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The Dagbon chieftaincy conflict in Northern Ghana: analyzing the role of the Committee of Eminent Chiefs to the restoration of peace in Dagbon

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DEDICATION

I dedicate this research to my parents, brother, and sisters. My Dad, Alhaji Rauf Yakubu, Mom, Hajia Nimah Saani, My Brother Muftaw, and My Sisters: Mariam, Abida, Mardia, and Hajara for their prayers and continued support in everything I do in my life.

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ABSTRACT

This study focuses on the Dagbon chieftaincy succession dispute between the Andani and the Abudu royal gates in the Northern Region of Ghana. The chieftaincy succession dispute between these two royal gates has existed since 1953. After what appeared to be unchecked rivalry even before Ghana attained political independence, the conflict festered and saw the murder of the overlord King of Dagbon Ya Na Yakubu Andani II in 2002.

In the past, state efforts at resolving the conflict through mechanisms like commissions and committees of inquiry, joint police-military intervention, and even seeking the Supreme courts intervention have failed to find a solution to the Dagbon chieftaincy conflict. In 2003, the government established a Committee of Eminent Chiefs to use Dagbon customs and traditions to resolve the chieftaincy conflict between the Andani and the Abudu royal factions after the murder of the overlord King of Dagbon Ya Na Yakubu Andani II.

The work of the committee culminated in a road map to peace known as Peace agreement I between the Andani and Abudu royal gate's representatives in 2006. The provisions in the Peace agreement I were not fully accepted by the two royal gates and resulted in a deadlock in the conflict. In 2018, the committee resumed talks with the representatives of the royal gates to find a solution to the conflict. The Dagbon chieftaincy conflict between the two royal gates was recently resolved by the Committee of Eminent Chiefs through Peace agreement II which was accepted by the royal gates.

This study investigates the role of the Committee of Eminent Chiefs in resolving the Dagbon chieftaincy conflict in the Northern Region of Ghana. Drawing on the telephone call interviews conducted with my research participants and the representatives of the Andani and Abudu royal gates who were directly involved in the Peace agreement II, this thesis discusses the strategy employed by the Committee of Eminent Chiefs to resolve the Dagbon chieftaincy conflict. The study revealed that the Committee of Eminent Chiefs employed the mediation strategy to resolve the Dagbon chieftaincy conflict between the Andani and the Abudu royal gates.

My thesis also examines the factors that accounted for Peace agreement II and how Peace agreement II has transformed the Dagbon chieftaincy conflict. The study also revealed that willingness to compromise to reach an agreement and the assurances given to the two royal gates that their goals would be achieved were the factors that accounted for Peace agreement II.

Keywords: Dagbon, Chieftaincy conflict, Andani Royal Gate, Abudu Royal Gate, Peace Agreement, Committee of Eminent Chiefs

List of Abbreviations

NLC	National Liberation Council
CPP	Convention People's Party
L.I	Legislative Instrument
NPP	New Patriotic Party
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 General Introduction

Ghana attained independence from colonial domination in 1957, first Sub-Saharan Africa to gain independence from colonial rule. Ghana, a country within the West African sub-region has been peaceful since 1992 after several coup d'états by military governments. It has often been described internationally as one of Africa's most stable, democratic, and peaceful countries. Before colonialism in Africa, African societies practice forms of rulership. This distinct form of rulership together is referred to as traditional rule and is frequently described by scholars as Chieftaincy. However, Boakye & Béland (2019, p. 404) note that not all traditional forms of rulership before colonialism were Chieftaincy. The term Chief or Chieftaincy as posited by (Adjaye & Misawa 2006, p. 1) was a creation of colonial administrators who, in their quest for a definable title for the existing traditional leader for purposes of categorization within the imperial administrative structure, designated such leaders as chiefs or warrant chiefs.

One of the oldest traditional institutions in Ghana is the chieftaincy institution. Chieftaincy in modern Ghana as Myers & Fridy (2017) puts it remains an informal traditional institution within the decentralized governance system. Chieftaincy institution has been linked to the politics of Ghana since the colonial period. Chiefs play considerable roles in the development of their areas of authority and the country at large. Despite the roles played by chiefs, there were several attempts by various governments- civilian or military since independence to redefine the role of chieftaincy as an institution until the enactment of the 1992 constitution of Ghana. Bukari et al (2021, p. 160) posit that there has always been subtle political interference and manipulation in the practice of chieftaincy from political parties and governments.

In Ghana, a notable example was when the Conventions People Party (CPP) government enacted the Chieftaincy Amendment Act (Act 81) in 1961 after the 1960 constitution to dispose of chiefs and create new paramountcy. As a result of these actions and interferences by various governments, chiefs were disposed of, and others were reinstated after being disposed of. During the colonial period, there were clashes between the British administration and chiefs over areas of control and political control over the people. The institution of Chieftaincy in Ghana has always been and shown considerable resilience despite historical attempts from both colonial rulers and post-independent governments to sidestep the institution and to subjugate and deprive chiefs of their status in Ghanaian society (Boafo-Arthur, 2006). Despite the

attempts to reduce the power of the chieftaincy institution, it survived political control in the 19th and 20th centuries. The resilience shown by the institution led to its recognition in the 1992 constitution of Ghana guarantees the institution of chieftaincy and traditional councils as established by customary law and usage under article 270 of the constitution. Similarly, Bofo-Arthur (2003, p. 126) asserts that given the evolutionary nature and the manner chiefs were imposed in areas by colonial rulers, modernization theorists in the 1950s and 1960s eagerly predicted and anticipated the withering away of chieftaincy in post-colonial states.

Myers & Fridy (2017) postulates that various constitutional provisions and acts have guaranteed the chieftaincy institution since independence in 1957. The recognition of the chieftaincy institution by the 1992 constitution of Ghana has made it an integral part of the governance system in the country. Bukari et al (2021, p. 156) further indicates that the recognition of chiefs by the constitution has bolstered their legitimacy as they continue to play separate roles in the governance system of Ghana at national and local levels. The independence and non-interference of the chieftaincy institution are guaranteed in the 1992 constitution of Ghana, allowing it to operate and perform its roles without interference from governments and political parties.

However, the chieftaincy institution in Ghana has been bedeviled by conflicts that are mostly linked with violent conflicts in the form of inter and intra-ethnic conflicts fueled by chieftaincy disputes over the control of resources and over succession to stools or skins that have engulfed the nation. The use of the terms “stool” and “skin” represents the symbols of authority of chiefs in the Southern and Northern parts of Ghana, respectively. The process of making a person a chief or a king is called enskinment in the North and enstoolment in the South.

The Northern chiefs sit on skins and their position is referred to as “skin.” The Dagbon chieftaincy conflict is an example of an intra-ethnic conflict that the chieftaincy institution has struggled to deal with in Ghana. The Dagbon chieftaincy conflict occurred in the Northern region of Ghana. The area inhabited by the Dagombas inhabitants is known as Dagbon. The main issue of the Dagbon conflict centers on intra-ethnic succession disputes over the high chieftaincy office of Ya Na Overlord of the Dagbon State that involves two rival royal families of the same descent (Asiedu, 2008, p. 8). The use of ‘Ya Na’ means Chief/Overlord/King. Ya Na is a traditional title name for the King of the Dagbon kingdom. The Dagbon chieftaincy conflict resulted in the loss of lives and displaced people. The focus of this research is on the

Dagbon chieftaincy conflict in the Northern region of Ghana. Below is the map of Ghana divided into sixteen (16) regions.

Figure 1-Map of Ghana showing the regions



Source: The permanent mission of Ghana to the United States from <https://www.ghanamissionun.org/map-regions-in-ghana/>

1.2 Origin of Dagbon's chieftaincy conflict

Dagbon is a notable kingdom with a strong traditional authority in the Northern region of Ghana. It became obvious as the customs and traditions of the Dagbon people evolved, any son of a former Ya Na is qualified to be considered a Ya Na if he has occupied the royal gates of Mion, Savelugu, and Karaga. A 'Gate' refers to a royal/ruling family through which the Ya Na's are selected to occupy the 'Nam' Skin. 'Nam' is the name of the Skin occupied by the Ya Na. Out of the three (3) royal gates, only the regents of Mion and Savelugu gates can occupy the position of Ya Na. The regent of Karaga gate is not qualified to occupy the Ya Na position.

The reason is that the grandfather (Yakubu) of Andani and Abudu gave birth to three (3) sons, Abdulai (Abudu), Andani, and Mahami. The fathers of Abdulai and Andani managed to become the Ya Na of Dagbon in Yendi. However, their brother Mahami could not make it to Yendi to become a Ya Na before passing away. This meant the children of Mahami could not become Ya Na of Dagbon since their father could not make it to Yendi. What this means is that Mahami descendants can earn and serve as regents of Karaga because the successor of Mahami from where his father ended at Kore to Karaga (Aikins,2012).

Over time, Dagombas, however, developed a rotational system where the skin passes on from one royal family to the other upon the natural death of the incumbent chief (Asiedu, 2008, p. 21). After the death of Ya Na Yakubu I, his eldest son Abdulai (1849-1876) succeeded him as it was agreed but on the understanding that the younger son Andani (1876-1899) would succeed Abdulai on his death. However, a problem arose on the death of Ya Na Andani I in 1899 regarding whether he should be succeeded by his son or the son of his late elder brother Abdulai (Albert,2008).

Consequently, a decision was taken that the son of Abdulai is made to succeed Ya Na Andani I, and this subsequently started the rotational system amongst the two ruling/royal gates the Abudu and the Andani families. The two gates practice a rotational system of chieftaincy where the title alternates between them (Issifu & Bukari, 2022, p. 225). Issifu (2021, p. 9) notes that what this meant was that if a ruling King, who was chosen from the Abudu clan passed on, the traditional political office goes to the Andani clan for the succession and then comes back to the Abudu clan once the Andani King was dead. This practice is called the kingship rotation system. Even though this system of succession by rotation was not formally codified at the time, it worked perfectly on the understanding of the two ruling families (Asiedu,2008, p. 22). As Tsikata & Seini (2004, p. 3) rightly noted, 'there is no agreement over who has the right to

select a successor and the ‘enskinment’ process failed to indicate how to make the royal Ya Na (Ladouceur, 1972, p. 15).

The rotational succession rule which has been in existence since 1824 was finally breached. The Abudu royal gate tried to import a strange practice of Primogeniture right of inheritance belonging exclusively to the eldest son into the Ya Na throne. According to Issifu (2015, p. 122), this is the root of the vicious violence involving members of the two royal gates in Dagbon. Issifu & Asante (2015, p. 133) notes that the manifestation of the conflict was in 1954 when Ya Na Abudulai III succeeded his father Na Mahama Bla III.

Issifu (2021, p. 10) postulates that the enskinment of Ya Na Abudulai III generated considerable dissatisfaction among the Andanis as they felt side-lined and marginalized, and this led to the Andanis not considering Ya Na Abudulai III as a legitimate King. After fifteen (15), Ya Na Abudulai III died and an attempt by some elders succeeded in imposing Abudulai IV, a regent from the Abudu gate as successor to his late father. This selection generated considerable dissatisfaction, particularly amongst the Andanis who felt they had been robbed of the high office. The regent of Mion, Mionlana Andani was the right person as customs demanded to succeed the late Ya Na Abdulai III. Consequently, impartial King makers deskinned Mahamadu Abudulai IV to allow Mion Lana Andani from Andani gate to be enskinned as the Ya Na (Issifu & Asante, 2015, p. 133).

The Andani family called for the deskinnment of Mahamadu Abdulai IV since he had not held one of the three gate skins Mion, Savelugu, and Karaga from which paramount chiefs were traditionally chosen (Asiedu, 2008, p. 24). Also, the Andani family was of the view that Mahamadu Abdulai IV was not properly enskinned according to Dagbon customs and traditions. According to Aikin (2012, p. 21), if the regent Mahamadu Abdulai IV had been installed this would have been the third time since 1948 that the Abudu gate would have occupied the throne to the exclusion of the Andani gate. The deskinnment of Mahamadu Abdulai IV as Ya Na caused a lot of controversies. Tsikata and Seini (2004, p. 33) account that the deskinnment of Mahamadu Abudulai IV is also one of the major sources of the conflict because “You do not destool a Ya Na” in Dagbon. The deskinned Ya Na Mahamadu Abdulai IV died in 1988. Following the death of Ya Na Mahamadu Abudulai IV (the deskinned) in 1988, the Abudu royal gate requested permission to perform his traditional burial rite in the royal palace where the incumbent King resided, but their demand was rejected because according to

Dagomba custom there cannot be a late Ya Na's funeral when there is a reigning Ya Na (Issifu 2015).

The Abudus wanted to perform the funeral rites of the late Mahamadu Abudulai IV just as any other legitimate Ya Na and bury him in the Gbewaa palace. Meanwhile, to benefit from such customary burial, one must have been a legitimate Ya Na who had passed on. The Andani gate prevented them from performing the funeral rites of the late Mahamadu Abudulai IV in the Gbewaa palace because he was not a legitimate King before passing on (Issifu & Asante, 2015, p. 133).

Paalo and Issifu (2021, p. 412) note that the Abudu royal gate feels aggrieved about their inaccessibility to the royal palace to perform the funeral rituals of the deceased Ya Na Mahamadu Abudulai IV and subsequently resulted in Ya Na Yakubu Andani II's life cut short in a regicide in 2002. The fundamental issues that led to the death of Ya Na Yakubu Andani II began during the preceding Eid-ul-Adha and fire festival when the regent of late Mahamadu Abudulai IV (the deskinned) tried to perform certain rituals reserved only for the legitimate Ya Na (Issifu & Asante, 2015, p. 136).

According to Dagbon customs, Ya Na has the sole right of officiating the celebration of the Damba, Chimsi Chugu, and Eid-ul Adha festivals. He also has the sole right of choosing celebrated Muslim scholars who perform spiritual functions for the Dagbon Kingdom (Ahorsu, 2014, p. 101). Now, for the Abudus to plan to perform this ritual, which was supposed to be ideally performed by the Andani King (Issifu, 2021, p. 11), the legitimate Ya Na Yakubu Andani II was not happy about this, as he perceived it as an affront to his authority as overlord of Dagbon (Issifu & Asante, 2015, p.136).

