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Examining the State's Capacity in the Management of the Dagbon crisis in Ghana: Is there a role for ECOWAS?

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ACRONYMS

DPAC	District Peace Advisory Councils
ECOMOG	ECOWAS Ceasefire Monitoring Group
ECOWAS	Economic Community of West African States
ECPF	ECOWAS Conflict Prevention Framework
EEC	European Economic Community
NGO	Nongovernmental Organisation
NPC	National Peace Council
PMAD	Protocols Relating to Mutual Assistance on Defence
PNA	Protocols Relating to Non-Aggression
RPAC	Regional Peace Advisory Council
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Introduction

One of the features of the African continent in the recent past has been the rising spate of conflicts. So intense and pervasive have been some of these conflicts that they have often resulted in some states being declared as either 'fragile', 'failed' or 'collapsed', as were the recent cases of Liberia, Rwanda, Burundi, Ivory Coast and Sierra Leone, among others. Studies have been conducted to diagnose the political, historical, and economic antecedents or causes of these developments, and in the process some reasons have been advanced to explain their emergence (African Studies Centre et al, 2003).

One very prominent reason is that this phenomenon is a direct result of the end of the Cold War at the turn of the 1980s. The end of the Cold War, for instance, has been cited as contributing to the rising spate of conflicts in most parts of Africa, especially, as the rival powers no longer extend military and/or economic support to former client regimes which are now unable to survive unaided (Ibid; Evans and Newnham, 1998; Nguyen, 2005; Richards, 2005). Besides, the end of Super Power rivalry opened up room for expression of long standing conflict and opportunity to address structural causes of conflict. Equally important was the role that aid played at the time which was exploited to maintain friendly regimes in power that propped up states with weak governance institutions. The withdrawal of such superpower support led to the collapse of such states. Another reason adduced to the rising spate of conflicts in Africa is the colonial legacy and post-colonial state building (African Studies Centre et al, opp. Cit). Indeed, colonialism in most parts created artificial borders and unviable social structures that have been and still are prone to ethnic conflict (often leading to full-blown civil wars) in the succeeding colonies. The result,

according to Nguyen (2005), has been a polarisation based on disillusionment and dissatisfaction with the state by the citizenry and the local elites who often exploit the tension for their own personal or group's interest.

Furthermore, the process of globalisation, and its socio-economic dimensions of widening the gap of inequality, has also been seen as a factor adding to the rising spate of conflicts on the continent of Africa, i.e., poverty-provoked conflicts (cf., Tsikata and Seini, 2004; Richards, 2005; African Studies Centre et al, 2003). On the whole, however, the combination of the above factors has brought in its wake a sharp rise of intrastate, as opposed to interstate, conflicts (Wenger and Zimmerman, 2003).

Research problem

Intrastate conflicts, which manifest themselves in either inter-ethnic conflicts (civil wars) or intra-ethnic conflicts such as issues surrounding land ownership, and most importantly about chieftaincy succession disputes (Tsikata and Seini, 2004), have at times resulted in large scale conflicts that engulf the communities that experience them. Some of these conflicts have had serious consequences for some countries. Over the past two decades, the West African sub-region has witnessed major intrastate wars with debilitating consequences. These conflicts nearly engulfed the entire sub-region but for the brave and timely intervention of some member-states of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), through its Ceasefire Monitoring Group (ECOMOG), which was subsequently set up to deal with such violent conflicts and instability (Khobe, 2000; Ero, 2000). ECOWAS' role in conflict prevention, resolution and management, as well as peace restoration and post-conflict reconstruction in the sub-region has been widely acknowledged, especially its role in ending the conflicts in Liberia, Sierra Leone and Guinea-Bissau, and presently its mediating role in La Côte d'Ivoire (cf., Adebajo and Keen, 2007; Hutchful, 1999; Ero, opp. Cit).

However, there are still a few pockets of intra-state conflicts within the sub-region – mainly intra-ethnic conflicts – which have become very difficult and sometimes elusive in trying to find a resolution. Most of these conflicts, due to their limited spread, as a result of their communal nature, seem not to receive the needed attention and intervention from the sub-regional organisation – ECOWAS – in relation to the attention previous civil wars received in the recent past. The seeming lack of interest and/or direct intervention by the ECOWAS Commission may be explained in several ways. In the first place, since such conflicts are mostly intra-ethnic, they seem to be best dealt with by the institutions of the states concerned other than the direct involvement of the Commission in trying to resolve such conflicts.

Furthermore, it can be argued that these intra-ethnic conflicts seem not to have reached a stage in which they pose threatdo not to neighbouring countries or 'constitute threats to international peace and security which could warrant a direct intervention of the sub-regional organisation as a way of stopping them from spiralling further or limiting their spread. Lastly, one could also argue that not until the Commission receives any expressed invitation from a government of a member state experiencing such conflicts to make an intervention, it would be considered as premature, and probably be seen as interference for the Commission to move into any country to try a resolution or mediation of an intra-ethnic conflict.

Conflicts in Ghana

Violent conflicts in any form – especially at the intra-ethnic level – need to be given deserving attention, since they eventually impact on the economic life, environment and development of the communities where such conflicts occur, as lives and properties are often lost in the process. Indeed, Ghana, which has often been seen as a relatively peaceful country in the troubled West African sub-region (Tsikata and Seini, 2004), has had her own share of conflicts, mainly bordering on inter-ethnic and intra-ethnic disputes, especially in the northern part of the country. The nature of

such ethnic conflicts in Ghana has mostly involved one group or a faction trying to alter the status quo which often leads to disputes as the other faction or party resists. In a discussion paper, the District Capacity Building Project (DISCAP, 2002), an NGO based in the Northern part of Ghana, contends that ethnic conflicts in northern Ghana are very cyclical in nature, with "outbreaks of fighting occurring on an almost regular basis", and each of these conflicts has its own unique issues or disputes.

