come we have two Mandariwuras in Mandari. As it is Bole is on a timed bomb, violence can break up anytime because the Bolewura is very weak and would soon pass away, which of the Mandariwuras succeeds him? The one appointed by Yagbonwura or the one appointed by Bolewura?”

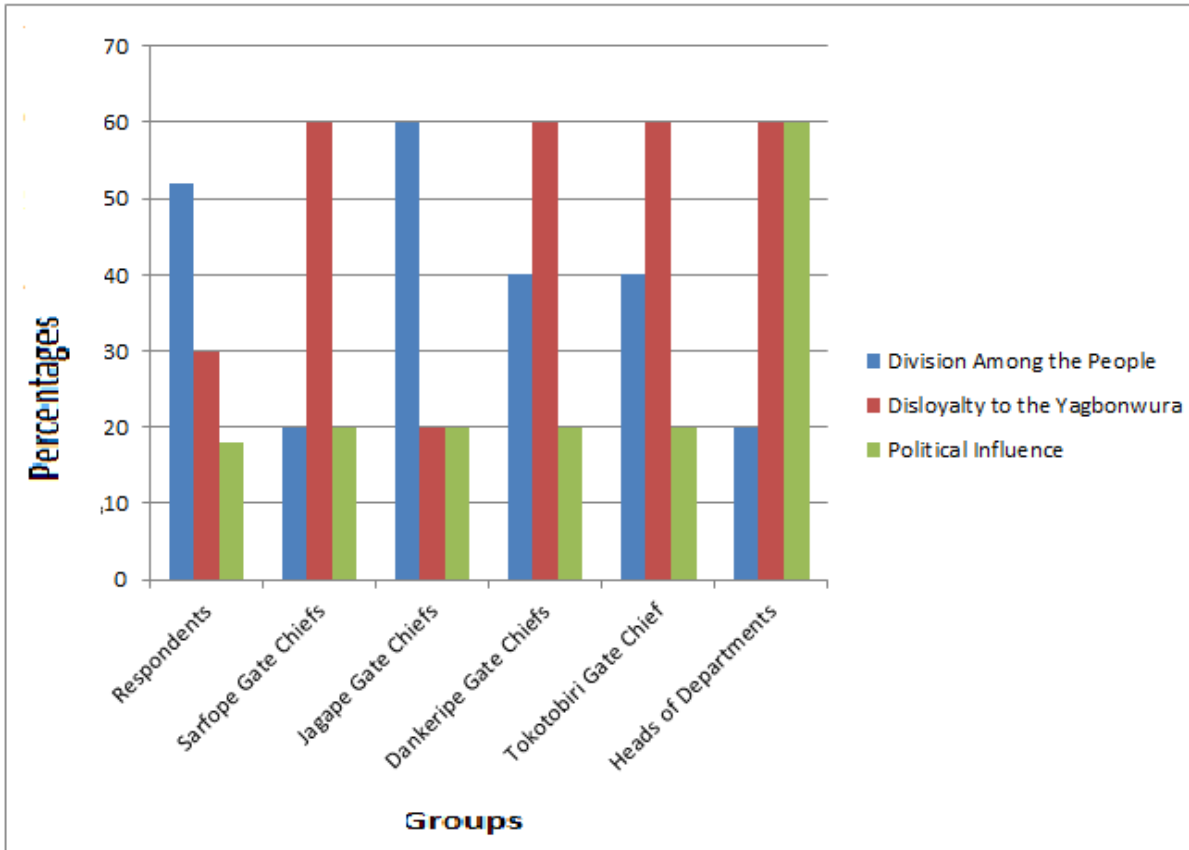
4.4. Effects of the Chieftaincy Succession Conflicts in Bole Traditional Area

4.4.1.Division Among the people of Bole

When I asked about the effects of the chieftaincy succession conflicts in Bole Traditional Area, 86 people representing 52% of the total respondents mentioned division among the people of Bole Traditional Area as one of the main effects of the chieftaincy succession disputes. They said as at now the people are divided between the supporters of the Mandariwura installed by the Bolewura and the one installed\ by the Yagbonwura. Each group of supporters feels their chief is the rightful one. Of this 52% , 80 of them feel this has further affected the loyalty of the people to both the Yagbonwura and the Bolewura. Supporters of the Yagbonwura increasingly paid less homage to the Bolewura likewise the supporters of the Bolewura increasingly become disloyal to the Yagbonwura, with the Bolewura inclusive.