This raised tensions between the Abudus and Andani which forced the Yendi district council to impose a curfew on Yendi in March 2002. The curfew was however lifted after consultations with Ya Na Yakubu Andani II. The uplifting of the curfew did not go well with the Abudus claiming that if they could not celebrate the fire festival nobody should celebrate it. In effect, none of the sides was able to celebrate the festival which intensified their anger, leading to some level of fighting which continued for about three days and eventually, causing the murder of Ya Na Yakubu Andani II and forty others on 27th of March 2002 (Tsikata & Seini, 2004). The murder of the King generated a series of tensions and resulted in violence in many areas across the Northern Region, including Tamale, Yendi, and Bimbila. It is important to point out that according to Dagomba custom, in the case of disputes arising from chieftaincy, especially

over the Ya Na's throne, Kuga Na is the prime person to mediate using Dagbon rituals for a peaceful resolution, and his decision or plea could not be ignored (Tonah, 2012). Kuga Na is the supreme father of both Abudu and Andani royal gates, possessed great wisdom and was respected by all. The superiority and unbiased reverence of the Kuga Na in mediation in the past helped to avoid disputes, which might have led to violent conflict and bloodshed (Paalo & Issifu, 2021, p. 415). However, the Kuga Na could not resolve the conflict between the Andani and Abudu gates because he was accused of being biased by the Abudu gate for supporting the Andani gate. Below I present a tabular representation of the origin of the conflict for a clearer picture of the Dagbon chieftaincy crisis. The table also shows the attempts by different governments/regimes to resolve the Dagbon chieftaincy conflict.

1.3 The genealogical table of the Dagbon skin and the origin of the conflict

Na Yakubu I (1824 – 1849). He ruled for 25 years

Until his rule, the line of succession to the Dagbon skin was unilinear. He was the father of Na Abudulai I and Na Andani II – the creators of the two royal Gates. Upon the death of Na Yakubu I, he was succeeded by his elder son, Na Abudulai I (who created the Abudu Gate), who was also succeeded by his younger brother Na Andani II (whose line of succession became known as the Andani Gate)

Table 1- Table of the Dagbon Kings and the origin of the conflict

<p><u>Na Abudulai I (1849 – 1876)</u> He ruled for 27 years. Upon his death succession went to the Andani Gate</p>	<p><u>Na Andani II (1876 – 1899)</u> He ruled for 23 years. Upon his death, succession rotated to the Abudu Gate</p>
<p><u>Na Alasani (1899 – 1917)</u> Succession went to the Andani Gate upon his Death</p>	<p><u>Na Bukari I (1920)</u> He abdicated within hours after enskinment due to old age and failing ill health. He nominated from the Abudu Gate to succeed him</p>

<p><u>Na Abudulai II (1920 – 1938)</u></p> <p>Upon his death succession reverted to the Andani Gate.</p>	<p><u>Na Mahama II (1938 – 1948)</u></p> <p>Succession rotated to the Abudu Gate, upon his death.</p>
<p><u>Na Mahama III (1948 – 1953)</u></p> <p>Upon his death succession did not revert to the Andani Gate, sparking the succession dispute</p>	
<p><u>Na Abudulai III (1954 – 1967)</u></p> <p>Upon his death, the succession went to the Andani Gate as per Legislative Instrument (L.I) No. 59, which called for the Andani Gate to have two successive turns. Legislative Instrument (L.I) No. 59 restored the Andani-Abudu rotational system</p>	<p><u>Na Andani III (1968 – 1969)</u></p> <p>Upon his death, succession was supposed to remain in the Andani Gate for one more turn before reverting to the Abudu Gate, as per the Legislative Instrument (L.I) No. 59 passed in 1960 by the Nkrumah government. However, this Legislative Instrument (L.I) No.59 was repealed, and in Busia’s government the skin was given back to the Abudu Gate</p>
<p><u>Na Mahamadu IV (1969 – 1974)</u></p> <p>In 1974, the National Redemption Council (NRC) regime revoked the decision to install him as the rightful King and implemented Legislative Instrument (L.I) No.59. As a result, he was deskinned, and instead Na Yakubu Andani II was enskinned in 1974</p>	<p><u>Na Yakubu Andani II (1974 – 2002)</u></p> <p>His reign ended in a regicide on March 27, 2002. Upon his natural death, the succession would have reverted to the Abudu Gate. However, since his life was cut short by a regicide, by the Dagomba custom, it has taken that he did not serve his entire term in office and therefore succession would have to remain in the Andani family.</p>

Source: Asiedu, E. O. (2008). Examining the state’s capacity in the management of the Dagbon crisis in Ghana: Is there a role for ECOWAS? *African Leadership Centre, Kings College, London*, pp. 53

1.4 Problem statement

Following the outbreak of the violent conflict, leading to the assassination of Ya Na Yakubu Andani II and 40 others, including his elders, both local and international actors called on the Ghanaian government to institute a commission of inquiry to investigate the conflict. In a bid to prevent conflict escalation and ensure relative peace, the Ghanaian government through the state security apparatus often deploys joint police-military forces in conflict zones for internal peacekeeping operations and appoints formal committees or commissions to investigate the conflict and recommend mechanisms for conflict resolution (Issifu & Bukari, 2022, p. 222). Before the creation of the Wuaku Commission, the government deployed heavy police and military troops in Dagbon for a peacekeeping mission to keep the two adversaries apart and prevent the conflict from escalating (Paalo & Issifu, 2021, p. 413). Given the complex and delicate nature of the conflict, neither the commission of inquiry nor the formal court as well as the joint police-military peacekeeping mission was able to reconcile the two factions in Dagbon (Paalo & Issifu, 2021, p. 413).

The government of Ghana constituted a Committee of Eminent Chiefs in 2003 to resolve the intractable Dagbon Chieftaincy succession disputes by using customs and traditions to settle the dispute between the Abudus and the Andanis in the kingdom. This was in tandem with the constitutional provision that mandates the government of Ghana to appoint three Eminent Chiefs to resolve the conflict. The Committee of Eminent Chiefs included the Asantehene, Otumfuo Osei Tutu II, the head of the Ashanti kingdom, Nayiri Naa Bohugu Abdulai Mahami Sheriga overlord of the Mamprugu Traditional Area and Yabonbwura Tuntumba Borsa Sulemana Japka I, the paramount chief of Damango and overlord of Gonja Traditional Area.

In 2005, based on the Wuaku Commission Report and consultations with the parties to the conflict, the Committee of Eminent Chiefs crafted a roadmap for the return of peace to Dagbon (Ahorsu, 2014, p. 113). After a lengthy period of deliberations and negotiations, representatives of the two feuding clans in Dagbon signed a Roadmap to Peace known as the peace agreement I on 30 March 2006. The peace agreement I enumerated five major benchmarks in the peace-building process. These include the burial of the late Ya Na Andani II; the installation of the regent of the late king; the performance of the funeral of the deposed Ya Na, Mahamadu Abdulai IV; the performance of the funeral of Ya Na Yakubu Andani II; and finally, the selection and enskinment of a new Ya Na for Dagbon (Tonah, 2012, p. 10).

However, this decision did not receive the cooperation of any of the disputants (Asiedu, 2008, p. 34). Ten (10) years after the signing of the peace agreement only the first two proposals were implemented with the remaining being shelved due to continuing disagreement between the two gates. After boycotting meetings and talks, the Andani and Abudu gates agreed to resume peace talks on September 5, 2017, with the Committee of Eminent Chiefs at the palace of the head of the committee. The committee reached a peace agreement II with the two royal gates on November 16, 2018.

The Committee of Eminent Chiefs grounded in traditional Dagbon beliefs, norms and local diplomacy helped to resolve the conflict. A new King of Dagbon, an Andani clan member, was enskinned and formally inaugurated as Ya Na Abukari II on 25 January 2019 (Issifu, 2021, p. 11). Almost four (4) years after the Committee of Eminent Chiefs resolved the Dagbon conflict, it is important to assess the strategy the committee used to finally resolve the intra-chieftaincy conflict between the two royal gates. It is imperative to also interrogate how peace agreement II has transformed the Dagbon conflict.

1.5 Research questions

1. What strategy did the Committee of Eminent Chiefs employ to resolve the conflict?
2. What are the factors that accounted for peace agreement II?
3. How has peace agreement II transformed the conflict in Dagbon?

To answer these research questions, I employed a qualitative research strategy and primary and secondary sources of data collection to answer my research questions. The qualitative research strategy is adopted because its flexibility allows the researcher to make interpretations of the data collected in the participants setting. This research strategy provides an opportunity to explore and understand the perspectives of participants.

I conducted interviews on telephone calls for the primary data, and for secondary data, I employed articles, journals, news articles, and books related to the Dagbon chieftaincy conflict for the study. I examine how the concept of mediation and readiness theory can be applied to resolve violent conflict and the factors that lead parties to negotiate and reach an agreement between conflicting parties. The research strategy, methods of data collection, concepts, and theory used for the study will be explained in detail in the subsequent chapters.

1.6 Research objectives

The objective of this study is twofold. Firstly, the study intends to assess the strategy of the Eminent Chiefs to finally resolve the Dagbon intractable chieftaincy succession disputes between Andani and the Abudu royal gates. Secondly, the study aims to find out how peace agreement II has transformed the causes of the conflict.

1.7 Relevance of the study

Scholarly works on non-state conflict such as the Dagbon chieftaincy conflict tend to concentrate on the state mechanisms to resolve the conflict. A lot of attention to scholarly works has been given to the state's efforts to resolve the Dagbon chieftaincy conflict. To prevent the conflict, the state has deployed joint police-military forces and has appointed committees or commissions of inquiry to investigate the conflict and recommend mechanisms for conflict resolution. Not much attention has been given to the state's approach to adopting traditional actors like the Committee of Eminent Chiefs to find mechanisms for the resolution of the Dagbon chieftaincy conflict.

As such, there is little knowledge, literature, and empirical studies about the role of traditional actors in resolving non-state conflicts. The finding of this study would provide input on the pivotal role traditional actors played in resolving conflict in the context of the Dagbon chieftaincy conflict. This study would also contribute significantly to academia. The study would contribute to the literature on the role of traditional actors in conflict resolution, peacebuilding processes, and conflict transformation beyond their customary roles as custodians of land and tradition.

1.8 Motivation and its relevance to peace and conflict studies

My motivation for this research stems from my personal experience. Growing up in Tamale as a young boy, I have seen how the conflict has affected people's lives. Tamale is the political capital of the Dagbon traditional area. On the 27th of March, 2002 the Dagbon traditional area witnessed one of the most gruesome atrocities when King Ya Na Yakubu Andani II was murdered with forty other people. The murder of the Ya Na resulted in conflict in Tamale that led to the destruction of properties, loss of lives, and people displaced, among others. The government had to impose a curfew in Tamale to control the conflict. Unfortunately, schools were closed because of the conflict. I was frequently distracted in my studies, and this has left me seeking answers to contribute to my quota in maintaining peace in Dagbon. The relevance

of this study to peace and conflict is related to bottom-up as a peacebuilding tool in resolving conflicts. The topic of chieftaincy conflict highlights the importance of traditional leaders in resolving conflicts in societies. Also, this study will fashion out more pragmatic policy support and promote the work of traditional leaders, especially in conflict prevention, mitigation, resolution, and peacebuilding. It is my view that issues raised in this study will contribute to sustaining peace in the Dagbon traditional area.

1.9 Chapter outline

The thesis is divided into five (5) chapters. Chapter one (1) is the introduction and focuses on outlining the background of the study, the research problem, the research objectives, the research questions, the relevance of the study as well as motivation and its relevance to peace and conflict studies. Chapter two (2) is the literature review. Included in this chapter are the concepts and the theory underpinning the study – mediation, transformative mediation, and readiness theory.

Chapter three (3) is an outline of the methodological framework for the study. A particular focus is the strategy of inquiry, philosophical and theoretical paradigms, study site and the participants, sampling procedures, recruitment, and data sources. Also discussed in this chapter are the strategy, reflexivity, ethical considerations, and challenges. Chapters four (4) and five (5) entail the presentation of empirical data and the analysis of the findings.

Specifically, Chapter five (5) provides a summary of the key points discussed in this thesis, as well as the recommendations and conclusion, arrived at after the analysis of the three (3) research questions for this study.

1.10 Conclusion

In this chapter, I introduced the chieftaincy institution and presented an overview of the Dagbon chieftaincy conflict. I also outlined my three (3) research questions and the methods employed to answer the questions. I went on to present the objectives of the study and the research problem. Furthermore, I explained my motivation for the study, its relevance to peace and conflict, and the relevance of the study. The outlay of this thesis was also provided to give an overview of how the thesis would be structured. The next chapter will discuss an overview of the literature on categories of conflicts in Ghana, chieftaincy conflicts in the Northern region, and the mechanisms adopted by the government to resolve the conflict after the 2002 murder of Ya Na Yakubu Andani II.

2.0 LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

This chapter is divided into two sections. The first section reviews related literature on categories of conflicts in Ghana, Chieftaincy conflicts in the Northern region, and the mechanisms adopted by the government to resolve the Dagbon chieftaincy conflict which resulted in the murder of Ya Na Yakubu Andani II in March 2002. The second section outlines the concept and theory used for the study.

2.2 Categories conflicts in Ghana

The West Africa Sub-region has been plagued with a series of devastating conflicts since the end of the Cold War, leaving profound consequences including the region's social, economic, political, and humanitarian crises. These are mostly intra-state conflicts derived from ethnic and religious causes. Notable examples of these conflicts include Rwanda, Sierra Leone, Côte d'Ivoire, Liberia, and Nigeria (Mahama & Longi, 2013) among others. The results of the conflicts have caused death, destruction of properties, hunger, poverty, and displacement of people.

Ghana has often been described internationally as one of the most stable, democratic, and peaceful countries in Africa since 1992 and has been spared violent conflict at the national level. However, several parts of Ghana have been plagued with violent conflicts in the past decades. Ghana has witnessed four successful coups d' states since attaining independence from the British in 1957. In addition to these coups, the country has witnessed various categories of conflicts over the years. Like many African countries, there are many languages spoken in Ghana made up of people from diverse groups of ethnic groups across the country. This seems to have made the country prone to ethnic conflicts since it gained independence from the British colony. Wolff (2006, p. 2) asserts that ethnic conflicts are those in which the goals of at least one of the parties are defined in ethnic terms, and in which the primary fault line of confrontation is one of the ethnic distinctions. According to (Tambiah, 1989, p. 336), ethnic conflict gained prominence in social literature in the 1960s and 1970s.

After reviewing several kinds of literature on conflicts in Ghana, I have identified two categories of ethnic conflicts that occur across the length and breadth of the country. These are inter-ethnic and intra-ethnic conflicts. There has been an intermittent eruption of either intra-ethnic or inter-ethnic conflicts over the past seven decades in Ghana. Inter-ethnic conflicts

occur between different ethnic groups of people in competition over a resource or power while intra-ethnic conflicts occur within the same ethnic group. Inter-ethnic conflicts, mostly centered on control over land and other resources and sovereignty issues, are what Brukum (1995) has described as wars of emancipation or secession.