One of such conflicts in the northern part of Ghana which presently has a semblance of becoming cyclical is the Dagbon dispute. The Dagbon dispute, which has led to the loss of many lives and displaced many people, has resulted in a crisis on two separate occasions – in 1969 and 2002 – anytime a particular political tradition finds itself in the seat of government, (cf., Tsikata and Seini, 2004; Albert, 2007; Ladouceur, 1972). Like some of the other conflicts in Ghana, particularly in northern Ghana, the main issue of the Dagbon conflict centres on intra-ethnic succession disputes over the high chieftaincy office of Ya-Naa – Overlord of the Dagbon State – that involves two rival royal families (called Gates) of the same descent. Even though the Dagbon people (Dagombas) had, over time, developed their own comprehensive means of selecting their kings to the Yani skin (Amankwa, 2005, quoted in Albert, 2008), the invasion of state politics into the selection and installation of kings to the Yani skin has contributed to the crises witnessed. Even though the origins of the present succession dispute date back to 1948 (Tsikata and Seini, 2004), it never led to any crisis which recorded fatalities until such time that the dispute became part of state politics, with its high point being the killing of the King on March 27, 2002.

The current Dagbon conflict began when the Gbewaa Palace, which houses the overlord (King) of Dagbon, came under heavy attack during which the King, together with over forty[1] others (mostly his advisors), was killed in a very dastardly manner. The death occurred after three days of continuous fighting which involved

[1] There are two different account of the number of the dead. Whereas the government account pegs it at 30 (Republic of Ghana, 2002a), other independent accounts put it at 43 (Tsikata and Seini, 2004; Boukary-Martinson, 2002; and subsequent media reports)

the exchange of gunshots around the vicinity of the Chief's Palace between March 25 to 27, 2002 (cf. Tsikata and Seini, 2004; Albert 2008; Boukary-Martinson, 2002; Republic of Ghana, 2002a). Even though there were distressed calls made by the King to request for help from the state security forces, none came until after the King had been killed, and a state of emergency was declared in Yendi. It was later to be known that the military vehicle that was meant for rescue would not start because of a weak battery (Republic of Ghana, 2002a)[2]. More so, even when military assistance eventually arrived at the scene, they realised that 'they had come with the wrong military gear and logistics' meant to counter the ongoing fights between the disputants (ibid).

Thus, given the fact that the Dagbon chieftaincy dispute seems to be perpetuated by state politics and thus risks becoming cyclical, the present stage of mediation being brokered by the Committee of Eminent Kings offers a clear opportunity for the ECOWAS Commission, as the sub-regional body, to use its good offices in ending the conflict for good. This has become imperative as the capacity of the state seems unable to resolve the present dispute due to perceived complicity, and thus would require a neutral and impartial outsider such as the ECOWAS, which has a wealth of experience in conflict management and resolution, to step in and help in the final resolution, which is presently in a stalemate.

Hypothesis/assumption of work

This work is premised on the assumption that the inability of the state to successfully broker a peace deal between the disputants of the Dagbon conflict emanates from the perceived government complicity by one of the disputants. From the very beginning of the conflicts, which saw the killing of Ya-Naa Yakubu Andani II, the Andani Royal Gate (the faction which suffered the loss) has not stopped pointing accusing fingers at the government and its functionaries as having prior

[2] See detail account in session three of this work

knowledge and thus a hand in the dastardly act of regicide on March 27, 2002 (cf. the Press Conference by the Andani Gate, January 9, 2003).

The perception by the Andani Royal Gate of the government's hand in the act is further heightened by the fact that the very first of such crises which took place in 1969, occurred when the same Danquah-Busia political tradition, which is closely aligned with the other disputant – the Abudu Royal Gate – was in power (Tsikata and Seini: 36; Laddouceur, 1972). This perception is so ingrained so much that it does not make the government seem an honest broker of peace, a fact the President himself admitted to when, on a visit to the Northern region, he "expressed regret that the murder of the Ya-Naa has sown mistrust between him (the President) and some of his Dagomba friends" (Myjoyonline, April 29, 2007).

Thus, the nature of such a perception by the faction makes any mediation efforts very difficult to achieve, especially as state institutions which are controlled by the same government are being used for the resolution of the conflict. This situation makes it extremely difficult in breaking the present stalemate. This therefore calls for a third party that could be seen as very impartial, adequately resourced and well versed in conflict mediation and resolution, which would be capable of securing the trust and cooperation of both disputants (Bercovitch and Lee, 2001; Bercovitch, 1996). It is in this regard that ECOWAS could play a major role such as making its good offices available to serve as an international guarantor to help break the present stalemate and secure a resolution of the conflict.

Methodology and organisation of work

The work is constructed largely through the use of secondary materials such as data, published articles and books, media reports and accounts, public official government documents, as well as official reports of commissions and mediation teams set up as part of efforts in the resolution of the dispute and other relevant documents of the ECOWAS Commission. Sources of materials also include certain unpublished

documents by some NGOs, government ministries, departments and agencies and individuals (some of which are confidential). This therefore impacts heavily on the organisation of the work, which consists of five chapters. The first chapter, which is the introductory part, consists of the introduction, problem statement, hypothesis and methodology.

The second chapter sets out the theoretical framework and reviews some of the existing literature relevant to the work. This is followed by the third chapter which deals with the issues involved in the Dagbon conflict. In this section an attempt is made to recap the historical background to the causes of the dispute, and efforts made to have the dispute resolved in order to avoid its recurrence. In doing this a critical examination is given to the official reports of the Wuaku Commission, the government's White Paper on the report, as well as the mediation efforts by the Eminent Kings in trying to resolve the dispute through a customary and traditional means. This same section looks at the deadlock of the resolution and the security challenges and developmental implications they have for the Dagbon state.