Figure 4.7 Effects of the Succession Dispute in Bole Traditional Area



As shown in figure 4.7 above, 60% and 80% of the key informants from the Sarfopegate and the Jagapegate also share in this view. They feel there is a sharp division between the people of Bole. On one hand are those who feel the decision of the Yagbonwura is right and on the other hand, are those who feel the Yagbonwura has usurped the powers of the Bolewura which, according to them should not be.



A key informant has this to say

Before this conflict, we were one. We knew that there was one Mandariwura and that this Mandariwurawould subsequently succeeds the Bolewura should he pass away. We are all from the same family so we related as brothers and sisters. But the recent struggle for the Mandari

skin has brought sharp division among us. Even among the Sarfope gate itself, there are some who support the decision of the Bolewura so you could see that there is an intra-gate division to begin with. Coming to the larger community, the Jagapegate members generally support the Bolewura, probably because he is one of their own. So when you come to Bole, you get people who support the Bolewura installed chief and those who support the Yagbonwura installed chief. The division is stronger between the Sarfopegate members and the Jagapegate members, even though one could see some elements of a cross gate support”

When I asked if the dispute has affected social functions in the community, 78% of the respondents mentioned that they still attend social ceremonies like marriages, funerals and cultural dances together but not with the same passion that used to characterize such occasions. Some key informants across the gates also feel that the social activities of the Traditional Area were still being carried out communally but not with the same unity that was before the dispute started. A key informant has this to say

“ We are brothers. Bole was the first division to be established by Ndewura Jakpa when he first entered the present Gonjaland through Ntereso. As he fought and defeated the Vagla group, he appointed his son called Sarfo and his immediate brothers there to be rulers of the people.

Some of his children he settled there with included Kwaja, Issifa, Wayo, Kiapewura Mahama, Alungu and Ajiramua

Today succession is rotational among four gates (Sarfope, Jagape, Denkeripe and Kotobiripe). Essentially, the Bole skin is reached through Mandari in rotation. All gates would have to select someone to go to Mandari as Chief and he is always next in line to the Bole skin making Mandari the gateway to Bole and the most sought after skin, anytime it becomes vacant. As



brothers we cannot say when one of us dies we cannot go and morn. What has actually changed is the commitment to some of these social events. When we go to any of these events, we sit in groups these groups are mostly carved according to gate membership. This use not to be the case”

4.4.2. Disloyalty to the Yagbonwura

I wanted to know whether inspite of the succession dispute in Bole, the Bolewura and his followers are still loyal to the Yagbonwura. 47 persons representing 30% of the respondents mentioned that the authority of the Yagbonwura over the Bolewura is at its lowest ebb because of the disputes. They said on many occasions, the Yagbonwura invited the Bolewura but he never went and that the Bolewura no longer sends the annual gifts that each divisional chief is supposed to present to the Yagbonwura as the custom demands. To them, these are indicators that point to the fact that the Bolewura has little or no respect for the paramountcy. 80% of the key informants from all the groups except the Jagape Chiefs Group also mentioned that the Bolewura does not regard the Yagbonwura as he is supposed to be doing. One of the key informants puts it this way

“ Personally I have my reservations about the Bolewura. When this problem started the Yagbonwura wanted to work with him so that the issue in Mandari could be resolved amicably. The Yagbonwura told him that his appointment was not proper. There are so many elderly people in the Sarfope gate who could be appointed as the Mandariwura so why does the Bolewura have to appoint their grandson who initially never showed any interest in the whole thing? The Yagbonwura then asked him to reverse the appointment but he remained adamant so the Yagbonwura went ahead and appointed another person who was the second most elderly



person since the eldest was not interested due to old age. As at now, the Bolewura doesn't attend the meeting of the Council of Elders nor does he send royalties to the Yagbonwura. So in my opinion, the Bolewura is not loyal to the highest throne in Gonjaland"

Three key informants from the Jagapechiefs group mentioned that the Yagbonwura is the cause of the disharmony between him and the Bolewura. They said the Bolewura went to the Yagbonwura's palace severally but on each occasion he was not welcomed and that his gifts to the Yagbonwura were returned to him on several occasions that is why the Bolewura also got tired of been humiliated and resolved never to visit the Yagbonwura anymore. One of them puts it this way