Tonah, (2005, p. 101) has explained inter-ethnic conflicts within the framework of the struggle for autonomy, litigation over the land tenure system, chieftaincy disputes, competition for power, and the demand for representation in local and national government bodies. Intra-ethnic conflicts as described by Tsikata, and Seini (2004) are partly overland ownership, competing uses of land, and the locating of institutions and services, but mostly over chieftaincy succession and conflicts between state institutions, such as the police and communities, over-policing and law and order issues arising from communal conflicts and inter-personal disputes. Tonah (2012, p. 3), defines intra-ethnic conflicts that occur over claims to chieftaincy titles involving persons from the same ethnic group or smaller units within the group such as the clan and the lineage. Intra-ethnic conflicts in Northern Ghana have been a result of chieftaincy succession disputes (Tonah, 2006).

Ghana has experienced both inter-ethnic and intra-ethnic conflicts in each of the sixteen administrative regions. Some of these conflicts include the Nkonya/Alavanyo ethnic conflict, Nkwanta conflict, Peki/Tsito and Abutia Kpota conflicts in the Volta Region, Winneba chieftaincy conflict in the Central Region, Mamprusi and Kusasi conflict in Bawku, in the Upper East Region; Konkomba and Nanumba conflict, Bimbila chieftaincy conflict and Dagbon chieftaincy conflict in the Northern Region of the country (Mahama, 2003).

Other conflicts in Ghana are the Anlo chieftaincy conflict, the Adoagyiri crisis, the Tuobodom chieftaincy conflict, and the Ga chieftaincy conflict in 2004 among others (Prah & Yeboah, 2011). The Nkonya/Alavanyo conflict, Nkwanta conflicts, Mamprusi and Kusasi, Konkomba and Nanumba conflicts are inter-ethnic conflicts while Peki/Tsito, Abutia Kpota conflicts, Dagbon conflict, Bimbila conflict, and Tuobodom conflict are intra-ethnic conflicts. These examples testify to the number of ethnic conflicts that occur in the country. Conflicts that have occurred in Ghana are mostly intra-ethnic and have been a result of chieftaincy succession disputes.

Brukum (2000, p. 131) indicates that twenty-two intra-ethnic conflicts and inter-ethnic conflicts occurred in the Northern Region alone from 1980-2002. Tsikata & Seini (2004) opined that there are several longstanding inter-ethnic and intra-ethnic disputes among various

communities across Ghana. Conflicts such as the Dagbon chieftaincy conflict, the Bimbila chieftaincy conflict, the Nkonya-Alavanyo ethnic conflict, the Tuobodom, and the Winneba chieftaincy conflict have degenerated into violent ones and have generated the attention of both the local and international community. Although some of these conflicts such as the Konkomba and Nanumba ethnic conflict and Dagbon chieftaincy conflict have been effectively resolved, others tend to be protracted.

In addition to the inter-ethnic and intra-ethnic conflicts, there are also religious conflicts among Muslims, Christians, Muslims, and Christians and conflicts between members of different political parties. Ghana has a strong religious affiliation, and this has been a source of tension leading to conflicts in some parts of the country. This view is supported by Awedoba (2009) who observed that conflict erupts between worshipers of different faiths and denominations. Awedoba (2009) identifies religious differences as a trigger of conflict in some parts of Ghana, particularly the Northern Region.

Tsikata and Seini (2004) posit that there have been violent incidents among Muslims, especially in the Northern, Ashanti, and Brong-Ahafo Regions. In 1996, a religious clash between Kotokoli and Dagomba at the Akim Oda town resulted in six deaths, the burning of ten houses, and the destruction of property worth millions of cedis according to a Ghanaian Times newspaper report cited in Tsikata and Seini (2004, p. 24). However, religious conflicts and conflicts between members of different political parties are not on the scale and are rare in contemporary conflicts in Ghana. Inter-ethnic and intra-ethnics conflicts have been dominant in Ghana since its independence from the British colony.

From the literature, conflicts in Ghana are complex and have varied causes ranging from religious differences to land, chieftaincy, and ethnic and political differences. Chieftaincy conflicts seem to be the most recurring and violent among all the conflicts taking place in Ghana. Chieftaincy conflicts can either be inter-ethnic or intra-ethnic conflicts. The total number of Chieftaincy conflicts in Ghana is estimated to be more than three hundred. Although chieftaincy conflicts are found throughout Ghana, there is a widespread perception in the country that Northern Ghana is particularly prone to such conflicts (Tonah, 2012, p. 2).

2.3 Chieftaincy Conflicts in Northern Ghana

In recent times, there has been an increasing number of chieftaincy-related conflicts which is of great concern to the Ghanaian society. Chieftaincy titles are keenly contested and extremely competitive in many parts of Ghana, particularly at the divisional, paramountcy, and kingship

levels. As (Hagan 2006; Tonah 2011) puts it becoming a chief is not merely a contest between individual members of the royal group but involves the contestants' families, lineages, and clans as well as their friends and supporters. Chieftaincy conflicts as described by Bukari et al (2021) in Ghana are often presented as disputes involving rival groups over succession to traditional political power.

Chieftaincy conflicts have been one of the main sources of communal conflicts in Northern Ghana. There have been several chieftaincy conflicts have been recorded in Kpandai, Yendi, and Bimbilla in the Northern part of Ghana. Northern Ghana alone has been cited to account for more conflict-related deaths than the rest of the regions combined. These conflicts have been characterized by the wanton destruction of life and property, development reversals, serious abuse of human rights, suffering, especially among the vulnerable, and relentless internal migration to the peri-urban periphery of Southern Ghana (Ahorsu & Gebe, 2011).

Conflicts in the Northern Region of Ghana have varying causes which include competition for chieftaincy positions and litigation over rights of land tenure (Tsikata & Seini 2004, p. 4). Chieftaincy conflicts in Northern Ghana are characterized by competition for succession by different gates among different ethnic groups in the region. Brukum (2005, p. 30) has noted that succession disputes have often occurred when one gate tries to monopolize the skin, as happened in Dagbon, or when attempts are made to bypass some of the gates in the system of rotation to the chiefship. The chieftaincy conflict in Kpandai among the Nawuris in Kpandai and Nawuris in Balai is over who to be the chief of Kpandai and the paramount chief of Nawuris.

Similarly, the Bimbilla conflict is a chieftaincy succession conflict between the Andani gate and Nakpa Naa gate all of whom are Nanumbas over which of the gates to occupy the skin and take control over resources in the community. Issifu (2021, p. 2) posits that one of the most protracted communal conflicts in Ghana is the Dagbon conflict in the Northern Region. The Dagbon chieftaincy conflict is the most complex, intractable, sensitive, and destructive (Issifu, 2021) conflict that has occurred in the modern history of conflicts in Ghana. Brukum (2007, p. 206) describes the Dagbon chieftaincy conflict as the worst dynastic conflict since Ghana's independence in March 1957. Ladouceur (1972, p. 98) posits that the Dagomba are strongly attached to the institution of chieftaincy, which partly accounts for the intensity with which conflicts over chieftaincy are carried out. According to Ahorsu (2014, p. 96), the Dagbon intrachieftaincy conflict, which dates to 1953, has been one of the main sources of communal

violence in Northern Ghana. In 2002, the King of the Dagbon traditional area Ya Na Yakubu Andani II was murdered in Yendi in a violent clash between the Andani and Abudu royal gates.

2.4 Mechanisms Instituted to Resolve the Dagbon Conflict After The 2002 Incident by The Government

The Dagbon chieftaincy crisis dates to the pre-colonial era and various attempts have been made to resolve the conflict. After the murder of Ya Na Yakubu Andani II in 2002, Dagbon was divided into Andani versus Abudu due to the events that surrounded the conflict in Yendi. To manage the crisis, the ruling government New patriotic party (NPP) was faced with the arduous challenge of finding answers to many questions surrounding the 2002 bloodshed and determining how to fully resolve the Dagbon conflict (Ahorsu, 2014, p. 18). The government established a special team of police investigators/military intervention, the Wuaku commission, and the Committee of Eminent Chiefs to resolve the conflict. According to various literature on the Dagbon chieftaincy conflict, these mechanisms were instituted to bring the Dagbon chieftaincy conflict to an end after the murder of Ya Na Yakubu Andani II in 2002.

2.4.1 Military and Police Intervention

The National, Regional, and District Security Councils, Ministry of Interior, and Ministry of Defense through the police and the military have been useful in conflict management and peacebuilding in Dagbon over the years (Issifu, 2015, p. 34). The government deploys police and military to help maintain peace and protect the lives and properties of people anytime there is an outbreak of violence in Dagbon. For instance, in managing the conflict that occurred in Yendi, the police and military were deployed following an exchange of gunfire and fighting between Andani and the Abudu that led to the murder of Ya Na Yakubu Andani II on March 27, 2002. They were deployed to help manage and control the conflict between the two royal families. This was a temporal measure to preserve and maintain peace and order to find a permanent solution to the long-standing Dagbon chieftaincy conflict.

Also, the police and military were deployed to intervene, monitor, and enforce the state of emergency imposed following Ya Na's death in Yendi, Tamale, and other catchment areas. On March 29, 2002, the Ghana government introduced Chief Superintendent of Police David Asante Appeatu to the Andani family and chiefs of Dagbon as the leader of the government's special team of police investigators mandated to investigate the murder of Ya-Na Yakubu Andani II and the others in 2002 (Ahorsu, 2014, p. 18). However, the special investigation

team introduced by the government did not present any report that could be used to identify and prosecute the perpetrators. The police and military interventions temporarily halted the conflict in Dagbon but did not resolve the causes of the conflict.

2.4.2 The Wuaku Commission of Inquiry

The Wuaku commission of injury was established by the government of Ghana to investigate the tragic disturbances that occurred in Yendi between the 25th and 27th of March resulting in the murder of Ya-Na Yakubu Andani II in 2002 and make a recommendation to resolve the conflict. The commission was established and tasked to (a) make a full and impartial inquiry into the circumstances of and establish the facts leading to the events and resultant deaths and injuries in Yendi in the Dagbon traditional area of the Northern region between the 25th and 27th March 2002 (b) to identify those responsible for the events and resultant deaths and injuries of persons and to recommend appropriate sanctions or actions against any person found to have caused, been responsible for or been involved in the violence and the resultant deaths and injuries (c) inquire into any matter which the commission considers incidental or reasonably related to the events and resultant death and injuries (d) submit within one month its report to the president giving reasons for its findings and recommendations (Wuaku commission, 2002).

The commission, after a series of both public and in-camera sittings over a period of 4 months, presented its report to the government. The commission in its report identified some major causes which led to the March 2002 crisis and the eventual violent clashes between the two Gates. The key and remote cause of the conflict, according to the commission, was the poor management of the past phases of the Dagbon dispute (Asiedu,2008, p. 29). The report states that the remote cause of the disturbances in Yendi between the 25th and 27th of March is the long-standing chieftaincy disputes between the Andani and Abudu gates. The conflict according to the Wuaku commission was also a result of the non-performance of the funeral of the late Mahamadu Abdulai IV the former Ya Na who died in 1988 (Ahorsu, 2014, p.19). The commission described the violence in Yendi as an act of war fought between the two gates. It states that “Having considered the totality of the evidence before the commission, we have concluded that the events that took place in Yendi on 25, 26, and 27of March 2002 were criminal acts of war fought between two gates for which individuals from both gates are blamable” (Ahorsu 2014, p. 19, Wuaku Commission 2002: p. 67-82). The commission also found that the parallel celebration, by both the Abudu and Andani Gates, of the two most important traditional festivals of the Dagbon people – the Bugum (fire) and the Eidul-Adha

festivals, previously held solely under the auspices of the Ya Na - was seen by the Andani family as an affront to the authority of the King, which heightened tension and consequently led to the crisis (Asiedu, 2008, p. 29).

The commission made several recommendations to the government such as the arrest and prosecution of individuals for their alleged role in the conflict. The report further advised that the funeral of Ya Na Mahamadu Abudulai IV is performed and that the body of the late Ya-Na Yakubu Andani II is properly preserved and buried according to Dagbon traditions (Ahorsu, 2014, p. 19). The findings and recommendations of the commission report were accepted by the government. However, it was difficult to implement some of the recommendations such as arrest and prosecution due to the lack of proper evidence against the alleged individuals.

2.4.3 The Committee of Eminent Chiefs

The most prominent and pragmatic step towards the resolution of the Dagbon chieftaincy conflict was the establishment of the Committee of Eminent Chiefs in 2003. The government appointed the Committee of Eminent Chiefs to find a durable solution to resolve the protracted Dagbon conflict. Ahorsu (2014, p. 19) explains that the selection of the Committee of Eminent Chiefs was influenced by shared characteristics of traditional administrative structures and the culture of chieftaincy.

Owusu-Mensah (as cited in Debrah et al, 2014, p. 35), further reiterates that the three Eminent Chiefs possess strong historical and traditional linkages, knowledge, and understanding of the Dagombas. The work of the committee was based on court rulings, previous committee's work, and the Wuaku commission report on the Dagbon crisis. These reports in consultations and meetings with the parties to the conflict and the Committee of Eminent Chiefs drafted a peace agreement that finally led to the restoration of peace in Dagbon. The outcome of the work of the committee was in two parts: peace agreement I and peace agreement II.