Chapter four examines the institutional structures and capacities for responding to conflicts in Ghana. In doing this the work examines existing national infrastructure in Ghana, and conflict management mechanisms of ECOWAS and their capacity in responding to intra-ethnic and inter-ethnic conflicts in member states. The preceding four chapters form the basis of our conclusions and recommendations, which constitute the final and fifth chapter.

CHAPTER 2

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK & LITERATURE REVIEW

Theoretical framework

Mediation has often been adopted as an effective diplomatic tool in conflict management and resolution. According to William Zartman (2000), "over half of the negotiated solutions in internal and ethnic conflicts during the twentieth century were achieved through mediation that involved third parties." Thus, mediation is seen as one of the several tools, and probably the major one, used in the prevention and management of conflicts. Since mediation is viewed as a placatory approach to conflict resolution and management, one effective feature of any successful mediation hinges on the total cooperation and willingness of the disputants to reaching a settlement. In this manner, any lack of cooperation or unwillingness on the part of any of the disputants in mediation or the process of negotiation would usually end up in a deadlock.

Thus, the effectiveness of the use of mediation as a tool in dealing with conflict management and resolution rests on certain theories. For this work, game theory – the Prisoner's Dilemma – is used to explain the present stalemate of the Dagbon conflict and the way forward, since the current stalemate and the seeming non-cooperative attitude from the disputants is exemplified by the Prisoner's Dilemma.

The Prisoner's Dilemma

The formulation of the prisoner's dilemma, developed from game theory, is usually credited to the mathematician Albert Tucker (Axelrod, 1984). Ever since his introduction of the game, it has become a popular tool used by the social sciences, as well as the biological sciences in explaining human behaviour under certain

circumstances. It is so called prisoner's dilemma because the originator of the idea shrewdly uses two prisoners who have both committed a crime, but each has a choice of either serving the minimum sentence, the maximum sentence, or not serving any prison term at all. Under the scenario both prisoners are told the same thing by the law enforcers, i.e., the police:

- If both prisoners cooperate with the law enforcers by confessing (C,C), they will both get a reward (R,R) of lesser sentence – minimum sentence.
- If neither confesses (D,D), the police will still manage to pin part of the crime on them, and they will both get punished (P,P) with higher sentences.
- However, if one of them cooperate by confessing and the other defects (C,D), the one that cooperates gets a deal with the police and gets set free (T) while the betrayed party (B), because he defects, goes to jail for the maximum years. The above scenario is explained by a table below:

		Prisoner 1	
		C	**D**
Prisoner 2	**C**	**R,R**	**B,T**
	D	**T,B**	**P,P**

<u>Table 2.1</u>: Prisoners Dilemma

The idea is that if one of the prisoners cooperates by confessing as a result of the temptation (T) of being freed, the other one who defects gets betrayed (B) and thus severely punished. That is, whereas one wins the other loses, creating a zero-sum situation. On the other hand, both would be rewarded (R,R) with minimum sentences for cooperating. Thus, by cooperating, the gain is higher for both, creating a win-win situation. However, if they defect, they both get punished (P,P).

The Dagbon dispute in game theory – the Prisoner's Dilemma puzzle

The Prisoner's Dilemma actually typifies the current stage of the Dagbon conflict where mediation efforts seem to have come to a stalemate as a result of a dilemma that both disputants find themselves in, regarding whether to cooperate with or renege on the peace deal brokered by the Committee of Eminent Kings. In this scenario mutual cooperation which would have ended the conflict seems to be missing, as suspicion and mistrust rather hold sway.

The ongoing mediation of the Dagbon conflict by the Committee of Eminent Kings seems to have reached a deadlock as a result of disagreements on the Final Peace Agreement by both disputants on one of the key recommendations. Clause 'C' of the Agreement partly reads:

> "… The Bolin-Lana as Regent of Naa Mahamdu Abdulai IV shall enter the old Gbewaa Palace as regent of his father and not as regent of Dagbon. His stay at the old palace shall commence on 22 December 2007 and terminate on 17 January 2008. Entry into the palace takes place only upon a letter to that effect from the Eminent Kings addressed to the Regional Security Council (REGSEC) to enable the REGSEC grant him access to the old palace, and upon the submission by the Abdulai family of a funeral programme and approval by the Eminent Kings. During this period he shall perform all ceremonies necessary for the funeral of his father ONLY …" (Committee of Eminent Kings, 2007)[3].

The Abudu family responded to the Final Peace Agreement of the Committee in a press conference rejecting the recommendations regarding the final funeral rites of Naa Mahamadu IV (Abudu Royal Family, May 29, 2008). Their contention was that under no circumstances should the funeral rites be held in the old Gbewaa Palace. Instead they would prefer the funeral taking place in the newly built Palace.

[3] Detailed account is discussed in **Section Three** below

In their view there is only one Palace in Dagbon, and therefore to have the funeral done in any other place (the old Palace) other than in the new and substantive Palace of the Dagbon people would amount to an "aberration of the Dagbon culture" (ibid).

The dilemma of the Andani family, on the other hand, is fuelled by an apprehension that the Abudu Gate is trying to be mischievous and that once it occupies the Palace for the final funeral rites of late Naa Mahamadu IV, it would sieze the opportunity to install a successor since the position is presently vacant (Republic of Ghana, 2002a). Besides, since in the Dagbon custom and tradition, dethronement of a Ya-Naa is 'unknown', the Andani Gate feels that should the Abudu Gate decide to install a Ya-Naa, such a person cannot be dethroned (cf. Tsikata and Seini, 2004; Ladouceur, 1972). This apprehension is further informed by the perceived state support the Abudu Gate enjoys from the ruling government. Even though the Final Peace Accord by the Committee of the Eminent Kings proposes around-the-clock security presence to enforce and ensure that the Abudus, whilst occupying the Gbewaa Palace for the funeral rites, would abide by the terms and not install their own Ya-Naa, the recent past events where the security forces have been seen by the Andanis as collaborating with the Abudus, make them feel uncertain that their royal cousins would abide by the tenets of the Peace Deal.