"As custom demands, after every harvest the divisional chiefs are supposed to send food to the Yagbonwura. In 2012, the Bolewura with some of his elders, went to present some food stuff to the Yagbonwura. When they went, they sat in the palace for so long but the Yagbonwura refused to come out. He said he was never ready to meet Bolewura. The Bolewura then got up and left to Bole with his elders. This repeated itself for about three times.if it is you would you like to go through this kind of humiliation all the time? That is why the Bolewura too has stopped"



The researcher also observed that the Bolewura feels the Yagbonwura has usurped his authority by appointing a sub-chief under his jurisdiction. The Bolewura feels he alone can appoint sub-chiefs in Bole Traditional Area. To him, the Yagbonwura threw out his respect when he decided to over stepped in his jurisdiction. This conforms with the work of Mahama (2015) when he said that there is a struggle for supremacy by the Yagbonwura and the Bolewura over who has

the right to appoint a Mandariwura. While the Yagbonwura is claiming to be exercising his constitutional authority, the Bolewura feels the Yagbonwura is acting unconstitutionally.

4.4.3. Lack of Development

I asked how the existence of the chieftaincy disputes has affected development in the area. To this question 20 persons, representing 30% of the respondents mentioned that since the dispute started, Mandari has not witnessed any development because as it stands there is no chief who can steer the affairs of the community or lobby for development projects from the District Assembly. Besides investors are scared to come and invest since it appears Mandari and even the whole of Bole township is sitting on a timed bomb. 60% and 80% of the key informants from the Jagape chiefs group and the Heads of Department group respectively agreed that development was hampered by the disputes since people fear to do any long term investment because the dispute can go violent at any moment. One of the key informants told me this

“There can be no any significant development in a conflict zone. Investors are scared to come in. Indigenous people themselves are scared to embark on any long term project because conflict can start at any moment. People are living in fear. So how can such a place witness development. When NGOs come to start an intervention project, they do not know where to go because a chief must welcome them and probably give them a land where they can carry out the project. Here however we have double chiefs and you know these white people are also too careful not to spark any violent conflict so when they learn there is a chieftaincy problem, they, most of the times, prefer to hang on and wait until the dispute is resolved. This is how we keep missing out on opportunities here in Mandari”.



The researcher also observed that most of the Mandari people had relocated to other parts of Bole Traditional Area for fear that Mandari could be in flames any moment. I also observed that none of the persons who were installed either by the Yagbonwura or the Bolewura stay at Mandari.

Collier, 2004 says the relationship between civil war and failures in development is strong and goes in both directions: civil war powerfully retards development; and equally, failures in development substantially increase proneness to civil war. She further indicates that the poorest communities or countries are likely to be stuck in a 'conflict trap; a cycle of war and economic decline.

4.5. Traditional Conflict Resolution Mechanisms in Bole

As indicated earlier, Conflicts are as old as human societies themselves. Historically, individuals, social groups and societies have disputed and competed against one another over scarce commodities and resources - land, money, political power, and ideology. They have even fought one another and bitterly sought the elimination and/or subjugation of rivals, in order to control these resources and commodities. But at the same time, human societies and groups have found their own ways and means for averting and/or resolving conflicts. The existing body of literature confirms that the nature and causes of conflicts and the mechanisms for resolving them are deeply rooted in the culture and history of every society; they are in many important ways unique to them. *Panchayat* in India (Baxi and Gallanter 1979; Moore 1985), Mediation Committees in China (Li 1978; Clar 1989), and *jirga* in Afghanistan (Carter and Connor 1989; Elphinstone 1992; Olesen 1995; Gletzer 1998) that operate as informal mechanisms of conflict resolution differ from one another significantly. More importantly, all these traditional forms of conflict



resolution are fundamentally different from the ways conflicts are resolved in much of the Western world(Reichel 1998).

These comparative social facts would seem to support the philosophical position of cultural relativists who have long argued that the nature of all social phenomena, including conflicts and their resolution, are relative and culturally specific (Harris 1968; Spiro 1986).

Since conflicts are a form of social relationships (though negative), they are bound to become more globalised and so are their resolutions.

I wanted to know if there are traditional mechanisms of resolving conflicts in Bole Traditional Area apart from the legal system and other conventional methods of conflict resolution. When I asked how conflicts are resolved traditionally in Bole, 90 persons representing 65% of the total respondents mentioned the council of Elders as the main mechanism through which conflicts are resolved. They said when there is any disagreement in Bole Traditional Area, the Bolewura who is the chief custodian of the land sees to it that disputes are resolved amicably. They mentioned that the Council consists of the Bolewura, Mankumawura, Seripewura, Kadewura, the chief imam and heads of each of the four gates, . The Bolewura, in consultation with the sub-chiefs would pass a judgment on any matter brought before him for adjudication. Anyone who is dissatisfied with the judgment of the Bolewura can appeal to the Yagbanwura. The Yagbanwura in consultation with the Council of Elders, would review the case and either uphold the decision of the Bolewura or ask him to reverse it.