2.4.4 Peace Agreement I

The Committee of Eminent chiefs with the support of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the Ministries of Interior and Chieftaincy as well as the parties to the conflict develop a roadmap for the return of peace to Dagbon. Four (4) years after the outbreak of violent conflict in Yendi, a peace agreement was signed between the parties to the conflict known as Dagbon roadmap I. The peace agreement was signed on March 30, 2006, after a

series of consultative meetings with the parties to address the underlying issues of the conflict. The roadmap contained 13 provisions for the return of peace to Dagbon and states that:

- a) The installation of the Regent of Ya Na Yakubu Andani takes precedence over Na Mahamadu Abudulai's Regent since Na Yakubu died in office Dagbon custom did not contemplate a situation where there would be two sitting Ya Nas of Regents at the same time.
- b) A council of elders, consisting of three representatives each from the Andani and Abudu families, will be promptly formed to act jointly with the Kuga-Na and the regent of Na Yakubu Andani and make all traditional arrangements from the date of Na Yakubu Andani's funeral to be carried out from funeral rites of the two deceased Ya Nas to the installation of a new Ya Na.
- c) The Council of Elders shall comprise the following persons:
 - I. From the Andani family: Sung Lana Abdulai Mahama; Kunkon Lana Fuseini Ziblim and the Kpan Na M.B. Bawah.
 - II. The Mion Lana shall be the head of the Abudu family in the Council of Elders, consulting with other family members to bring two more names to the Committee of Eminent Kings. The names of the members of the Council of Elders from the Abudu family shall be submitted by the Mion Lana to the Kuga Na on or before Saturday 1st April 2006 and notified to each of the Eminent Kings as soon as possible.
- d) The burial of Na Yakubu Andani should take place on 10th April 2006, with the consultation and active participation of the Council of Elders, and his Regent appointed shortly thereafter by Dagbon customs and traditions.
- e) The Kuga Na is enjoined to act as father of all, to be impartial, and to ensure the full participation of the Abudu family in all matters relating to the burial of Na Yakubu Andani and the management of the Dagbon State.
- f) The Regent's powers shall be limited due to the special circumstances in Dagbon today. In this context, the Regent shall not have the power to appoint any chiefs or alienate any lands or other resources belonging to the Dagbon State.
- g) Without prejudice to clause "e" above, the Regent with the concurrence of the Kuga Na and the Council of Elders shall appoint chiefs to vacant skins whose participation will be crucial to the performance of the funeral rites of Na Mahamadu and Na Yakubu

Andani, and to assign the Regent of Na Mahamadu to skin after the performance of the funeral of his father.

- h) The burial of Na Yakubu Andani shall be performed in the royal mausoleum. All other purposes connected to his burial shall be performed at the temporary palace.
- i) There can only be one palace in the Dagbon kingdom. The temporary palace was constructed following the unfortunate incidents of 2002. In this regard, the old Gbewaa Palace should remain free from occupation or activity until a date is set for the funeral rites of Na Mahamadu Abudulai IV to be performed.
- j) After the funeral of Na Yakubu Andani, both sides will meet again with the Eminent Kings Committee to work out a program for the funeral rites of Na Mahamadu and Na Yakubu Andani. Since Na Mahamadu died before Na Yakubu Andani, his funeral shall be performed first.
- k) The Eminent Kings shall agree upon a period with all the parties within which the respective funerals of the late Ya Na shall be performed. The eminent Kings will continue to engage with the parties on the way forward until a New Ya Na is enskinned.
- l) All the parties pledged to abide by this Roadmap to peace and to encourage their supporters to continue to keep the peace.
- m) The agreements reached hereunder do not represent a victory to any side. The parties are urged to continue in the spirit of accommodation, compromise, and oneness that constitute the foundation for this agreement, and to avoid celebrations or acts that depict a victory or loss on any side (Statement issued by the Committee of Eminent Chiefs, Ghana News Agency, 2006).

However, among the thirteen (13) provisions, only the burial of the late Ya Na Yakubu Andani II in the Gbewaa palace and the appointment of Kamkpakuya-Na Andani the eldest son of the late Ya Na, as the Regent of Dagbon was implemented. Hope (2008, p. 3) asserts that the funeral rites of the former Ya Na Mahamadu Abudulai IV, which were considered critical to the peace process, stalled, and were not implemented. The unwillingness of both families to make significant compromises concerning the implementation of the other provisions collapsed the peace agreement.

2.4.5 Peace Agreement II

After several boycotts of sittings between the Committee of Eminent Chiefs and the parties to the Dagbon conflict, the representatives of the two Royals in Dagbon agreed to resume peace

talks on Tuesday, September 5, 2017. On the 15th of November 2018, the Northern Regional Minister led the representatives of the royal gates to a final meeting with the Committee of Eminent Chiefs. This was in line with the government's resolve to permanently solve the Dagbon chieftaincy dispute. In recommitting themselves to the resolution of the Dagbon conflict, the parties signed a new peace agreement II in November 2018 after talks with the Committee of Eminent Chiefs.

The committee decided on November 16, 2018, that the kings of Abudu should conduct the funeral of the late Ya Na, Mahamadu Abdulai. The funeral rites were to be performed beginning December 14 to 28, 2018. This was to be followed by the funeral of the late Ya Na Yakubu Andani II by the Andani royals from January 4 to 18, 2019. The two funeral rites of the late Ya Nas were to be performed at the old Gbewaa palace in Yendi. The finalized peace agreement for the restoration of peace in Dagbon contained three (3) provisions of peace agreement I. The final provision of the peace agreement was the enskinment of a new Ya Na in Dagbon after the funeral rites of the late Ya Na Andani Yakubu II. Peace agreement II was successfully implemented and the chief of Savelugu was appointed as the successor to Ya Na Yakubu Andani II.

In conclusion, the above section provided an overview of categories of conflicts in Ghana, chieftaincy conflicts in the Northern region, and the mechanisms adopted by the government to resolve the Dagbon chieftaincy conflict. I outlined the joint police-military intervention, the Wuaku commission, and the Committee of Eminent Chiefs established and appointed by the government to resolve the conflict after the murder of Ya Na Yakubu Andani II in 2002. The Committee's work culminated in peace agreement I and peace agreement II between the Andani and Abudu gates which finally resolved the Dagbon chieftaincy conflict. The goal of this research is therefore to assess the role of the Committee of Eminent Chiefs in finding a lasting resolution to the Dagbon chieftaincy conflict in the Northern region of Ghana. The next section, therefore, discusses the theoretical and conceptual framework used for the study.

2.5 Conceptual and theoretical framework

2.5.1 Introduction

This section presents a conceptual and theoretical understanding of mediation and readiness theory to resolve intractable conflict. The section would provide how transformative mediation and readiness theory can be applied to resolve a conflict between disputing parties.

2.5.2 Mediation

Mediation as a concept has been defined differently by scholars. Engel & Korf (2005) understand mediation as an assisted negotiation process, moderated by a third party, aimed at assisting the conflicting parties to find mutually acceptable solutions, including addressing the root causes of the conflict. According to Nolan-Haley (2008), mediation is a short-term, structured, and task-oriented participatory intervention where disputing parties work with an impartial third party to negotiate toward a resolution of conflict. Kressel and Pruitt (1989, p. 3) have defined mediation as assistance to two or more interacting parties by a third party who at that time has no power to prescribe agreements or outcomes. Nolan-Haley (2008) defines mediation as a short-term, structured, and task-oriented participatory intervention where disputing parties work with an impartial third party to negotiate toward a resolution of conflict.

On the other hand, Drew (2008, p. 7) posits that mediation is a decision-making process in which the parties are assisted by an outside intervener, who makes attempts to assist the parties in their process of decision-making and reach an outcome in which each of them can assent without the mediator having a binding decision-making capability. From a different point of view, Bush & Folger (1994) define mediation as a process in which a third party works with conflicting parties to help them change the quality of their interaction from negative and destructive to positive and constructive. Alexander (2008) has indicated that mediation has varied objectives from the efficient settlement of disputes and access to justice to conflict resolution. However, Debrah et al (2014, p. 33) contend that irrespective of the objective, the essential element of mediation is to meet the needs of parties and key stakeholders.

Dryzek & Hunter (1987) see mediation as a form of third-party intervention in which a mediator enables conflict transformation without enforcing a solution. Central to all mediation approaches is that a third party helps the disputing parties to resolve conflicts by enabling the parties to find their solutions (Picard 2002). Moore (2014, p. 8) asserts that mediation is a conflict resolution process in which a mutually acceptable third party, who has no authority to make binding decisions for disputants, intervenes in a conflict or dispute to assist involved parties to improve their relationships, enhance communication and use effective problem solving and negotiation procedures to reach a voluntary and mutually acceptable understanding or agreements on contested issues.

According to Picard & Melchin (2007, p. 36) what they discover in the process are new pieces of information about each other and new ways of “seeing” the issue and the other person.

Participants thus come out of the process with new ways of resolving the dispute between them and, ideally, of working and living together. There are four models of mediation that are available to traditional mediation practitioners and professionals in their efforts to settle disputes. These models of mediation are facilitative mediation, settlement mediation, transformative mediation, and evaluative mediation.

These models of mediation are aimed at helping disputants address their conflict. Very often literature on mediation refers to a third “objective or neutral” party that is brought into the conflict situation to assist in its transformation (Schellenberg et al. 2007). For this study, I use transformative mediation to understand the role and strategies of the Committee of Eminent Chiefs to resolve the Dagbon conflict. Transformative mediation helps conflicting parties to resolve and transform conflicts.

2.5.3 Transformative Mediation

Transformative mediation is where parties are urged to deal with the underlying causes of their problems with a perspective of repairing their relationship as the basis of the settlement of the dispute (Debrah et al, 2014, p. 34). Alexander (2008) argues that transformative mediation adopts a social-communicative perspective of human conflict, which emphasizes disputing parties’ ability to transform their relationship through empowerment and recognition, to encourage them to communicate with each other in a constructive and useful manner. Transformative mediation is an effective tool for transforming social relationships and building peace. In transformative mediation, the mediator helps the parties to transform their conflict from destructive to constructive. Transformative mediation does not only aim to transform conflict, but also to foster long-term relationships and cooperation (Katila et al., 2014). Menkel-Meadow (1995) state that the goal of transformative mediation is not only to reach a solution but also to facilitate change in the overall interaction of the parties.

Transformative mediation focuses on two things namely empowerment and recognition. Picard & Melchin (2007, p. 37) postulate that transformative mediation focuses on relationships and on parties’ ability to achieve empowerment thus the ability to make one’s own decisions and recognition which is the ability to recognize others’ experiences through mediation. Nthontho (2020, p. 306) is of the view that what counts most in transformative mediation is empowering the parties (empowerment) and getting them to have a genuine appreciation of the other’s predicament (recognition). In this situation, the mediator is less interested in probing the conflict situation and is more interested in providing opportunities for parties to make decisions

at every turn and in “recognizing opportunities for recognition in the parties’ conversational cues and creating responses that support the development of empathy” (Della Noce 2001, p. 108).

In the mediation process, the mediator does not bring his ideas and suggestions to the table but helps the parties listen to themselves and each other in their ongoing interaction. The transformative mediator is impartially present but neither neutral nor objective (Alrø and Dahl, 2015, p. 506). Menkel-Meadow (1995) posits that the transformative mediation model uses concrete mediation practices that follow a bottom-up rather than a top-down intervention approach. Mediators support, rather than replace, party decision-making, and they facilitate and support party communication and perspective-taking, rather than enforce them.

All solutions that emerge from mediation according to the transformative practice model are firmly rooted in the conflicting parties' own decisions and decisions (Menkel-Meadow, 1995). The key interventions of mediators, according to Menkel-Meadow (1995), include: (1) constantly reflecting on the parties' comments as they take turns talking, noting and elevating their comments so that they can hear and listen to each other and themselves when expressing their views, feelings, and desires; and (2) periodically summarizing the issues the parties are discussing, and particularly their disagreements, as the conversation unfolds. These interventions are effective in helping parties understand each other, build cordial relationships, and gain clarity about issues to make informed decisions.

For empowerment and recognition to manifest during the transformative mediation process, Bush, & Folger (2005) advocate for a “relational” rather than “individualism” framework because a relational framework “sees the world as containing both the plurality of individual selves and the unity made up of the network of their relationships. It is important to point out that the Committee of Eminent Chiefs embraces the relational and leaves out the individualism framework.

2.5.4 Empowerment as a Transformative Mediation tool in conflict

Empowerment in transformative mediation implies that the mediator’s role is to support parties in decision-making. According to Bush & Folger (1994), empowerment improves the capability of the conflicting parties by enabling them to handle and make better decisions on their conflict problems. Nthontho (2020, p. 311) notes that parties can clarify their goals, options, and preferences as well as communicate and negotiate these with the opposing party. Building consensus and enhancing communication through empowerment prevents tensions

and unnecessary disruptions between conflicting parties. As part of a strategy to strengthen empowerment, the Committee of Eminent Chiefs began its work by organizing a peace workshop for the chiefs and youths of the conflicting parties.

The peace workshop was intended to help and enhance communication between the two feuding parties in the mediation process. Empowerment in mediation means a willingness and ability to brainstorm, explore, argue, and analyze to qualify common decision-making. When the parties can see strengths and weaknesses in their own and others' views, they can come to manage situations together that they would not be able to master alone (Alrø and Dahl, 2015, p. 507). According to Debrah et al (2014, p. 36), this brings the disputants and the mediators into close interaction and designs common objectives that would be acceptable to all parties.

2.5.5 Recognition as a Transformative Mediation tool in conflict

Bush & Folger (1996) note that recognition as a transformative conflict mediation tool enables parties to see and understand the other person's point of view. Understanding conflict issues and context is crucial when addressing conflict. Alrø and Dahl (2015, p. 507) are of the view that recognition means the parties are willing to inquire into each other's perspectives on the common concern. According to them, this includes appreciating the diversities of each other's group and letting go of ingrained patterns and habits to come to see things in a new light.

Alrø & Dahl (2015, p. 507) agree that it is important to understand how they define the problem and why they seek the solution that they do. The feuding parties in the Dagbon chieftaincy conflict had opposing goals. The death of Ya Na Yakubu Andani II strained relations between the two royal families to the extent that each regarded the other family as an adversary (Debrah et al 2014, p.36). Based on this, the Committee of Eminent Chiefs acknowledged the differences between the two opposing families and took steps to reconcile them. The Committee of Eminent Chiefs arranged separate meetings with the families, which involved efforts to persuade each family to embrace peace and relegate hatred and violence to the background (Mahama, 2009).

2.6 Readiness theory

Readiness theory is particularly applicable to intractable conflicts, as these conflicts involve severely fractured relationships between the parties to the dispute (Pruitt, 2007, p. 1526). The Dagbon conflict can surely be viewed as an intractable chieftaincy conflict that lasted for 65 years between 1953 and 2018. According to Pruitt (2007), readiness theory describes the

conditions appropriate for commencing negotiations in the language of psychological variables, with a focus on the processes underway on each side separately. Readiness is a characteristic of a party in a conflict that reflects the thinking of the leadership regarding the conflict, and it can vary within a wide scale of conciliatory behavior (Pruitt, 2007). Schiff (2014, p. 59) refers to readiness theory as conditions that have the potential to bring parties to the negotiation and provide an opportunity to examine factors that influence the de-escalation process of conflicts that are not necessarily interstate, intrastate, or violent in nature.

Readiness theory focuses on the processes that lead the parties to sit at the table, it may also be useful in examining the factors that influence concession-making during negotiation (Pruitt, 2007). According to readiness theory, each side might have varied reasons for entering negotiations (Pruitt, 2005). Some readiness is needed on both sides of a conflict for negotiation to start and an agreement to be reached (Pruitt 2007, p. 1525).