Most importantly, for the Abudu family to be allowed access to the new Gbewaa Palace would mean the Andani family temporarily vacating the Palace to make way for the funeral (Albert, 2008). Thus, the Andani Gate seems to have misgivings over the critical transition period between when the Abudu Gate would be allowed access to the Gbewaa Palace for the performance of the final funeral rites of the late Naa Mahamadu IV and the satisfactorily implementing the Peace Deal during the customary performance of the funeral.[4]

The above account perfectly fits into the prisoner's dilemma puzzle. For instance, whereas a mutual cooperation between the two disputants, as indicated in

[4] Even though the 'Final Peace Agreement gave specific dates for the performance of the funeral rite (from 22 December 2007 to 17 January 2008), the funeral rite had still not been honoured as at the time this work was being presented in August 2008.

the table below, would ensure a win-win (R,R) pay-off for both, the present total rejection (double defection) of the agreement by both parties rather ensures that they both get the maximum punishment (P,P), and thus leads to the present deadlock.

		THE ABUDU GATE/ FAMILY	
		Cooperate	**Defect**
THE ANDANI GATE/FAMILY	**Cooperate**	**R,R (win-win)**	**B,T (zero-sum game)**
	Defect	**B,T (zero-sum game)**	**P,P (Stalemate)**

Table 2.2: Prisoners' Dilemma - the Andanis and the Abudus

To be able to break this deadlock and achieve a lasting solution would mean an involvement of a third party that would be seen entirely as an outsider, impartial and trustworthy. This third party would (1) act to alleviate any fears of possible a doublecross on the part of any disputant in the course of implementation of the agreement; (2) to help dispel any misgivings being entertained by any of the disputants during the critical transition period of the Peace Agreement and its implementation; and (3) to reassure both disputants of an existing dependable arrangement so as to ensure that any concessions given up now would be exchanged for a predictable future (Cohen, 2001). This would ensure a movement from double defection (P,P) – a stalemate – into a double cooperation (R,R) – a win-win situation – which would ensure a successful resolution of the present conflict.

Thus the theory that explains the current impasse between the disputants can be leveraged in finding a solution to the deadlock. The game theory therefore presents a solution in coming out of the present quagmire in which both disputants find themselves in the implementation of the recommendations of the Final Peace Agreement.

Literature review

Indeed, a lot has been written, discussed and said about the Dagbon Crisis, since the regicide took place on March 27, 2002, to the point that the issue seems to have been over-flogged, especially in the media. This notwithstanding, the issue seems not to have been subjected to serious academic discourse in trying to find means of going about the current impasse in coming up with a lasting solution. Usually whenever the Dagbon conflict has been mentioned in most academic works, they have either been mentioned in passing or been lumped together and discussed as part of other conflicts in Northern Ghana (cf., Kusimi, J., et al, 2006; Lund, C., 2003).

Nonetheless, there are some works that have been specifically focused on the Dagbon disputes. Ladouceur (1972), for instance, discusses in his article "The Yendi Chieftaincy Dispute and Ghanaian Politics" the first ever crisis in the post-independence Dagbon Kingdom in 1969 which came about as a result of chieftaincy succession dispute between the two royal families during which, similar to the recent crisis, at least 23 people died and over forty got injured in the melee (p.97). Ladouceur takes a deep look into the sources of the conflict and the involvement of politicians. He traces the sources to the colonial times and the immediate post-independence era. Ladouceur, for instance, sees the succession dispute that led to the conflict between the two contending royal families as a result of a clash of political interests or political expediency, on one hand, and traditional practices of a people who were hitherto comfortable with their rotational succession to the skin (throne) of their kingdom, on the other hand. Ladouceur's article is very useful for this work

as it gives a background to the current conflict and thus serves as a rich source of historical context within which the ongoing conflict can rightly be located.

In their publication, Tsikata and Seini (2004) also look into much detail the impact of identities and horizontal inequalities on conflicts in Ghana. The focus of their work is on the general causes of conflicts in Ghana from 1990 – 2004, which touches on several forms of conflicts. Among the different forms of conflicts identified in their work include inter-ethnic conflicts; intra-ethnic disputes; religious disputes within same faiths and between different faiths; political conflicts; industrial conflicts between workers and employers; as well as violent conflicts emanating from sports.

Thus Tsikata and Seini provide an account of how spatial inequalities in Ghana have contributed to the instances of instability and violence. In doing this however, several instances and cases of conflicts are used to find their correlation with either inequalities or identities. The Dagbon conflict is used as one of the many different types of conflicts in their work. Their work was however done during the peak of the Dagbon conflict, and as a result it fails to capture the entire conflict management and resolution processes that were subsequently put in place by the government, such as the Mediation Committee of the three Eminent Kings. This therefore makes the case study on the Dagbon conflict in their work inconclusive. Nevertheless, their work gives a very good academic overview of different kinds of conflicts in Ghana in general, and also about the Dagbon crisis in particular. Their study thus becomes very useful to this present work as it offers a very good source of academic material and reference.