Four key informants from the Jagapegate and 3 and 2 from the Sarfope and Dankeri gates respectively also mentioned the council of elders as one of the main methods of resolving conflicts in Bole Traditional Area. This has a semblance with the concept of *Jirga* in Afghanistan. According to *Ghyathul-Lughat* (1871:119) it is derived from *jirga*, which means a



'wrestling ring', or 'circle', but is commonly used to refer to the gathering of people. Other scholars believe that the word *jirga* originates from Turkish where it has a very similar meaning to those in Pashto and Persian (Faiz-zad 1989: 5). These meanings of *jirg* and *jirga* strongly reflect the rituals and processes of the Pashtun traditional tribal *jirga* where people gather and sit in a large circle in order to resolve disputes and make collective decisions about important social issues. Rubin (1995: 42), a prominent scholar, describes the institution of *jirga* in this way: 'The *jirga* includes all adult males and rules by consensus. In theory, a *jirga* can be convened at any level of tribal organisation, from the smallest lineage to an entire confederation. *Jirgas* are most commonly held at the lineage level, but there are larger tribal or even inter-tribal *jirgas* as well, at least among the eastern Pashtuns.'

When I asked why the Mandariwura dispute went to court instead being handled through the traditional method, 105 persons, representing 79% of the total respondents mentioned that it is so because the Bolewura and the Yagbonwura who are supposed to work together to try to resolve the conflict are in logger heads with each other so they can't work together for a common goal. That is why the case had to go to court for arbitration. An average of 80% of key informants from across all the gates also mentioned the disagreement between the Yagbonwura and the Bolewura as being the major impediment to the resolution of the conflict.



CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.0 Introduction

The overall aim of this study was to ascertain the sources of chieftaincy succession disputes in Gonjaland and their manifestations in the Bole traditional area. The specific objectives were to know the manifestations of these succession conflicts in Bole traditional area, to investigate how the succession disputes/conflicts undermine social and cultural coherence of the people in the Bole traditional area, and to identify the traditional mechanisms that can be employed to address the disputes in Bole traditional. This section revisits the research objectives above; discussed the findings of the research work and finally offers a recommendation.

5.1. Summary of Findings

5.1.1. Sources of Chieftaincy Succession Conflicts in Gonjaland

It was revealed that the main sources of the chieftaincy succession conflicts in Gonjaland are commodification of thrones by the traditional rulers for selfish monetary advantage (65%), the desire to control resources (20%) and political influence (15%). This confirms the views of Adedeji (2008), Bujra (2010), Sulemana (2012) and Gati (2008) that the causes of ethnic conflicts in the North revolve around economic, political and social conditions.

One of the key objectives was to find out how these chieftaincy succession conflicts manifest in Bole traditional area. It was revealed that apart from the commodification of thrones, the desire to control resources and political influence, Bole had some specific sources of its chieftaincy conflicts which are; the inability of the sorfope gate to present a consensus candidate to be



installed as a Mandariwura by the Bolewura (47%) and the Manipulation of the elders of the sofope gate by Bolewura so that he installs his nephew as the Mandariwura (18%). This resonates with the conspiracy theory where a group of individuals secretly plan and orchestrate a hidden plan for their selfish interest. The study also identified that although most of the chieftaincy succession conflicts in Gonjaland were violent and confrontational (43%), but the one at Bole was never violent, it was rather characterized by a withdrawal from communal activities (49%) and spiritual attacks (8%).

The study also identified the sharp division among the people (52%), disloyalty to Yagbonwura (30%) and stifled economic growth and development (18%) as the main effects of the chieftaincy succession conflict in Bole Traditional Area. The study found out that most of the people in Mandari and the Bole Traditional Area as a whole are divided between supporters of the Yagbonwura installed Mandariwura and the Bolewura installed Manariwura. It was also revealed that this has effects on social events like marriage and funeral ceremonies, cultural events like dance and sacrifices as opponents feel reluctant to attend such events.