Pruitt (2007, p. 59) identifies two components of readiness theory that encourage a party to a conflict to agree to conduct negotiations or mediation. Firstly, both parties to the conflict must have the motivation to end the conflict in the sense that the conflict is unwinnable and possesses unacceptable risk and loss. Also, there should be pressure from a powerful third party to end the conflict. Secondly, parties to a conflict should be optimistic about what can be achieved from negotiations or mediation.

According to Pruitt (1997, p. 239), readiness theory asserts that a party will move toward the resolution of a heavily escalated conflict thus entering a negotiation, making concessions, etc. to the extent that it is motivated to achieve de-escalation and optimistic about finding a mutually acceptable agreement that will be binding on the other party. Schiff (2014, p. 59) asserts that the stronger the third party and the greater the pressure it applies, the more the parties will endeavor to demonstrate that they seek an end to the conflict. A third party's motivation to end the conflict may encourage them to take the initiative to bring the disputing parties to negotiations (Pruitt, 2007). The death of the Ya Na in 2002 strained the relationship between the two royal families in Dagbon. When the military and police interventions failed to resolve the conflict permanently, the government established a Committee of Eminent Chiefs to find lasting solutions to the conflict. To reconcile the two royal families, the first initial step the Committee of Eminent Chiefs took was to organize a separate meeting between the families. The meetings were to persuade each family to embrace peace and not regard each

other as adversaries. As stated earlier, the Committee of Eminent Chiefs was established to find a permanent solution to the Dagbon conflict.

This initiative taken by the Eminent Chiefs was to bring the two disputing families together to interact with each other on a common platform. Motivation to end the conflict started to develop through the initiatives of the Eminent Chiefs. Debrah et al (2014, p. 36) postulate that, unlike in the past when attempts to unite the factions ignited conflict, the grand meeting between the two families proceeded amicably with handshakes and traditional kisses which signaled the end of hostilities between the two rival royals.

On the other hand, optimism refers to the possibility of concluding negotiations with an agreement that is acceptable to both sides (Schiff, 2014, p. 60). On January 28, 2016, the Abudu royal gate petitioned the Committee of Eminent Chiefs to boycott invitations for fresh talks on the implementation of the final phase of peace agreement II. The Abudu gate in their petition stated among other reasons that “the committee has failed to give true meaning to clause ‘i’ of their Roadmap to peace document which states that...the old Gbewaa Palace should remain free of occupation or any activity until a date is set for the performance of the funeral rites of Ya Na Mahamadu Abdulai IV” (Naatogmah, 2018).

The Abudu gate was compelled to temporarily suspend its appearance before the Committee of Eminent Chiefs since their objectives were not met. Schiff (2014, p. 60) contends that a party’s motivation to end a conflict is often discerned by a third party, making the latter more optimistic about ending the conflict. The Committee of Eminent Chiefs succeeded in convincing the representatives of the two royal gates to return to the negotiation table for peace talks to resume after the previous boycott by the gates.

Full readiness exists when the situation is symmetrical, such that both parties are motivated to achieve de-escalation and both are optimistic about reaching an agreement (Pruitt, 1997, p. 239). Some readiness is needed on both sides of a conflict for negotiation to start and agreement to be reached.” (Pruitt, 2007, p. 1525). He is of the view that parties must also have some optimism about the outcome of the negotiation, and some faith that the final agreement will satisfy one’s goals and aspirations without too much cost. Readiness theory would be used to explain the factors that accounted for peace agreement II in chapter four (4) of this research.

2.7 Conclusion

In this section, I discussed the concept of mediation, and transformative mediation and examined two assumptions underlying the concept of transformative mediation, empowerment, and recognition. I also looked at different discussions regarding readiness theory and the potential to bring conflict parties to the negotiation table to reach an agreement.

3.0 METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This chapter outlines the methodology adopted to answer my research questions. My research aims to analyze the role of the Committee of Eminent Chiefs in resolving the Dagbon chieftaincy conflict. The study employed a qualitative research strategy and primary and secondary sources of data collection to answer my research questions. The next section highlights the research design used for the study.

3.2 Research design

To achieve the aim of research questions in qualitative research, it is important to identify the appropriate research design that will be suitable for the study. According to Bryman (2016, p. 46), a research design provides a framework for collecting and analyzing data. Bryman (2016, p. 45) notes that research design represents a structure that guides the execution of a research method and the analysis of the subsequent data. The selection of the research design for this study is based on the issues being addressed and my desire to conduct an in-depth understanding of the phenomenon of chieftaincy conflict in Northern Ghana in the context of Dagbon.

This study adopts an exploratory case study approach. One of the several ways of conducting qualitative research is the use of a case study approach. Bryman (2016, p. 45) describes a case study as the detailed exploration of a specific case, which could be a community, organization, or person. In this sense, the Dagbon chieftaincy conflict between the Andani and the Abudugate in Dagbon is used as a case study approach to analyze the role of the Committee of Eminent Chiefs in the intra-chieftaincy conflict. An exploratory case study approach is a justifiable rationale because of the nature of my research questions and the phenomenon this study seeks to understand in real life context. The exploratory approach helped to get a detailed and in-depth understanding of issues and what participants think about things that affect them or events happening around them through their experiences of the Dagbon conflict.

The philosophical assumption for this study is constructivist interpretative epistemology. This study also has a deductive approach to testing theory from the data collected. Constructivists hold the assumption that individuals seek an understanding of the world in which they live and work (Creswell, 2009 p. 26). Constructivists argue that meanings are constructed by human beings as they engage with the world they are interpreting. The choice for this philosophical

assumption is influenced by three aspects: participants' subjective view of the phenomenon being studied, open-ended questioning employed and my role as a researcher. The first aspect of the constructivist assumption is based on the premise that participants have subjective meanings for their experiences.

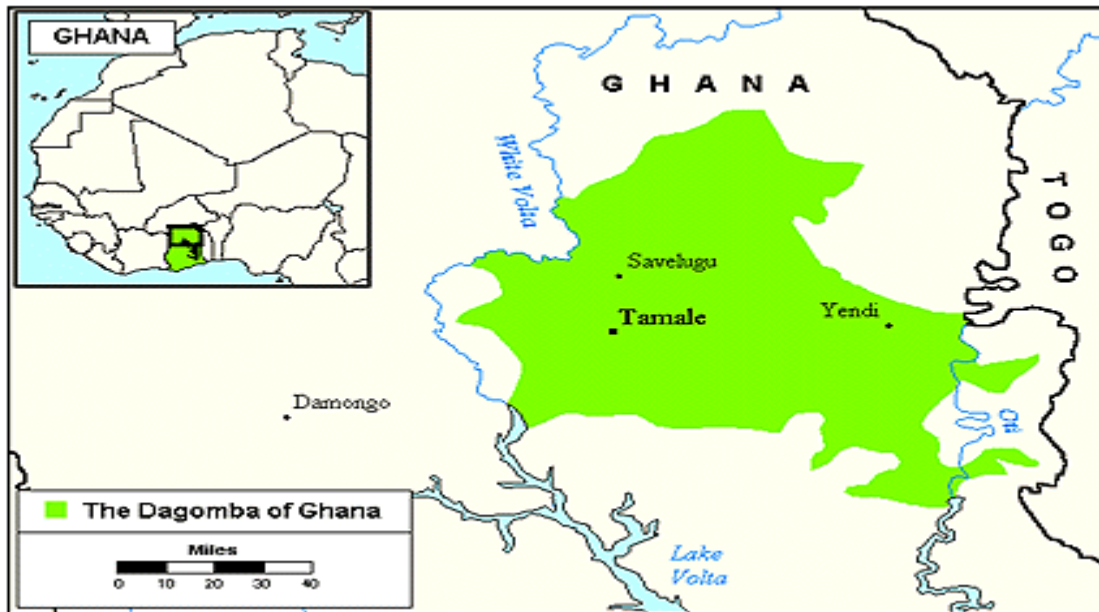
However, Creswell (2009, p. 26) suggests that the goal of the research is to rely as much as possible on the participants' views on the situation being studied and to look for the complexity of the views rather than the meanings of a few narrow down categories or ideas. The second aspect influencing the choice of constructivist assumption is the use of open-ended questions to allow participants to share their views. The open-ended questioning provided me an opportunity to listen carefully to what my participants say and do in their settings. The third aspect stems from my role as a researcher in the construction of the phenomenon being studied. According to Creswell (2009, p. 26) researchers recognize that their backgrounds shape their interpretation, and they position themselves in the research to acknowledge how their interpretation flows from their personal, cultural, and historical experiences.

3.3 Study area

Dagbon is a traditional kingdom located in the Northern Region of Ghana. Dagbon is the largest Kingdom in Northern Ghana. The Kingdom is divided into three major provinces: Karaga, Mion, and Savelugu (Staniland, 1975). Dagbon occupies a total area of about 8,082 square miles. The people of Dagbon are called Dagombas. The overlord of the kingdom is Ya Na. The traditional capital of Dagbon is Yendi where the king resides today. Yendi lies about 98 km east of Tamale, the regional capital of the northern region.

Awedoba (2009, p. 203) asserts that chiefship is the heartbeat of Dagbon and there are several grades of chiefship that royals and non-royals may aspire to. The political system of the Dagbon traditional area is centralized with Ya Na at the apex. The Ya Na has the sole right to choose and install paramount chiefs in the Dagbon traditional area. Yendi, the traditional capital of Dagbon where the seat of the Ya Na is, and Tamale, the regional capital of the Northern region were the hotspots of the disputes and where intense fighting happened. This, therefore, forms the basis for the selection of my study areas. The study areas for this research are the traditional capital of Dagbon and the regional capital of the Northern region. The site of the Dagbon intra-chieftaincy conflict between the Andani and Abudu was in Yendi and Tamale hence, the reason these areas are chosen for the study. Below is the map of the Dagbon traditional area.

Figure 2- Map of the Dagbon traditional area



Source: Joshua's Project at https://joshuaproject.net/people_groups/11470/GH

3.4 Sampling techniques and procedures/selection of participants

Since this is qualitative research, I used a combination of two non-probability sampling techniques for the selection of my participants. Purposive and snowball is a non-probability form of sampling that was adopted for this study. The study entailed seven (7) semi-structured interviews which lasted between 50-60 minutes for each telephone call interview conducted. As a researcher, non-probability sampling allows me not to generalize a population but instead provides me a choice to choose a sampling technique that suits my study. According to Babbie (2010, p. 23), purposive sampling is selecting a sample based on your knowledge of the target group, its elements, and the nature of your research aims.

Based on my research questions, I used purposive sampling to identify participants that were involved in the Dagbon conflict and the processes leading to peace agreement II. The participants were selected for this study because they know the historical and cultural contexts of the conflict and their relevance to my research questions. As identified by Bryman (2016, p. 418), the goal of purposive sampling is to sample cases/participants strategically so that those sampled are relevant to the research questions that are being posed.

Snowball sampling is another non-probability sampling approach used in qualitative research. This sampling approach was also adopted for this study in addition to the purposive sampling. This approach was utilized to reach two (2) of my participants and a contact helped in reaching out to these participants. Snowball sampling refers to recruiting respondents by asking existing

respondents to recommend the study to their acquaintances, which are their friends, family, and colleagues (Walliman 2015, p. 115).

3.5 Data collection methods

As indicated earlier, I used both primary and secondary sources of data collection for this study. Primary data comprised of telephone call interviews that were conducted, audio recorded from respondents, and secondary data obtained from articles, journals, reports, news articles, and books related to the Dagbon chieftaincy conflict were used for the study. The articles, journals, reports, news articles, and books were obtained through google, google scholar, and Oria searches online.

3.5.1 Primary Data Collection-Telephone interviews

One of the most widely employed methods for the collection of data in qualitative research such as this study is the use of interviews. Interviews are conversations that are deliberately set with the purpose of collecting information about research questions or a topic and following rules and procedures. Interviews in qualitative research are used to gather data from the interviewees' points of view rather than reflecting the researcher's concerns. For this study, I used telephone call interviews as a method to collect data for the research. These interviews were conducted by telephone calls given the limited period to complete this study coupled with my inability to travel to collect data in the field. With the help of a research assistant, I established contact with my research participants who have been actively involved in the conflict and peace agreement process on the telephone to conduct my interviews.

I called the two representatives of the Andani and Abudu gates and other research participants for the study on the telephone to introduce myself and explained my research intentions and the general areas the interviews will cover. Critics of telephone interviews have argued that there are few differences in the kinds of responses that one gets when asking questions by telephone rather than in person (Bryman 2016, p. 488). However, according to Sturges & Hanrahan (2004, p. 113), there are no noticeable differences between the responses given in telephone interviews in that there are similarities in the quantity, nature, and depth of responses compare to face-to-face interviews.

I conducted interviews using semi-structured interviews on a telephone call. Semi-structured interviews were adopted because of their flexibility and open-ended to gain more information from respondents. This allowed respondents themselves to speak freely and raise

complementary issues that form part of this study. Semi-structured interviews follow an interview guide to obtain information from respondents. Bryman (2016, p. 477) is of the view that it can be difficult to get people to expand further on their answers in qualitative interviews.

However, the semi-structured interviews allowed me to ask questions that were not included in my interview guide. The interviews were conducted on telephone calls following an interview guide that had pre-determined questions to get the responses of respondents for the study.

3.5.2 Secondary sources

In addition to the telephone call interviews, secondary sources of data collection were also employed for the study. Through an internet search, I gathered and purposively selected scholarly articles, academic journals, books, reports, news articles, and publications that have been written on chieftaincy and ethnic conflicts in Ghana, particularly the Dagbon chieftaincy conflict in the Northern region as a secondary source for this study. These materials were gathered through electronic searches such as Oria and google scholar. These materials were also relied on to provide a background understanding and knowledge of the conflict and the peace agreement.

3.6 Reflexivity

According to (Guillemin & Gillam, 2004, p. 273) reflexivity involves critical reflection on how the researcher constructs knowledge from the research process including what sorts of factors influence the researcher's construction of knowledge and how these influences are revealed in the planning, conduct, and writing up of the research. When conducting research, the researcher must consider his/her role as the researcher. In this context, I consider that I am an insider because I was born in Tamale and my family lives there. For this reason, my personal bias toward the research was considered in each step of my research process. I alienated myself, personal biases, and value judgments during the collection and analysis of my data.

3.7 Ethical considerations

This section deals with concerns of ethics that occurred while conducting this research. I considered ethical issues such as informed consent, trustworthiness, and confidentiality to ensure that the research does not harm and stress the participants involved in the study. This was paramount given the sensitive nature of the study. Gaining informed consent from participants to collect data is one of the core principles of social research.