In his article, "From 'Owo Crisis' to 'Dagbon Dispute' – Lessons in the Politicisation of Chieftaincy Disputes in Modern Nigeria and Ghana", Albert (2008) makes a comparative analysis of two separate chieftaincy succession disputes in Nigeria and Ghana, and brings out the similarities regarding the political influence and interferences of the ruling class and political elites in the two different societies. He refers to such interferences as "unhealthy third-party intervention" (p.49). Albert

traces the present chieftaincy succession disputes to the British colonial instituted policy of indirect rule which sought to make the chiefs more or less pawns as a way of having a direct control of their subjects. Albert contends that by the policy of indirect rule, the colonial authorities directly meddled in the traditional chieftaincy institution to the point of imposing their kind of traditional rulers on the people and deposing, in some instances deporting, certain chiefs considered as unfriendly or adversarial to the colonial authorities. Thus with the indirect rule system, the colonial authorities arrogated to themselves the power to make and unmake chiefs, virtually reducing the institution of chieftaincy in Ghana and Nigeria to the levels that they had absolute control over.

Albert contends further that after the colonial authorities had laid the foundation of subordinating the traditional rulers, the post-independence governments of both Ghana and Nigeria continued in the manipulation "through the powers to appoint, discipline and reward these chiefs" (p.49). He thinks that the direct meddling in chieftaincy disputes in partisan ways has contributed in no small measure to the intractability of the present disputes and crisis in the chieftaincy institution. Albert's work thus draws on the instances of the Owo crisis in Nigeria and the Dagbon dispute in Ghana where political interferences by the elites were the causes of the unending conflicts in the two communities discussed. Even though his work basically looks at the similarities between the two case studies – Owo Crisis and Dagbon Disputes – regarding the politicisation of the conflicts, he gives very good historical underpinnings to the present Dagbon conflict and thus makes his article a valuable source of reference for this work.

This paper however takes further the works of the various authors reviewed above by looking at how the Dagbon conflict could be resolved for good. The approach is to look beyond the State which seems to lack the internal capacity to deal with the conflict since most efforts that have been expended on the conflict so far have been tainted with politics. Issahaku (2005), for instance, thinks that "... all previous efforts toward peace in Dagbon, including those carved by governments,

were aimed at appeasing one of the rival Gates at the very expense of the other Gate and to the detriment of achieving real peace in Dagbon" (unpublished). This work thus seeks to define and examine a role that the ECOWAS Commission can play in ending the conflict.

CHAPTER 3

THE DAGBON CONFLICT IN PERSPECTIVE

Historical background of the Dagbon conflict

The Dagbon people (referred to as Dagombas) constitute the single largest ethnic group in Northern Ghana, with Yendi (the seat of the Kingdom) as its traditional capital (Ladouceur, 1972; Tsikata and Seini, 2004; Albert, 2008; Republic of Ghana, 2002a). Tamale, which is part of the Dagbon traditional area, is the capital of the Northern Region of Ghana. The paramount chief of the Dagombas is called Ya-Naa[5]. Under him are three principal divisional chiefs – Karaga Lana, Mion Lana, and Savelugu Naa - anyone of whom is capable of ascending to the higher Yani [Ya-Naa] skin (Brukum, 2004). These divisional chiefs also have under them other sub-chiefs.[6]

The Dagombas are known to be very "strongly attached to the institution of chieftaincy", which virtually account for the "intensity with which conflicts over chieftaincy are carried out" (Ladouceur, 1972; Tsikata and Seini, 2004). Thus between the two royal gates, it is actually considered disgraceful to allow a chieftaincy to pass away or be lost to the other gate, especially when it is one's turn to occupy the skin. 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[7]. This system arose in pre-colonial times following the death of Ya-Naa Yakubu I (Albert, 2008) who had two sons with different mothers. On his death it was agreed that the elder son, Abudulai (1849-1876), succeeded him, but on the understanding

[5] A note on terminology: 'Na' means Chief/Overlord/King; a chieftaincy in most part of Northern Ghana, including Dagbon, is known as 'skin', basically because chiefs sit on animal skins (as symbol of authority), therefore Chiefs are enskinned; a 'Gate' refers to a royal/ruling family through which the Ya-Naas are selected from to occupy the 'Nam' Skin; the area inhabited by the Dagombas (inhabitants) is known as Dagbon; 'Nam' is the name of the Skin occupied by the Ya-Naa

[6] See **Appendix 3** for the traditional hierarchy of the Dagbon Kingdom

[7] Natural death in this instance means death that occurs not through murder or assassination, as it is the present case. This was made to ensure that one does not fasten the death of the incumbent to ensure his turn of office

that the younger son, Andani (1876-1899), would succeed Abudulai on his death. However, a problem arose on the death of Naa Andani I in 1899 regarding whether he should be succeeded by his son or the son of his late elder brother Abudulai (ibid.).

Consequently, a decision was taken that the son of Abudulai be made to succeed Ya-Naa Andani I, and this subsequently started the rotational system amongst the two ruling/royal houses – the Abudu and the Andani families. 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. This subsequently, however, was to become the loophole that was exploited by the ruling class and the Dagomba elites and handed them the opportunity to meddle in the selection of a successor. According to Tsikata and Seini (2004) the system had "no agreement over who has the right to select a successor" and moreover, which particular act in the 'enskinment' process makes one a Ya-Naa (cf. Ladouceur, 1972).

The smooth rotation between the two gates continued until 1948 when a problem arose regarding who had the right to succeed the skin, after the death of Ya-Naa Mahama II, who was from the Andani Gate. The wrangling that ensued afterwards has been rightly pinned down as constituting the origins of the present succession dispute, which eventually led to the recent March 2002 regicide and the subsequent conflict and its management (Tsikata and Seini, 2004; Ladouceur, 1972; Ferguson and Wilks, 1970; Albert, 2008). Indeed, the problem began when the selection process which was rested in the hands of four soothsayers headed by an elder called Kuga Na was replaced with an eleven-member selection committee in 1948. Following the death of Ya-Naa Mahama II, his son who became the Regent, put himself forward to succeed him, clearly in violation of the established alternating system of succession. He failed in his bid, however, and eventually became the Mion Lana (a divisional chief) instead. Subsequently, Ya-Naa Mahama III, from the Abudu family, was rather made the King of Dagbon in 1948.