The study further found out that the traditional mechanisms for conflict resolution in Bole Traditional area are: the Council of elders (65%), the Council of elders (25%) and oath taking administered by the chief priest or priestess (15%). It was also revealed that none of these is able to resolve the conflict because the Yagbonwura and the Bolewura who are key adjudicators are in a supremacy battle and cannot work together to resolve the conflict (79%) that is why the case has been sent to court.



5.2. Conclusion

The literature reviewed and the data collected revealed that the main causes of conflicts in Gonjaland is the selling out of skins to non-deserving candidates by the Ganja traditional chiefs which has made the people lose confidence in the traditional institution of chieftaincy. For instance, in Kusagwu, Buipe and Mandari there were two sub-chiefs, the one installed by the Yagbonwura and the one installed by the divisional chief of each traditional area. The reasons for the double installation of chiefs are tied against who is able to lobby best verses who deserves the throne. Whenever there is a vacant skin, even though the constitution for chieftaincy rotation in Gonjaland provides for who qualifies to be enkinned, some people, however, sideline this constitutional provisions and go to lobby to the appointing authority. In most cases the highest bidder wins. This has made it appear like the skins are being auction for bidders and the highest bidder wins; a situation which has brought great disrepute to the chieftaincy institution in Gonjaland. Thus the dissatisfaction arising from this always degenerate into violent confrontations between those who feel deprived and those who benefit from the deprivation.

Intertwined with the commoditization of thrones is the desire to gain power and control resources. When people go to lobby, they have their eyes fixed on the benefits that will accrue to them after winning the bid. This can make them go to any length to achieve their aim. When the people who deserve the skin realize that they have been denied, they react, when justice is not served, they resort to violence in order to claim what they feel rightly belongs to them.

Another source of the chieftaincy succession dispute in Bole is political influence. The study revealed that some of the chiefs are aligned to certain political parties in the country so sometimes they are been influenced by the politicians of their respective parties to make certain



appointments which are advantageous to them. For instance, the study revealed the Bolewura is a staunch NPP member. This was made visible at his coronation party when the coronation party nearly became an NPP congress as all the big names in the Party were present from the presidential candidate of the party to the District secretary (Mahama, 2015). His alliance with the NPP among other things, influenced his appointment of a grandson to be a Mandariwura while his grandparents are still alive and active.

Most often than not the succession conflicts in Gonjaland are violent in nature, they remain latent for sometimes but later find an outlet through a trigger which is mostly a court ruling or a pronouncement by the Yagbonwura. Bole is yet to experience any violence but it is certainly following a similar trend with that of Buipe which remained latent for a very long time but turned violent after a court pronouncement in 2012. One would not be wrong if one says Bole is sitting on a timed bomb.

The other sources of chieftaincy succession disputes that are specific of Bole Traditional Area are the inability of the Sofope gate to provide a consensus candidate who would be installed as a Mandariwura due to the conspiracy of the elders of the Sofope gate members and the Bolewura. The 1930 Gonja constitution provides that when a skin is vacant, the eldest of the succeeding gate should be appointed. This is not the case in Mandari under the watch of the current Bolewura. The elders from the Sofope gate were manipulated by the Bolewura so that they would be unable to arrive at a consensus candidate, giving him the discretion to appoint whoever he wanted. This went as plan. He finally appointed his nephew; Issahaku Abdulai as the Mandirawura, claiming the Sofope gate members are unable to present a consensus candidate on three different occasions. This situation angered some of the elders in Sofopegate and they went



to seek redress from the Yagbonwura, the over all chief of Gonjaland. The appointment and installation made by the Bolewura was nullified by the Yagbonwura, but the Bolewura insists he will not rescind his decision. Mandari now has two chiefs. It is at a standstill and the whole of Bole traditional area is at a stand still awaiting the court verdict.

The effects of this conflict on the social coherence of the people are obvious. There is a sharp division among the people of Bole Traditional area. On one hand we have the people who support the Bolewura and uphold his Mandariwura as the rightful chief of Mandari, on the other hand we have those who are for the Yagbonwura appointed mandari. One interesting element about the whole thing is that, this is supposed to be an intra-gate struggle over who becomes the next Mandari but it has taken a different dimension. We have people from the other gates having interest in it especially those from the Jagape gate. Again we have politicians trying to throb into the traditional affairs and the coherence of the people of Bole Traditional Area. Even though social events like marriages, funerals and other cultural events are still being attended, the enthusiasm and unity that usually characterized such events is missing since the dispute started.