Before conducting my interviews, I ensured that I had obtained informed consent from my participants for the study. This was done by getting my participants to sign an informed consent form. The forms were written and sent to my research assistant through his email to be printed and presented to the participants to read and sign before the interviews were conducted. On a telephone call, I explained the purpose of my research, its aims to the participants, and why I am conducting this interview by telephone.

In addition, I informed my participants that participation in this study is voluntary, that they can withdraw it at any time and that data will be anonymized once it is collected. The consent form contained adequate information that was given to participants to have the opportunity to enable them to decide whether to take part in the study or not. I ensured that participants understood the consent form and provided them an opportunity to ask questions about any information regarding the form that they could not understand.

Another ethical issue that was considered during the research process was the issue of confidentiality. As a researcher, it is my responsibility to do everything possible to maintain the confidentiality of my participants for the study. To ensure the confidentiality of the information or data gathered from my participants, I made sure they were identified by pseudonyms and reported in ways that could not identify them after the interview process. This was done in order not to expose the participants in the study. Recorded audio and transcripts from the data gathered were stored on my computer. I encrypted and secured it with a password-protected to ensure that the data cannot be accessed and restricted to a third party.

In addition to these ethical issues, this study also considered trustworthiness. Three key factors helped enhance the trustworthiness of this study. The three factors include informed consent, confidentiality, and a telephone conversation with the participants. I noticed that during the data collection process, my research participants gave me their trust after I obtained their consent and assured them of the confidentiality of any information or data, I gathered from them. I strived to obtain their consent and confidentiality to gain their trust to facilitate the data collection process.

Also, a telephone call conversation to introduce myself to the participants before data collection helped to gain their trust. I assured participants that transcripts of the interviews were to be sent to them to read and provide corrections on things they did or did not want to be captured in the interviews. The participants, after reading and understanding the consent form, confidentiality, and gaining my trust signed for the data collection to begin.

3.8 Challenges

One of the significant challenges that I faced was not being able to conduct interviews with the Eminent Chiefs that were established to resolve the conflict. This was resolved by my interviews with the representatives of the gates to understand the committee's task to resolve the conflict. The identification and selection of participants for this study were easy, especially with the representatives of the two gates. The Andani and Abudu representatives were known in the public domain for their involvement in a bid to resolve the conflict by representing the two gates at the committee meetings with the Eminent Chiefs. However, the difficult challenge I faced was getting the contacts of the two representatives to conduct interviews with them.

My inability to travel for field data meant I had to use a different method of data collection for this study. One way of overcoming this challenge was to get a research assistant. Conducting interviews by telephone meant I had to get a research assistant to help get the contacts of the participants. With the help of a research assistant, I was able to get their contacts and spoke to them on the telephone to familiarize myself and explain the purpose of my study.

Also, the process of arranging to get the contacts of participants for the interviews was very time-consuming. For example, an arrangement was made to speak to the representative of the Andani gate through his secretary but on the day of the interview, I could not speak to him. I was told he was busy, so we had to reschedule the meeting with him.

Another challenge that I faced while conducting this study was not being able to meet participants in person. Telephone interviewing comes with certain benefits however it is not possible to observe to see how participants respond to questions in the physical sense. Initially, the plan was to organize a WhatsApp video call to conduct interviews for this study since I was not able to travel for field data collection. However, the poor internet connections in the locations of the participants did not allow for that process. Instead, I relied on telephone calls for the interviews.

Additionally, conducting a telephone interview from Europe to Africa is very costly. I spent NOK 400 for 50-60 minutes on a call for each of the seven (7) interviews I conducted on the telephone calls. Despite all the challenges, the data collected through telephone call interviews together with collected secondary materials is enough for the study.

3.9 Data analysis

The interviews for the study were conducted in the local dialect of Dagbani. The interviews were translated and transcribed by me. The analysis began by transcribing the interviews gathered from my research participants for the study. After transcribing the interviews, I read the transcripts and listened to the interviews gathered from my research participants for accuracy. Using thematic analysis, the interviews were structured according to themes. With help of NVivo, I coded similar contents into categories based on my research questions. The themes reflected the research questions which were categorized into the strategy of the Committee of Eminent Chiefs, factors for peace agreement II, and peace agreement II transforming the conflict. Other themes on the role of the Committee of Eminent Chiefs and the role of government in resolving the Dagbon conflict emerged in the study. The thematic analysis allowed me to link the concept and theory applied to the study with the data that has been gathered from my interviews.

3.10 Conclusion

In this chapter, I gave an overview of the methods and methodology used for the research. Both primary and secondary methods of data collection were used for the study. I also explained and justified the choice of research design, philosophical assumptions, sampling techniques, reflexivity, ethical considerations, challenges of the study, and data analysis. The next section discusses the findings and analysis of the study.

4.0 FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS

4.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the findings and analysis of the research data. It examines the research participants' perspectives and experiences regarding the research questions. I begin the discussion by seeking to understand the strategy employed by the Committee of Eminent Chiefs to reach a peace agreement II between the two royal gates to resolve the Dagbon chieftaincy conflict.

After this, I would present and discuss the factors that accounted for peace agreement II. Furthermore, I would discuss how peace agreement II has transformed the Dagbon chieftaincy conflict, the role the Committee of Eminent Chiefs played, and finally the role of the government in resolving the conflict. These discussions are guided by the research's theory and concept, which is aimed at providing answers to the research questions.

4.2 The Mediation Strategy by The Committee of Eminent Chiefs

The study revealed that mediation was employed as a strategy by the Committee of Eminent Chiefs to find a lasting solution to the Dagbon conflict. The Committee of Eminent Chiefs used the transformative mediation process to resolve the Dagbon conflict.

The representative of the Abudu gate when asked what strategy the Committee of Eminent Chiefs employed to resolve the conflict *“There is a conflict resolution method referred to as mediation. The committee of eminent chiefs used mediation in resolving the conflict. With mediation, every decision must be consensual. The mediators will hold you into understanding the need for you to put your common interest before everything else so that gradually you can come to an understanding. Mediators have no right to impose, they may suggest for the parties to agree”* (Telephone call interview, 18/07/22). This is in tandem with the mediation process as a conflict resolution strategy between conflicting parties. It is a process of assisted negotiation where the mediator has no power to impose outcomes. Instead, he or she supports the parties' efforts to work their way through the issues, ideally to a consensus. Mediation seeks to change the way participants relate to the problem and each other (Picard & Melchin, 2007, p.36). In mediation, the mediator aims to assist conflict parting in reaching an outcome without influencing the decision-making of the parties. As a mediator, the Committee of Eminent Chiefs used mediation to guide the communications between the Andanis and Abudus royal family to reach an understanding and help the parties resolve the dispute. According to the

Abudu representative “*the mediation strategy by the Committee of Eminent Chiefs was in three processes. The first process was to meet the two royal families separately. The second process was the performances of the funerals of the two late Ya Na and the final process was selecting a new overlord. So that was the process the Eminent Chiefs used to resolve the conflict*” (Telephone call interview, 18/07/22). The Committee of Eminent Chiefs’ work was to provide decision-making assistance and understanding through mediation and not the authority to make decisions for the parties involved in the conflict. The mediation strategy by the Committee of Eminent Chiefs was in various processes. The Committee of Eminent Chiefs to bring the two opposing families to reconcile with each other arranged separate meetings with the royal families.

For instance, the Abudu representative says “*The first process was to meet us separately and it worked. It took time, Andani initially said they will not sit with Abudus, and it took 3 years before they agreed*” (Telephone call interview, 18/07/22). This arrangement to meet the families separately was to persuade each family to embrace peace. The Committee of Eminent Chiefs demonstrated a commendable level of recognition by meeting the families separately to understand their predicaments.

In transformative mediation, what is important is empowering and getting conflicting parties to recognize the predicament of each other situation during the conflict. The two royal families to an extent regarded each other as enemies after the murder of Ya Na Yakubu Andani II. As a way of enhancing communication through empowerment, peace workshops were organized for the parties in the conflict. The peace workshops were particularly important because they brought disputants and mediators into close interaction by allowing conflicting parties to agree to the mediation process.

By enhancing communication and building consensus, the transformative mediation process helped prevent unnecessary disruptions and tensions during the conflict. In the words of the Andani representative “*Everyone was angry after the murder of Ya Na Yakubu Andani II. When the committee started the mediation process at first, neither party could sit in the same place or even stay in the same hotel for a meeting. The chiefs tried their best to calm everyone until they started sitting together*” (Telephone call interview, 20/07/22). From the view of the Andani representative, the committee was able to convince the royal families to start sitting together. Once it became convinced that the families had demonstrated a willingness to forgive each other the committee organized face-to-face meetings between the Andani and Abudu

royal families. The meeting between the two families ended the hostilities between the royal families. The second process, the Committee of Eminent Chiefs in an agreement between the royal families was the performance of the funeral of the late two Ya Nas. The reason for the late performance of the funerals of the two Ya Nas years after their death was due to the contention of who would become the new Ya Na of Dagbon. In Dagbon customs, once the funeral of a former Ya Na is performed, a new Ya Na must be enskinned. The performance of the funerals was a major step towards restoring peace to Dagbon. The study revealed that the refusal of the Andani royal family to allow the Abudus to perform the funeral of the late Ya Na Mahamadu Abdulai IV was the cause of the Dagbon chieftaincy conflict.

An informant, when asked what the cause of the Dagbon chieftaincy conflict was, replied “*The main cause was the refusal of the Andani people to allow the Abudu people to perform the funeral rites of Ya Na Mahamadu Abdulai IV. The Abudu people were insisting on performing the funeral rights because without the performance of the funeral a king cannot be selected from their gate again meaning only the Andani can choose a king from the heirs and the Abudu people did not want that to happen*” (Telephone call interview, 15/07/22). The Andanis on the other hand also had the funeral of the late Ya Na Yakubu Andani II pending. The committee organized meetings with the Andani and Abudu to agree on how to perform the funerals of the late two Ya Nas.

The Committee of Eminent Chiefs resolved with each royal family an opportunity to bid the final farewell to the late Ya Nas regarding the performance of the final funeral rites. Moore (2014, p. 22) asserts that the mediator’s tasks are to assist disputants to identify, understand, and articulating their needs and interest to each other, identifying mutually acceptable to address and meet them. The two royal families agreed the funerals of the late Ya Nas should follow the customary practices of the people. Consequently, the committee decided with the royal families that by custom, the funeral of the eldest of the deceased should be performed first to be followed by the younger deceased. Hence by a resolution of the elders representing the two gates, it was agreed that the funeral of the late Ya Na Mahamadu Abdulai IV who died in 1988 would be performed first, and that of Ya Na Yakubu Andani II will follow (Debrah et al, 2014, p. 37). The final process of the mediation strategy by the Committee of Eminent Chiefs with the Andani and Abudu royal gate was the selection of a new Ya Na for Dagbon.

The next process after the burial of the late Ya Na Yakubu Andani II and Ya Na Mahamadu Abdulai IV was to select a new Ya Na for Dagbon. An informant speaking on the selection of

Ya Na for Dagbon indicated that *“the Committee of Eminent Chiefs and the two royal families worked together to use the traditions and customs to select the next king. So, they started setting up meetings and both gates were invited by the committee for talks and the meetings were always held at the head of the committee’s palace”* (Telephone call interview,15/07/22). The selection of the Ya Na was to be done following the customs and traditions of Dagbon. The mediation process employed by the Committee of Eminent Chiefs yielded a peace agreement implemented to resolve the Dagbon chieftaincy conflict. The implementation of the peace agreement meant a new Ya Na was enskinned. The chief of Savelugu was selected and enskinned as Ya Na Abukari II, king of Dagbon following the customs and traditions of Dagbon. The peace agreement I and II as discussed in the earlier chapter contained all these strategies employed by the Committee of Eminent Chiefs during the mediation process.

4.3 Factors That Accounted for Peace Agreement II

As discussed earlier, readiness theory focuses on the processes that lead parties to sit at a table during negotiation. When the representatives of the Andani and Abudu gates were asked what accounted for the peace agreement II; willingness to compromise and assurances to the parties that their respective goals would be achieved were their responses. The representatives of the royal gates interviewed expressed the view that willingness to compromise and the assurances given to them resulted in the ability of the Committee of Eminent Chiefs to develop key provisions in peace agreement II.

This can therefore be understood in the context of readiness theory. According to readiness theory, parties to a conflict have varied reasons for entering negotiation to reach an agreement. In Dagbon customs and traditions, the funeral of the Ya Na is performed at the Gbewaa palace. After the death of Ya Na, his funeral is performed at the Gbewaa palace according to the culture and traditions of Dagbon. The Andani gate did not recognize Ya Na Mahamadu Abdulai IV as Ya Na because he was not properly enskinned and therefore could not be accorded the right for his funeral to be performed as Ya Na. At a point, the Andani gate accepted the funeral of the late Ya Na Mahamadu Abdulai IV should be performed but not at the Gbewa palace. The Abudu representative in an interview said at the start of meetings with the committee *“the Andani agreed that Ya Na Mahamadu Abdulai IV’s funeral should be performed but not at the Gbewa palace because he was not Ya Na. The funeral can be performed but it can only be performed where he died not in the palace and Abudus also said NO”* (Telephone call interview, 18/07/22). The Abudu gate believed Mahamadu Abdulai IV was a legitimate Ya Na

and therefore, his funeral should be performed according to the traditions and customs of Dagbon hence the funeral should be performed at the Gbewa palace. The two royal gates were unwilling to compromise on where the burial of the late Ya Na Mahamadu Abdulai should be performed.

The lack of willingness to compromise was a challenge to reaching a peace agreement II between the Andani and Abudu gates with the Committee of Eminent Chiefs. The situation looked quite alarming for both parties as they found it difficult to reach a peace agreement. The desire to end the conflict started to develop when there was pressure from the Committee of Eminent Chiefs for factions to negotiate to reach a compromise to resolve the conflict. A powerful third party can motivate disputing parties to a conflict to reach an agreement to resolve the conflict. After meetings with the Committee of Eminent Chiefs, the two royal gates compromised to reach a peace agreement that included the performance of the funeral of the late Ya Na Mahamadu Abdulai IV at the Gbewaa place.