On the death of Naa Mahama III in 1954, the Mion Lana from the other gate (Andani) once again put forward his candidature for the skin. Indeed, by the rotational system of succession it was the turn of an Andani to occupy the skin. This did not turn out to be, as the Abudu family, through the influence of the local elites and the eleven-member selection committee, managed to install the son of the deceased Ya-Naa Mahama III to succeed his father as Ya-Naa Abudulai III in March 1954. This action was in clear violation of the established succession by rotation system (Albert, 2008; Ladouceur, 1972; Tsikata and Seini, 2004). This became possible as the previously established traditional system of selecting a Ya-Naa through soothsaying (Ladouceur, 1972) was replaced by a committee of eleven in the 1948 which was now given the power to select a successor to the Yani skin (Albert, 2008). The committee was set up by the educated elites in Dagbon, most of whom came from the two royal families. The selection and subsequent installation of Ya-Naa Abudulai III as a successor by the committee held, even though it violated the established alternating system of succession, but the ensuing conflict continued up until the independence of Ghana in 1957.

However, the immediate period prior to Ghana's independence saw an intense political environment as the nation was at the time being prepared for independence and for that matter a national government had to be in place prior to said independence from the British government. The political campaign saw a sharp division between some of the prominent spokespersons and political figures of the two gates taking sides. Whereas some prominent Andani family members were in support of Nkrumah's Convention Peoples Party (CPP) in the 1954 elections, some prominent figures within the Abudu Gate, including the Ya-Naa Abudulai III, were anti-CPP and openly campaigned against the CPP. The CPP eventually won the election and thus subsequently formed the post-independence government (Ladouceur, 1972).

Post-independence Yendi disputes

Shortly after independence in 1957, having openly supported the CPP government and contributed to its success in the election, the Andani family, using its newly acquired political influence, pressurised the government to have Ya-Naa Abudulai III dethroned and in his place have the Mion Lana Andani, the head of the Andani family, installed (Tsikata and Seini, 2004; Ladouceur, 1972). The Andani family elites in the government accused the Ya-Naa of having a deformity and therefore not fit for the position as King of Dagbon. He was further accused of not being properly installed by the custodians of the regalia; that he had not held one of the three gate skins – Mion, Savelugu, and Karaga[8] - from which paramount chiefs were traditionally chosen. Although some of the issues raised by the Andani family on the eligibility of Naa Abudulai III could be found to be cogent, all of them ran counter to a long-standing Dagbon tradition that a Ya-Naa cannot be destooled, once installed (ibid). Besides, President Nkrumah was on the other hand persuaded by other members of his cabinet from northern Ghana against any decision to have Ya-Naa Abudulai III deposed, since in their estimation any such move, apart from spelling political doom for the party could also lead to a civil war in northern Ghana (ibid).

In response to the appeals and pressures from both gates, President Nkrumah in 1960 called for a meeting involving all Dagomba chiefs in the country's capital, Accra, where he sought to find a solution that would be satisfactory to both sides. The resolution that the meeting agreed upon culminated in a form of a Legislative Instrument, L.I. 59, which sought to allow the incumbent chief to finish his term. Instead a clause in the L.I. 59 proposed that upon the death of the incumbent, the skin would revert to the Andani Gate to allow for the customary rotation of succession to proceed. However, having regard to the fact that the Abudu Gate had twice in succession occupied the skin, another clause was introduced in the L.I. 59 to allow the Andani Gate to also occupy the skin twice in succession starting from the death of the incumbent Ya-Naa Abudulai III (who was from the Abudu Gate), after

[8] See **Appendix 3** for the Dagbon Traditional chieftaincy hierarchy

which the established alternating system would resume and proceed in its normal way (Ladouceur, 1972: 100-106).

The L.I. 59 was supposed to have been a perfect peace deal as both gates agreed to its contents. However, events in the middle to late 1960s changed everything and the conflict resumed thenceforth. President Nkrumah's government was overthrown through a coup d'état in 1966, and on September 14, 1967, Ya-Naa Abudulai III passed away. His nineteen year old son, who became the Regent, immediately put forward his candidacy to become the next Ya-Naa. However, the Mion Lana Andani, who in 1954 lost the contest to Naa Abudulai III, was selected to the skin as the Ya-Naa by the kingmakers (Tsikata and Seini, 2004). This did not seem to have found favour with the Abudu Gate. Barely a week later, after Ya-Naa Andani had been selected, fourteen senior chiefs, including eight of the eleven-member selection committee who were pro-Abudulai, as well as the Abudu family, protested to the government that they rather selected the young Gbon Lana[9] (Regent) Mahamadu, and not Mion Lana Andani as the Ya-Naa. Based on the protest the junta government revoked the L.I. 59 by the previous government and in December 1968 set up a Committee (Mate-Kole Committee) with a mandate to inquire into the customary procedures for selecting and enskinning a Ya-Naa (Tsikata and Seini, 2004; Albert, 2008; Ladouceur, 1972).