Finally, the main conflict resolution mechanism in Bole Traditional Area is the Council of elders which is made up of the Bolewura, Mankumawura, Seripewura, Kadewura and elders from the four gates. This council sits and deliberates on disputes before the Bolewura makes his pronouncements. When any party to the dispute is dissatisfied, the party has the right to go to the Yagbonwura for redress. Other traditional mechanisms of resolving conflicts in Bole Traditional area are the administering of oaths and the smoking of peace pipes.



5.3. Recommendations

The Ministry for Chieftaincy and Local Government Affairs should liaise with the National and Regional Houses of Chiefs in order to ensure that chiefs are well resourced so that they can take initiatives that will diversify their income base. This would end the incidences that chiefs take moneys before performing their duties or allowing monetary benefits to cloud their sense of judgment.

The Gonja Traditional Council, the elites, sons and daughters of Gonjaland should reiterate the need to follow the guidelines for appointing chiefs as provided for in the 1930 constitution. This would make it impossible for any chief to act outside the powers confer on him by the constitution.

To resolve this mishap of duality of authorities and their adverse repacusions in the Bole traditional area and Gonjaland at large, there will be the need for government, political parties, the Bole District Assembly and all stakeholders to: (a) show a high sense of morality and refrain from exploiting ethnic sentiments for electoral favours (b) empower the Regional House of Chiefs or the National House of Chiefs to lead mediations on resolving the conflict (c) reduce the role and power of the chief, so that calculated risk of perpetuating chieftaincy violence will become greater than their „pay-off“.

The Ministries of Local Government and Chieftaincy and culture should again liaise with the Commission for Civic Education to educate all the chiefs and their subjects on the need to separate the institution of chieftaincy from partisan politics. They should be reminded of the



critical role the chieftaincy institution plays in the Ghanaian society thus, the need for chiefs to remain neutral and non-partisan.

The Judicial committee of the Northern Regional House of Chiefs should expedite its proceedings and give final verdict to resolve the Mandari dispute to pave way for the performance of the remaining funeral rites of the late Bolewura Awuladese Pontomprom(11) which has been suspended as a result of the impending dispute over the mandarin skins which is currently before the Judicial Committee of the Northern Regional House of Chiefs.

Civil Society Organisation on their part should continue their sensitisation and facilitation programmes. They should however remain neutral and resolute in their negotiating efforts.

Besides, they should study the situation well before acting so as to make the right interventions at the right time and place. A common practice of some the CSOs in the area is to lure the disputants with money to honour invitations to their programmes. This practice does not allow those who are genuinely interested in peace to attend such programmes and make their voices heard. CSOs will make much more significant impacts if they stop enticing

the people with money. Likewise, they should pay attention to issues raised during their meetings particularly problems facing the youth. Since unemployment is a serious economic problem facing the youth making them susceptible to be influenced to indulge in violence, CSOs should come together and establish industries to employ the idle hands. Finally they



should follow up on programmes they initiate so as to strengthen them and make them yield the necessary results.

All stake holders in gonjaland should make efforts to concientice the disputing parties to trust and accept the ruling of the Judicial committee of the Northern Regional House of Chiefs on the Mandari chieftaincy affairs when it pronounces its final judgement on the matter.

A win-win approach of dispute resolution should be applied and the loser given well recognised chieftaincy tittle that would keep him in an advantageous position in the winner's administrations since they are all from the same royal gate. This would not just bring peace, but unite the supporters of the two so that there would be no such divisions which currently exist in Bole and is affecting the social coherence of the people of Mandari and Bole Traditional Area as a whole.

The Yagbonwura and the Gonja traditional council who is the appointing authority of the Bole skins according to Gonja tradition must accept and appoint any of the two mandarin wuras as the next Bole wura even if the vedict does not favour his nominated candidate for the mandari skins.



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Appendix

Interview Guide

My name is Edward Hardi Yakubu, a final year M.Phil student of the Department of Social and Development Administration, University for Development Studies (UDS) Wa Campus. I am carrying out a research on chieftaincy disputes in Gonja land with the following objectives:

1. To ascertain the sources of chieftaincy succession disputes in Gonja kingdom.
2. To know the manifestations of these succession conflicts in Bole traditional area
3. To investigate how the succession disputes/conflicts undermine social and cultural coherence of the people in the Bole traditional area.
4. To identify the traditional mechanisms that can be employed to address the disputes in Bole traditional area

I will be recording the session because I do not want to miss any of your comments. Although I will be taking some notes during the session, I cannot possibly write fast enough to get it all down. Because we are on tape, please be sure to speak up so that we do not miss your comments.