This was the response of the Abudu representative when asked what accounted for the peace agreement “*Both parties were tired of the conflict, were ready, and willing to compromise to reach a peace agreement. We knew that there is no other home rather than Dagbon, so there was a need to give room for peace so that was one of the biggest reasons why both parties reached an agreement*” (Telephone call interview, 18/07/22). Within the context of readiness theory, it can be argued that the Andani and Abudu gate reached a peace agreement to resolve the Dagbon conflict due to the willingness of both factions. The Dagbon chieftaincy conflict has been in existence for a long time. The parties to the conflict were tired of the conflict and were ready to resolve their differences with the Committee of Eminent Chiefs. The motivation to end the conflict by reaching a peace agreement II can be understood in the sense that the two gates realized the conflict is unwinnable and Dagbon was lacking behind in terms of development compared to other areas.

The Andani representative in a view expressed that “*We all saw that Dagbon should not be in a state of conflict and Dagbon is a big kingdom to not have a king. This was the reason both Andani and Abudu agreed to compromise for the burial of the late Ya Na Mahamadu Abdulai IV to be performed at the Gbewaa palace*” (Telephone call interview, 20/07/22). The willingness to compromise for peace to prevail in Dagbon between the two royal gates resulted in the performance of the funeral of the late Ya Na Mahamadu Abdulai IV at the Gbewaa palace. Pruitt (2007, p.1529) asserts that being motivated to end a conflict and start a

negotiation is not enough to get one into a negotiation. One must also have some optimism about the outcome of the negotiation and some faith that the final agreement will satisfy one's goals and aspirations without too much cost.

The Abudu representative when asked what accounted for the peace agreement II, he responded that *"There were assurances given to the Abudus side that all the pending funerals of the Abudu side which were 18 would be performed. The Abudus insisted they would want the Mion-Lana upon becoming the regent to perform and enskinned them because the Andani side already had all the available skins. They assured the Abudus that they would all go to them. They will be giving the skins to the current Ya Na, and he will give all the skins to Abudus. The Abudu gate will also have to select who becomes chiefs for each of those positions"* (Telephone call interview, 18/07/22). The royal gates agreed to peace agreement II because the outcome of the agreement would satisfy their goals and aspirations. Motivation and optimism are intimately related in that motivation to end a conflict often encourages the development of optimism (Pruitt, 2007, p.1529). The willingness and assurances accounted for the two royal gates to reach a peace agreement II to finally resolve the conflict with the Committee of Eminent Chiefs.

4.4 Transforming and addressing the Dagbon chieftaincy conflict

Regarding the question of how peace agreement II has transformed the Dagbon conflict, the study revealed that peace agreement II has transformed and addressed the causes of the Dagbon chieftaincy conflict with the performance of the funeral of the late Ya Na Mahamadu Abdulai IV. An informant in explaining what the peace agreement II was about, mentioned that *"The former Ya Na was from the Andani gate, and the current Ya Na is also from the Andani gate because they want to bring lasting peace so it was said that since Ya Na Yakubu Andani II did not die naturally and was killed, Andani gate will still rule. So, if the current King exhausts his time on the throne the Abudu gate will be the next in line to rule. That was peace agreement II, and everyone accepted it. So, the peace agreement II has solved the petty problems we had"* (Telephone call interview, 15/07/22). As discussed in the previous chapters, the non-performance of the funeral of the late Ya Na Mahamadu Abdulai IV was the result of the conflict. When asked if peace agreement II has transformed the causes of the conflict, this was an informant's response *"Yes, the peace agreement II has addressed that because the Abudu was insisting to perform the funeral of Ya Na Mahamadu Abdulai IV at the Gbewaa palace and that was what the Andani was kicking against. Peace agreement II insisted that the funeral rites of Ya Na Mahamadu Abdulai IV should be performed at the Gbewaa palace and that has*

been done there. Another one was to see that his children should be royals of Dagbon so they can be enskinned as Ya Na in the future and that has also been because his son is now Mionlana Abdulai. He is the chief of Mion, gate to the Ya Na position sitting there and looking forward to becoming Ya Na” (Telephone call interview, 15/07/22).

As contained in peace agreement II, the Gbewaa palace was made available for the royal gates to perform the funerals of the late Ya Nas. The gate was the first to perform the funeral rites of Ya Na Mahamadu Abdulai IV. The Abudu gate left the Gbewaa palace after the performance of rites of the late Ya Na Mahamadu Abdulai IV for the Andani gate to perform the final funeral rites of the late Ya Na Yakubu Andani II. The Andani representative noted that *“peace agreement II helped a lot because we had two rulers at first and that was the whole issue and why we did not have peace but now everything is in place, and we have only one ruler and it’s because of the peace agreement”* (Telephone interview, 20/07/22). Another key provision in peace agreement II was the selection of a new Ya Na after the funeral of the late Ya Nas. The selection of a new Ya Na as agreed in peace agreement II between the two gates has transformed the causes of the Dagbon chieftaincy conflict. Since the enskinment of Ya Na Abukari Mahama II as the king, Dagbon has remained peaceful.

An informant was of the view that peace agreement II has solved the problems in Dagbon. He said in an interview that *“We are happy that the peace agreement II has solved some of the partial internal problems we had and hope to enjoy more peace”* (Telephone call interview, 15/07/22). Another point worth noting is that the regents of the late two Ya Nas were enskinned as chiefs of the gates to the Ya Na position after the enskinment of Ya Na Abukari Mahama II as king of Dagbon. Commenting on this an informant indicated that *“Both regents have been enskinned as the chiefs of the gates to Yani. They are anticipating reaching where their ancestors have reached. The Andani regent has been enskinned as the Yo Na, chief of savelugu, and the Abudu regent as the chief of Mion.”* (Telephone call interview,15/07/22). Yani is the position of the Ya Na in Dagbon traditions.

Bush and Folger (2005) and Augsburg (1992) suggest three indications of a transformed conflict: (a) Transforming attitudes: Emergence of “new” perceptions among the conflicting parties, based on a commitment to view each other in a spirit of goodwill and mutual respect. (b) Transforming behaviors: Parties focus on collaborative behavior, including in their communication, and commit to mutually beneficial actions. (c) Transforming conflict: Parties attempt to remove incompatibilities to pursue mutual gains. In tandem with these three

indications of a transformed conflict, an informant asserts in an interview that *“We have Ya Na who is now in charge of everything so should in case anything happens we now have a place to go. Dagbon has a unanimous mouth, you cannot do anything without the consultation of Ya Na. So, this is how peace agreement II has transformed the conflict. The youth are now interacting with one another. In those days you can see a lot of groups separated. The only thing that brings us together is if someone dies and we go to the cemetery. You can see both sides mixed in the commentary of the Abudu and Andani. Today our weddings, our funerals, and outdooring we are now interacting with one another. You can see we do business together now, which was not possible during the conflict. Even in marriages, there were divorces because of the conflict. Today those things are now past and gone. There are now marriages between the two gates. One could not marry an Abudu when you are an Andani and vice versa. But today we are intermarrying now. We are living in a harmonious community now”* (Telephone call interview, 15/07/22). The view of the informant on how peace agreement II has transformed the Dagbon conflict encompasses the three indications of a transformed conflict noted by Bush and Folger (2005) and Augsburg (1992). From his view, peace agreement II has transformed the conflict to ensure that both gates interact with one another. There is social cohesion between the two gates in Dagbon.

Peace agreement II has transformed the Dagbon chieftaincy conflict from a destructive struggle between the two gates toward accommodation between them. Peace agreement II has also transformed the relationship between the two royal gates as previously they did not interact with each other. According to Reimann (2004) as well as Bush and Folger (2005), conflict is transformative when it promotes an opportunity for social change, aiming not only to stop the conflict but also to change the negative or destructive interaction into positive, constructive, and humanizing interaction by empowering parties and recognizing shifts in their interaction. Peace agreement II between the two gates transformed the causes of the conflict and Dagbon is enjoying the peace it has long yearned to achieve.

4.5 The role of the Committee of Eminent Chiefs in resolving the Dagbon chieftaincy conflict

The study revealed that the role of the Committee of Eminent Chiefs was to serve as a mediator between the Andani and Abudu royal gates. In response to the role of the Committee of Eminent Chiefs in resolving the conflict, an informant asserted that *“The Eminent Chiefs played a vital role in resolving the conflict. The Committee of Eminent Chiefs was serving as a*

mediator between the royal families and the subordinates of Dagbon in the process of finding a lasting solution to the conflict. The subordinates are the supporters of both royal gates” (Telephone call interview, 15/07/22). The committee’s role was to mediate the conflict by finding ways to bring the two royal gates to agree to negotiate toward the resolution of the conflict. The Abudu representative noted that *“The committee was supposed to bring discussions to a round table and they succeeded in doing that and guided our discussion to ensure that we arrive at a consensual decision. We were told clearly that, before the committee will accept any decision it must be consensual.”* A series of meetings and dialogue between the two royal gates and the Committee of Eminent Chiefs culminated in peace agreement II which was implemented to finally resolve the conflict.

The role of the committee was also to examine the traditional issues related to the Dagbon conflict and find traditional solutions to the conflict. The Andani representative expressed that *“The tradition of Dagbon has always been the same since the first Ya Na and it is still the same. The customs and traditions of Dagbon were what was used for the peace agreement. There would not be conflict resolution without the Committee of Eminent Chiefs. They did everything when it came to resolving the conflicts because left to the two gates, I do not think it would be resolved by now so we cannot thank them enough. It was stressful, but they did everything they could to ensure we get the peace we have now”* (Telephone call interview, 20/07/22).

As indicated in earlier chapters, various commissions, committees, and subsequently the supreme court of Ghana attempted to resolve the Dagbon chieftaincy conflict between the Andani and Abudu royal gates. The government referred the Dagbon conflict to the supreme court for consideration and finding a solution to the conflict in 1986. An informant in explaining the role of the committee said *“Their role was to make both gates understand their stand in the conflict. Their role was to soften both gates’ stand as far as the kingship of Dagbon is concerned. Let them understand the rulings of the supreme court are still bounded on Dagbon that Ya Na Mahamadu is recognized as the king of Dagbon even after his death, and his children will be entitled to become the king of Dagbon, and his funeral rites should be performed at Gbewaa palace. The Committee of Eminent Chiefs was to make both factions understand the supreme court judgment”* (Telephone call interview, 15/07/22). The supreme court in its ruling stated that the deposed Ya Na Mahamadu Abdulai IV should be recognized as a former Ya Na. In its ruling, it stated that deskinment is unknown in the traditions and customs of Dagbon therefore, Ya Na Mahamadu Abdulai IV be regarded as a former Ya Na

without regard to how he ceased to be a Ya Na. His descendants are eligible for the Ya Na position in the future as well.

The Supreme court rulings failed to resolve the conflict however, the rulings of the court were still bounded on Dagbon. Chairman of the Committee of Eminent Chiefs, Otumfuo Osei Tutu II, at the ceremony at the Jubilee House, said the committee's duty was to restore the customs and traditions of the Dagbon traditional area and restore peace there. He said the report of the committee among other considerations was to give credence to the Supreme court ruling that the late Ya Na Mahamadu Abdulai IV died as a legitimate Ya Na for which reason his funeral should be performed as such (Naatogmah, 2018). The Committee of Eminent Chiefs, having regard for the ruling of the supreme court worked their rulings to ensure they resolved Dagbon's conflict. The role of the committee as a mediator contributed to the restoration of peace in Dagbon today.

4.6 The role of government in resolving the conflict

The government played a key role in resolving the Dagbon chieftaincy conflict in the Northern region. The study revealed the government's role in setting up the Committee of Eminent chiefs, providing financial support to the committee, security, and commitment of the government finally resolve the conflict. In recognition of the government's role in resolving the Dagbon conflict, a Committee of Eminent Chiefs was set up to resolve the issues relating to the chieftaincy conflict. The committee was set up by the government to find traditional solutions to the Dagbon conflict and to resolve it. The participants stated that the government setting up the Committee of Eminent Chiefs was helpful in finally resolving the Dagbon conflict.

In an interview with the Andani representative, he noted that *"The government's key role was setting up the committee to resolve the conflict and only the government knew the terms of reference he gave to them. So, we thank the government so much and appreciate its efforts to give us the peace we have today"* (Telephone call interview, 20/07/22). The comment of the Andani representative indicates that the government played a crucial role in ensuring there is peace in Dagbon by setting up the Committee of Eminent Chiefs to resolve the Dagbon matter. This comes after several attempts to find a lasting solution to the Dagbon issue has not yielded any result in restoring peace.

The government disengaged all the mechanisms it adopted to find peace in Dagbon and appointed the Committee of Eminent Chiefs which finally resolved the conflict. An informant

expressed a view that *“I think the government did well by appointing the Committee of Eminent Chiefs. If there’s conflict in your country, you find a way to resolve it and that is exactly what the government did. If not because of the government intervention I do not think we would have peace by now”* (Telephone call interview, 15/07/22). It is clear from the comments of the Abudu representative and an informant that the government played a vital role in bringing peace to Dagbon by resolving the long-standing chieftaincy conflict between the Andani and Abudu royal gates.

The government supported the committee financially by providing them with funds to ensure they work diligently without financial constraints. The meetings between the Committee of Eminent Chiefs and royal gates were held at the head of the committee’s palace in Kumasi. Representatives of the two royal gates will always have to travel from Tamale to Kumasi for meetings. The government provided them with funds to ensure they were able to travel for meetings with the committee. The Abudu representative explained that *“It took us about 18 years to get to where we are so all those years there was funding from the government, and it took so much money. Funding was not only for the committee but also for security all over Dagbon just to prevent fighting. So, their key role was particular with funding and security personnel, and they also gave the committee a lot of support to enable them to do their work”* (Telephone call interview, 18/07/22). The government’s role in resolving the Dagbon chieftaincy conflict was also due to the intention of the government to find a permanent solution by providing security and supporting the Committee of Chiefs with funding to resolve the conflict.

The government was concerned about the incessant chieftaincy dispute in Dagbon. The government was committed to ensuring that there is peace and security in Dagbon. It was the government’s wish that Dagbon would have a substantive Ya Na. According to an informant *“The previous government played a role in resolving the conflict and the current government immediately after he became the president, he visited then regent of the Andani gate who is currently the chief of savelugu and told him vividly that, he would like to come back to Yendi to see Ya Na sitting at the palace. That will be the end of the conflict in Dagbon. The intention and spirit of the current government were very key factors in resolving the conflict”* (Telephone call interview, 15/07/22). The government in a commitment promised to make available the necessary resources to enable the committee to bring finality to the conflict.