In the course of the Committee's work, the incumbent King, Ya-Naa Andani III died on March 14, 1969, and his son, Yakubu Andani became the Regent (Gbon Lana). It was also at this time that Ghana was quickly returning to a civilian rule after the 1966 coup that overthrew Nkrumah's government. Interestingly, however, the yet to be resolved chieftaincy dispute in Yendi became one of the key electoral campaign issues, thus sharply dividing the two gates, each supporting one or the other political party (Ladouceur, 1972). The Progress Party, led by K. A. Busia, which the Abudu Gate supported, won the elections. Just a day after Dr. Busia became Prime Minister, the Mate-Kole Committee's report was made public. Among the

[9] The Gbonlana is usually the eldest son of the deceased chief who becomes the Regent on the death of the father

Committee's findings was that the "enskinment of the Mion Lana (Andani) as Ya-Naa was repugnant to Dagbon custom" and thus declared the installation null and void. It rather recommended the immediate installation of the Gbon Lana Mahamadu Abudulai (from the Abudu Gate) as the rightful Ya-Naa (Ladoucuer, 1972; Albert, 2008; Tsikata and Seini, 2004). Consequently, the Andani family who were still occupying the Palace to enable them perform the funeral of Ya-Naa Andani III, were forcibly ejected by the military, and the new King installed. In the melee, many lives were lost and several others injured and displaced. According to Ladouceur (1972), "... there were neither apologies nor any regrets on the part of the government for the killings" believed to have been caused by the military. Indeed, the Busia government rather went a step further to name the new, and rather young, King (Naa Mahamdu Abudulai IV) as a member of Council of State[10], in October 1969 (ibid).

The issue never ended with the installation of the new king. Indeed, the Andani family appealed to the Progress Party government to be granted permission to perform the funeral rites of Ya-Naa Andani III, but was refused. The grumbling continued until there was a change of government in 1972. The Andani family pressed ahead with their petition, and the new government also set up yet another committee (Ollenu Committee) to, among others, look into the correct custom and customary procedure in the selection and enskinment of a Ya-Naa (Tsikata and Seini, 2004). Among the Committee's findings, which were accepted by the government, were that the appointment of Ya-Naa Andani III was justified and rather nullified the enskinment of Mahamdu Abudulai IV. By extension, this decision seemed to have re-instituted the L.I. 59 established by the Nkrumah government in 1960. Subsequently, Yakubu Andani, who had become the Regent after the death of his father, was nominated and enskinned as the new Ya-Naa (ibid).

It is interesting to note at this juncture that anytime that a committee was set up it was charged to look into the procedures for installing one as a Ya-Naa. This

[10] A constitutionally established body responsible for advising the Prime Minister

seems to be the case because, as indicated earlier, there seems not to be any agreement regarding who has the right in selecting a successor to the skin, and which of the acts in the installation process makes one a Ya-Naa (Ladouceur, 1972; Tsikata and Seini, 2004), thus allowing for manipulation by the elites and the resultant perpetuation of the conflict. In this manner, as governments changed, the dispute kept resurrecting. However, after the recommendations of the Ollenu Committee, the matter was finally challenged at the courts for a determination. The Supreme Court in 1986 ruled by six to one majority to uphold the rotational system of ascension to the skin, thus "elevating the rotational system to the status of a national law" (Tsikata and Seini, 2004; Republic of Ghana, 2002a).

Mahamadu Abudulai IV of the Abudu Gate, who had sought determination of the dispute in the courts passed away in 1988. The Abudu Gate sought permission to have his funeral organised at the Gbewaa Palace where the sitting King was. This request was turned down, since accepting it meant that the sitting King, Ya-Naa Yakubu Andani II, would have to temporarily vacate the palace to make way for the Abudu Gate to perform the funeral rites. The grumbling continued until the pro-Abudu New Patriotic Party (incidentally the successor to the Progress Party of 1969) came to power in January 7, 2001. Emboldened by this new event, the Abudu Gate saw it as an opportunity to revisit the issue again by demanding the performance of the final funeral rites of Naa Mahamadu IV (Tsikata and Seini, 2004). In March 2002, a crisis emerged after the authority of the Ya-Naa was challenged by the Abudu Gate (Republic of Ghana, 2002a). In the event, Ya-Naa Yakubu Andani II and over forty others, mainly his advisors, were murdered in cold blood on March 27, 2002, and the Palace razed during three days of intense fighting involving the two Gates. It is worth noting that in all cases that the dispute had ended up in crisis with deaths and destruction of properties – Dagbon Crises I and II - such events had happened under the rule of a particular political tradition in Ghana, thus making the Dagbon crisis appear cyclical in its outlook.

Management of the Dagbon Conflict and the measures so far taken

Management of the Dagbon conflict, since its genesis in the 1940s, seems to have been through ad-hoc measures. As governments changed and the dispute recurred, committees were rather set up, which findings and recommendations often ended up "appeasing one of the rival gates at the very expense of the other and to the detriment of achieving real peace in Dagbon" (Issahaku, 2005), depending on which side the government of the day sees as an ally. This view is similarly shared by Brukum (1995) who, for instance believes that such recurrence can be linked to ineptitude and open bias of incumbent governments and some coercive state agencies.

Thus, rather than allowing established state institutions and structures to deal with the dispute impartially, committees with politically tainted biases are set up to investigate the causes and come up with resolutions. This has therefore contributed to its continuation. Ninsin (1995), for instance, sees the lack of clear institutional infrastructures within the state for the resolution of such conflicts whenever they come up as leading to their perpetuation and recurrence. The only exception was when the courts were resorted to its settlement during which the Supreme Court of the land, in 1986, upheld the alternating system as the best way out. It is therefore of no surprise when after the recent crisis the government set up a commission of enquiry (the Wuaku Commission, chaired by a retired supreme court judge) to investigate the conflict, identify the perpetrators, and make recommendations (Republic of Ghana, 2002a). In furtherance to the establishment of the commission, the government set up a Committee of Eminent Kings headed by the Asantehene (the Ashanti King) to find customary and traditional solution to the aged-old dispute.