All responses will be kept confidential. This means that your interview responses will only be shared with research team members like my supervisor and external supervisor and we will ensure that any information we include in our report does not identify you as the respondent. Remember, you are not obliged to talk about anything you do not want to talk about and you may discontinue the interview at any time if you feel uncomfortable with it. Thank you for accepting to participate in this research.



CAUSES OF CHIEFTAINCY SUCCESSION DISPUTE IN GONJALAND

1. Gonjaland has been bedevilled with many chieftaincy disputes of late. Can you kindly share with us the causes (sources) of these conflicts?
2. Why have these chieftaincy conflicts become so widespread across the Gonja kingdom?
3. It appears many of the conflicts have something to do with succession why has this become an issue when we have the 1930 constitutional arrangement about the rotation regarding the order in which the respective 'gates' would take up chieftaincy positions?
4. Does the 1930 constitutional arrangement by the colonialists still hold as the standard to follow in chieftaincy succession?
5. In the traditional Gonja political structure there exists an institution of 'kingmakers'. In your view is the kingmaker institution still relevant in the midst of the succession conflicts that are so prevalent in the Gonjaland?
6. There are many cases where exists two chiefs for one community, which has brought about many problems and violence? Do you think this situation exists because there breakdown of the authority of the Yagbonwura over his subordinates?
7. Has the chieftaincy conflicts have anything to do with partisan politics (past and current) political affiliations? If that is your feeling what makes you think so?



Do we also have cases where people who are not royals attempt to influence kingmakers to put them in chieftaincy positions? Kindly elaborate on your views on this issue.

8. Is there any other cause of the chieftaincy conflicts among the Gonja that you know but which we have not touched on? Can we kindly discuss that?

MANIFESTATIONS OF THE CHIEFTAINCY SUCCESSION DISPUTES OF GONJA LAND IN BOLE

9. The chieftaincy succession conflicts exist in such places as Buipe, Yapei, Yapei and many other places. I kindly want us to have a discussion on how the conflicts/disputes manifest in these communities. Does it take the form of open and continuous conflicts and destruction in the communities?
10. Do we have cases where some of these conflicts/disputes remain latent (not openly displayed) in the communities? How do you know this?
11. Are the community members able to mobilise themselves to solve their common needs?



EFFECTS OF THE CHIEFTAINCY DISPUTES ON THE SOCIAL COHESION OF THE PEOPLE OF BOLE TRADITIONAL AREA

12. We would now want to focus on the chieftaincy disputes in the Bole traditional area.

There are many chieftaincy disputes currently in the Bole area. In your view what are the causes of these disputes?

13. In view of the existence of these disputes can we say that the Bolewura is still loyal to the Yagbonwura? Kindly tell us reasons for your view.

14. There are several cases of two chiefs in the communities under the Bolewura. Apparently this would lead to division among the protagonists. Kindly tell us the effects of these situations on the people and on the chieftaincy institution in the area.

15. Do these communities experience open and violent conflicts as a result of the chieftaincy disputes? And if they do, are people's lives and property affected? Kindly elaborate on this regarding frequency and intensity.

16. How does the existence of the chieftaincy disputes in the communities affected in terms of development? Is it possible to have some form of organisation that brings the people together to deal with their development needs?

17. How the relationship among the conflicting gates before the conflict was broke out?

18. Are social functions in the communities affected by the existence of the conflicts? In what way does this exist?

19. Do the other gates recognise the current Mandira of Bole?



20. Do you think the conflicting parties still see each other as brothers or sisters?

THE TRADITIONAL MECHANISMS THAT CAN BE EMPLOYED TO ADDRESS THE DISPUTES IN BOLE TRADITIONAL AREA

21. Are there ways that the chieftaincy conflicts in the area can be resolved through a typical Gonja traditional arrangement? If there exists in form does it exist?

22. It appears the traditional Gonja modes of resolving the disputes are no longer effective, due the prevalence and persistence of these conflicts. Do you agree with this view and why? Even if you think otherwise what makes you this so?

23. Can the Yagbonwura and the Bolewura on their own accord team up to solve these chieftaincy disputes without a third party? Kindly tell us the position behind your views in this regard.

24. Are the contemporary institutions like the House of Chiefs and the Court system the way to resolve the conflicts amicably among the people? Are there any evidence to that effect?