To speed up the work of the Committee of Eminent Chiefs, the government set up the Inter-Ministerial Committee to support the committee in its work. The Inter-Ministerial Committee was made up of the Northern Regional Coordinating Council, the Ministry of Chieftaincy and Religious Affairs, and the National Security Ministry. An informant said that *“A lot of the accolades goes to the government, for all the support especially financially and security-wise. The government supported the committee and provided security during the funeral of the late Ya Na Yakubu Andani II and Ya Na Mahamadu Abdulai IV”* (Telephone call interview, 15/07/22). The government deployed police and military personnel to provide maximum security during the performance of the funerals of the late Ya Na Yakubu Andani II and Ya Na Mahamadu Abdulai IV. This was to ensure that the funerals were performed successfully without any interruptions from the Andani and Abudu gates.

The Abudu representative expressed that the security provided by the government ensured the funerals were performed smoothly. He said, *“In fact, without the government’s support, nothing would have worked honestly speaking because without the security presence that would have been impossible”* (Telephone call interview, 18/07/22). The police and military were deployed to prevent conflict between the two royal gates during the performance of the funerals of the late Ya Na Yakubu Andani and Ya Na Abdulai IV. An informant had a different view on the role of government in resolving the Dagbon conflict. He said in an interview that *“The government played a role in resolving the conflict for their interest. Either to get power or to leave a legacy”* (Telephone call interview, 15/07/22). From the perspective of the informant, the government’s role in the conflict was for political gains.

In acknowledging the government’s role and commitment to finally resolving the Dagbon chieftaincy conflict, an informant stated that *“The Ya Na gave the president a chieftaincy title as Abudani I. The title was a result of the government solving the Dagbon conflict which is why they combined it to call it Abudani. This was a good decision by the king of Dagbon. By making the president understand the appreciation towards what he has done in bringing a lasting solution to Dagbon”* (Telephone call interview, 15/07/22). Ya Na Abukari II gave the president of Ghana the title Abudani I. The title was given to the president in recognition of the government’s role in bringing lasting peace to Dagbon.

4.7 Conclusion

In this chapter, I map different ways in which the Committee of Eminent Chiefs used mediation and transformative mediation to resolve the Dagbon chieftaincy conflict. I pay particular

attention to the two capabilities of transformative mediation, namely empowerment and recognition. I exploited the extent to which the two components of readiness theory, motivation to end conflict and optimism about the outcome of negotiation helped reached peace agreement II to resolve the Dagbon chieftaincy conflict. I then discussed how the Dagbon chieftaincy conflict has been transformed by peace agreement II. Finally, I discussed the role of the Committee of Eminent Chiefs and the role of government in resolving the Dagbon chieftaincy conflict.

5.0 SUMMARY, RECOMMENDATION, AND CONCLUSION

5.1 Introduction

The objective of this study was first to assess the strategy of the Eminent Chiefs to finally resolve the Dagbon intractable chieftaincy succession disputes between Andani and the Abudu royal gates. Secondly, the study aims to find out how peace agreement II has transformed the causes of the conflict. This chapter seeks to provide a summary of the major discussions in the various chapters of this study, a summary of key findings, offer recommendations based on the findings, and finally draw a conclusion.

5.2 Chapter summaries

This thesis is written on the Dagbon chieftaincy conflict between the Andani and Abudu royal gate involving a chieftaincy succession title in the Northern region of Ghana. In chapter one, I discussed how the royal gates to the Dagbon chieftaincy started due to the number of male sons (Abdulai, Andani, and Mahami) the first Ya Na had given birth to and the origin of the Dagbon chieftaincy conflict.

I started by explaining that any son of a former Ya Na is considered to become a Ya Na if he has occupied the royal gates of Mion, Savelugu, and Karaga. Abdulai and Andani managed to reach the Ya Na position, but Mahami could not. The descendants of Mahami can only serve as regents of Karaga. I further discussed that over time Dagombas developed a rotational system where the skin passes on from one royal family. The rotational system which has been in existence since 1824 was breached in 1954. I presented a tabular representation of the origin of the conflict for a clearer picture of the Dagbon chieftaincy crisis in chapter one. The chapter further discussed the research questions, objectives of this study, Motivation, and relevance of this study.

In chapter two, the discussions were in two sections. The first section review literature on categories of conflicts in Ghana, chieftaincy conflicts in the Northern region concerning the Dagbon chieftaincy conflict, and the mechanisms adopted to resolve the conflict after the murder of Ya Na Yakubu Andani II. With the mechanisms adopted by the government, I presented the written materials on the commissions, committees, and joint police-military set up to resolve the conflict. The first commission of inquiry set up by the government after the murder of Ya Na Yakubu Andani II was the Wuaku commission to look at the criminal aspect of the 2002 incident in Yendi. The Committee of Eminent Chiefs was established to resolve

the conflict and find lasting peace in Dagbon. The work of the committee resulted in a peace agreement that found a lasting solution to the Dagbon chieftaincy conflict. In the second section of chapter two, I also presented the conceptual and theoretical discussions on the strategy the Committee of Eminent Chiefs employed to finally resolve the Dagbon chieftaincy conflict. The concept of mediation, transformative mediation, and its components-empowerment and recognition as well as readiness theory by Pruitt and their components to reaching an agreement in the conflict were also discussed.

Drawing on the sources of data for this research, chapter three discussed the methods and methodology used in answering my research questions. In my analysis of the role of the Committee of Eminent Chiefs in resolving the Dagbon chieftaincy conflict, I used both primary and secondary sources of data. Articles, journals, new articles, books related to the Dagbon chieftaincy conflict, and telephone call interviews were used in presenting and analyzing my discussions for this study.

In chapter four, I presented the findings and analysis of the study. I first discussed the research question of finding the strategy the Committee of Eminent Chiefs employed to resolve the conflict in Dagbon. In the discussions, I found out that the committee used mediation in a form of transformative mediation and its components as a strategy to bring the Andani and Abudu gates together to resolve the conflict. I also discussed the factors that accounted for peace agreement II and how it has transformed the Dagbon chieftaincy conflict.

In presenting the factors that accounted for peace agreement II, I used readiness theory and its components of motivation and optimism to explain how to reach an agreement in conflict. I further presented the role of the Committee of Eminent Chiefs in resolving the Dagbon conflict. In the study, it was revealed that the committee was to serve as a mediator between the two royal gates and guide them to reach a peace agreement. I also presented the role of the government both in financial support and providing security to finally resolve the Dagbon chieftaincy conflict.

5.3 Summary of key findings

This section briefly summarizes the findings of the study concerning the research questions. My research questions include (1) What strategy did the Committee of Eminent Chiefs employ to resolve the Dagbon chieftaincy conflict? (2) What factors accounted for peace agreement II? (3) How has peace agreement II transformed the conflict in Dagbon?

5.3.1 The strategy employed by the Committee of Eminent Chiefs in resolving the Dagbon chieftaincy conflict

Data from the research revealed that when the Committee of Eminent Chiefs was established to resolve the Dagbon chieftaincy conflict, the committee employed the strategy of mediation. The Committee of Eminent Chiefs was set up by the government to use customary ways to resolve the Dagbon chieftaincy conflict. After the murder of Ya Na Yakubu Andani II in 2002, the Andani and Abudu gates were angry at each other and were not interacting with one another.

The murder of Ya Na Yakubu Andani II strained the relationship between the two royal gates. The study revealed that when the mediation process started both the Andani and the Abudu could not sit in one place for meetings with the Committee of Eminent Chiefs. The study found that it took three (3) years for the Andani to agree to sit at meetings with the Abudu royal gate. The committee served as a mediator by bringing the Andani and Abudu royal gates to the negotiation table.

In the mediation process, the mediator has no right to impose outcomes instead they may suggest for parties to agree. The mediation strategy employed by the committee was to first meet the two royal families separately. The second after meeting with the families was to mediate for the royal families to negotiate to reach an agreement to perform the final funerals of the late Ya Na Yakubu Andani II and the late Ya Na Mahamadu Abdulai IV. The final strategy was the selection of a new King for the Dagbon traditional area. The mediation strategy of the Committee of Eminent Chiefs using Dagbon customs and traditions resulted in a peace agreement II between the two royal gates that finally resolved the Dagbon chieftaincy conflict.

5.3.2 Factors that accounted for peace agreement II

The willingness to compromise to reach an agreement and the assurances given to them that their respective goals would be achieved were the key factors that accounted for peace agreement II. This was a view expressed by the Andani and Abudu representatives when they were asked what accounted for peace agreement II. Peace agreement I reached a deadlock because both royal gates were unwilling to compromise, especially concerning the performance of the funeral of the late Ya Na Mahamadu Abdulai IV at the Gbewaa palace. The study revealed that because the conflict has been in existence for a long time, the parties to the conflict were tired and ready to resolve their differences. The Dagbon chieftaincy conflict has over the years retarded the development of the area until it was finally resolved. The two royal families

realized that for Dagbon to develop, there was a need to compromise to reach an agreement to resolve the conflict. Also, the assurances that the goals of the parties to the conflict would be achieved was a key factor in reaching peace agreement II as the study revealed. Parties to a conflict agree to enter negotiation when they know their goals will be achieved. The assurance that the goals of both parties would be achieved led the Andani and the Abudu gate to the negotiating table to reach a peace agreement II.

For the Abudu royal gate, there were assurances from the committee that the pending funerals of the Abudu side would be performed. Chieftaincy positions that belong to the Abudu gate were assured to be given to them to select who becomes a chief for each of the positions. These were issues that were contested, and the committee assured them that they would be given to the Abudu gate once a new Ya Na is enskinned. The Abudus were happy with the assurances, hence leading to reaching a peace agreement II. On the other hand, the Andanis were satisfied that the position of the Ya Na would remain at their royal gate.

5.3.3 How has peace agreement II transformed the conflict in Dagbon

The cause of the conflict was the refusal of the Andani gate to allow the Abudu gate to perform the funeral of the late Ya Na Mahamadu Abdulai IV at the Gbewaa palace. The study revealed that Peace agreement II transformed the causes of the Dagbon chieftaincy conflict. A key provision in peace agreement II was the performance of the funeral of the Late Ya Na Mahamadu Abdulai IV at the Gbewaa palace. The Gbewaa palace was made available to the Abudu royal family to perform the funeral of the late Ya Na Mahamadu Abdulai IV.

The performance of his funeral at the Gbewaa palace meant that his children can be enskinned to become Ya Na of Dagbon in the future once they occupy the royal gate to the Ya Na position. As stated in the earlier chapters, these were the causes of the Dagbon chieftaincy conflict, and peace agreement II transformed the conflict. Due to the conflict, Dagbon did not have a ruler to preside over the traditional area. Peace agreement II has ensured that a new Ya Na is enskinned and Dagbon has a King now. There is also peace in Dagbon, and the royal gates and their supporters now interact with one another.

5.4 Recommendations

The study made two recommendations based on the findings of the research. The mediation between the Committee of Eminent Chiefs and the two royal gates for peace agreement II ended without a document to refer to in the future. Although peace agreement II was agreed upon

between the Andani and Abudu royal gate, there is no document to that effect for reference. The agreement was only a verbal one between the royal gates and the Committee of Eminent Chiefs. The study recommends that there should be a document for peace agreement II. The document for peace agreement II would ensure that parties to the conflict are bound to it and have respect for the document. The Committee of Eminent Chiefs should draft a document for peace agreement II and get parties to the conflict to sign for reference in the future. This will prevent any future misunderstandings or disturbances between the Andani and the Abudu royal gates.

The study also recommends that the two royal gates with the Committee of Eminent Chiefs should convene a constitutional conference for a Dagbon constitution. The purpose of the conference with the Committee of Eminent Chiefs would be to draft a constitution regarding the succession to the Ya Na position. The provisions of the Dagbon constitution should include the smooth operation of the rotation system, how long a Ya Na funeral should last, the procedures to select a Ya Na, and the composition of the selection committee of Ya Na. A Dagbon constitution containing these recommendations would prevent future occurrences of chieftaincy conflict in the Dagbon traditional area.

5.5 Conclusion

In conclusion, this thesis discussed and analyzed the strategy the Committee of Eminent Chiefs employed in finally resolving the Dagbon chieftaincy conflict in the Northern region of Ghana. It has also discussed the factors that accounted for peace agreement II and how peace agreement II has transformed the chieftaincy conflict in Dagbon. It further discussed the role of the Committee of Eminent Chiefs in finding a lasting solution to the Dagbon chieftaincy conflict through the customs and traditions of Dagbon. The government played a crucial role by providing financial support to the committee to ensure they do their work properly and provided security to ensure that peace agreement II was successfully implemented.

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7.0 APPENDIX

7.1 CONSENT FORM

Project Title: The Dagbon Chieftaincy Crisis in Northern Ghana: Analyzing the Role of The Three Eminent Chiefs To The Restoration Of Peace In Dagbon.

Student Name: Abdul-Rauf A Z Abideen

I am a master's student at The Arctic University of Norway (UiT) studying MPhil Peace and Conflict Transformation. I am researching the above topic. I would like to collect data from you as part of my research project. Any information you provide is for research purposes only.

By signing this consent form, I declare that:

1. I have read and fully understand the information sheet for the above project. I confirm that I was provided with the opportunity to take into consideration the information, ask all the questions I wanted, and have them answered satisfactorily.
2. I am fully aware of what is expected of me. I understand that I will be asked a set of questions, which I am supposed to answer as honestly as possible.
3. My decision to participate in this study is fully voluntary. I also understand that I am free to leave at any time without providing any reason. I understand that my withdrawal will not affect my legal rights.
4. I understand that I can withdraw permission to use my data within a week after it has been collected. I understand in this case my data will be deleted and will not be used for this research.
5. I understand that the data provided by me will be looked at by the researcher. I permit these individuals to have access to my data.

.....

(Signed by the participant)

7.2 INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR THE PARTICIPANTS

1. What were the causes of the conflict?
2. Who was involved in resolving the conflict.
3. What is your perception of the Committee of Eminent Chiefs?
4. How did the conflict impact your life?
5. How has the peace in Dagbon impacted your life?
6. What do they think helped resolve the conflict?
7. How did peace agreement II transform the causes of the conflict?
8. What was the role of the Committee of Eminent Chiefs in resolving the conflict?
9. What role did the government play in resolving the conflict?

QUESTIONS FOR THE REPRESENTATIVES OF THE ANDANI AND ABUDU GATES ON PEACE AGREEMENT II

1. What were the causes of the conflict?
2. In your view, tell me about the strategies of the Committee of Eminent Chiefs to resolve the conflict.
3. In your view, explain peace agreement II to me.
4. What factors accounted for peace agreement II?
5. In what ways has peace agreement II solved the causes of the conflict?
6. What was the role of the government in the implementation of peace agreement II?
7. What was the role of the Committee of Eminent Chiefs in resolving the conflict?
8. What role did the government play in resolving the conflict?