Questionnaire

My name is Edward Hardi Yakubu, a final year M.Phil student of the Department of Social and Development Administration, University for Development Studies (UDS) Wa Campus. I am carrying out a research on chieftaincy disputes in Gonja land with the following objectives:

5. Identify the factors that militate against the traditional processes involved in chieftaincy succession in the Bole traditional area.
6. To ascertain the causes of chieftaincy succession disputes in Bole traditional area.
7. To investigate the effects of chieftaincy succession disputes on the social relations of the people of the Bole traditional area.
8. To identify the socio-cultural mechanisms that are put in place to resolve chieftaincy succession conflicts in Bole traditional area.

I will be recording the session because I do not want to miss any of your comments. Although I will be taking some notes during the session, I cannot possibly write fast enough to get it all down. Because we are on tape, please be sure to speak up so that we do not miss your comments. All responses will be kept confidential. This means that your interview responses will only be shared with research team members like my supervisor and external supervisor and we will ensure that any information we include in our report does not identify you as the respondent. Remember, you are not obliged to talk about anything you do not want to talk about and you may discontinue the interview at any time if you feel uncomfortable with it. Thank you for accepting to participate in this research.



I. Bio Data

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

- 2. Educational level of respondent: 1. Basic [] 2. Second cycle [] 3. Tertiary [] 4.No formal education

- 3. Status of respondent: 1. Chief [] 2. Opinion leader [] 3.ordinary citizen [] 4. Security officer 5. Queen mother

FACTORS UNDERMINING CHIEFTAINCY SUCCESSION ARRANGEMENTS

- 4. Do you know about the traditional arrangements for chieftaincy succession In Bole Traditional Area?
 - 1. Yes. 2. No
- 5. What in your opinion prevents these arrangements from functioning the way they should?
 - 1. Greed. 2. Corruption on the side of kingmakers. 3. Political interference 4.lack of clarity 5. Other (specify).....
 -
 -
 -

CAUSES OF CHIEFTAINCY SUCCESSION DISPUTE



- 6. What in your opinion is/are the cause(s) of chieftaincy succession disputes in Bole Traditional Area
 - 1. Unwillingness to cede power by the ruling family 2. Desire to control resources 3.Lack of a clearly spelt out succession arrangement
 - 4. Political interference
 - 5. Other (Specify).....
 -
 -

7. What is fuelling/sustaining the conflict?
1. The need to claim victory by one faction []
 2. Warring nature of the people []
 3. Politicisation of the issues involved []
 4. Other
-
.....

**EFFECTS OF THE CHIEFTAINCY DISPUTES ON THE SOCIAL RELATIONS
AMONG THE PEOPLE OF THE BOLE TRADITIONAL AREA**

8. How was the relationship among the conflicting parties before the conflict broke out?
1. Very cordial.
 2. They were not really having time for one another.
 3. They used to do things in common
 4. They met only at social gatherings
 5. Other (specify).....
-

9. Before the conflicts started, were they attending each other's social functions like funeral or wedding?
1. Yes
 2. No
 3. Other (specify).....
-
.....

10. After the conflict do they still attend each other's funeral or wedding?
1. Yes
 2. No
 3. Other (specify).....
-
.....

11. Do the two conflicting parties still have a common Traditional Head?
1. They pay tribute to different chiefs
 2. Each has installed its own chief.
 3. They all pay tribute to the paramount chief of Bole traditional area.
 4. Other (specify).....
-
.....

12. Does the custom allow the conflicting parties to marry among themselves?
1. Yes
 2. No
 3. Other (specify).....
-
.....



.....
.....
13. From 12 above, if it was done in the past is it still happening that the conflicting parties inter-marry?

1. Yes.
2. No
3. Some do others don't.

14. Do you think the conflicting parties still see each other as brothers or sisters?

1. They still relate well to one another
2. They don't even come close to one another.
- 3 they fetch water from the same river
4. They don't see eye to eye.

EFFORTS MADE TO RESOLVE THE CONFLICT AND THEIR IMPLEMENTATION.

15. What are the Traditional conflict resolution mechanisms in Bole Traditional Area?

.....
16. How have these mechanisms been applied to the chieftaincy succession conflicts in Bole Traditional Area? 1. Repressive, 2. top-down 3. Bottom-up 4. Other (specify).

17. Why are these mechanisms unable to address the disputes?

1. They are outmoded
2. The people have set tradition aside
3. Political interference
4. Other (Specify).