The Wuaku Commission

After the death of Ya-Naa Yakubu Andani II, King of Dagbon, on March 27, 2002, the President, acting under the 1992 Constitution of the Republic of Ghana, declared a

state of emergency. The President followed it up on April 25, 2002 with a Constitutional Instrument No. C.I. 36, 2002 which set up the Wuaku Commission, mandated to investigate the events in Yendi leading to the regicide. The commission was also expected to identify the perpetrators and to make appropriate recommendations to the President (Republic of Ghana, 2002a). The commission, which began sitting on May 29, 2002, submitted its report to the President on November 6, 2002.

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. Even though the source of the conflict is traceable to the events of 1948 and thereafter, as has been shown earlier, the commission rather found the non-observance of the customary funeral ceremony of the late Ya-Naa Mahamadu IV by the Abudu Gate as the origin of the March 2002 mayhem (Republic of Ghana, 2002:63). 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 *Eid-ul-Adha* festivals, previously held solely under the auspices of the Ya-Naa - was seen by the Andani family as an affront to the authority of the King, which heightened tension and consequently led to the crisis. Reminiscent of the 1969 installation of Ya-Naa Mahamadu Abudulai IV where the ctate security apparatus provided full protection for the occasion, the Gbon Lana of the Abudu Gate in 2002 similarly, and with ease, secured the protection of ctate security to help celebrate both the Bugum (fire) and the *Eid-ul-Adha* festivals. The commission further saw the attack on an Adani youth by the Abudu youths on March 25, 2002 as the last incident that ignited the crisis, as the ensuing retaliation from the Andani youths for the attack of their clansman led to the mayhem.

The commission actually acknowledged that the Abudu Gate is a pro-Busia/Danquah political tradition from which both the Progress Party of 1969 and

the present ruling New Patriotic Party (NPP) government emerged (ibid: 65), and it was during their eras the two separate Dagbon crises – September 1969 and March 2002 - occurred. It is therefore of little surprise that soon after the NPP government assumed the reign of power, the Abudu Gate began contesting the authority of the sitting Ya-Naa with a view of unilaterally (*but with tacit support from the ruling government*) controlling certain festivals and ceremonies such as the traditional *Bugum* (fire) and *Eid-ul-Adha* festivals. The report found that events surrounding the concurrent celebration of the *Eid-ul-Adha* by both gates in February 2002 actually escalated the dispute, as they both "started piling up arms and ammunitions, and trained their warriors" in preparation for the impending *Bugum* (fire) festival.

The security situation in the traditional area at the time compelled the government to put off the festival and instead imposed a dusk to dawn curfew on Yendi from March 20-26, 2002. This action by the government was met with mixed reactions from the two gates. The Abudu family, for instance, saw the action as a victory and thus were happy that they had succeeded in scuttling the Ya-Naa's efforts in celebrating the annual traditional fire festival. The Andani family, on the other hand, saw it that their authority had been eroded by the pro-Abudu government. But the situation got worse on March 24, 2002, when the regional minister who was absent when the curfew was originally imposed on Yendi, on his return reversed the curfew. In the ensuing jubilation by the Andani youths for the lifting of the curfew the Abudu youths attacked them, sparking off the three day fight during which the king and others were murdered.

Based on its findings, the commission absolved some government officials who had been accused of complicity in the crisis by the Andani family, and also identified some people as perpetrators of the killings. Accordingly, the commission made some recommendations to the government. Among the recommendations included the trial for murder of some identified Abudu family members who were seen with the severed head and limbs of the slain king, as well as those seen setting his remains ablaze. The commission also recommended actions against certain

identified public officials and institutions whose role contributed to the crisis. One of such recommendation was a sanction of demotion in rank against the area manager of the state's telecommunication company whose office did little to restore the telephone lines which strangely went dead during the heat of the crisis in Yendi, but only got restored soon after the death of the King (Republic of Ghana, 2002:86).

It further recommended to government to reprimand the military commanders in the Yendi area for failing, in time, to either prevent or intervene in the crisis. The commission saw their response to the crisis as very lackadaisical. It further recommended for the final funeral rite of the former Ya-Naa Mahamadu Abudulai IV, who died in 1988, to be performed, *"as a matter of urgency and in accordance with Dagbon traditional custom"* (ibid: 88).

Government response to the commission's report

In a response to the commission's report, the government on December 23, 2002 issued a white paper accepting the general findings and most of the recommendations made by the commission. The government accepted the recommendation of the commission absolving key government officials – the Minster for the Interior, the National Security Advisor, and a security operative working with the national security outfit – who had been accused of direct complicity. The government, however, did not find favour with the commission's recommendation made on one lawyer Ibrahim Mahama, an Andani and the legal advisor to the late king, whom the commission found as obstructing its work and thus suggested that his conduct be reported to the General Legal Council for action. The government in the white paper indicated that Ibrahim Mahama's conduct should rather be further investigated by the police for appropriate legal action to be taken (Republic of Ghana, 2002b). In addition, the commission's recommendation that the regional minister, whose actions of reversing the curfew led to the crisis be charged for criminal negligence was rejected by the government and instead proposed a reprimand.

Furthermore, the government accepted a recommendation by the commission to prosecute the people found to have killed the Ya-Naa and the two main people who were seen with the severed head and limbs of the king were actually put on trial. However, the two were later acquitted and discharged by an Accra High Court for lack of evidence by the state prosecution team (*Ghana News Agency*, July 24, 2003)[11]. Ever since the discharge of the two main suspects, who were seen with the severed head and other limbs of the slain king in addition to those seen setting the corpse ablaze, there have been constant and several petitions to the government mainly from the Andani Gate, the children and widows of the deceased King to have the killers arrested and faced the law (*the Daily Graphic,* April 12, 2006; *Ghanaweb,* November 29, 2007*)*, thus fuelling the suspicion of government's conspiracy and complicity.

The government, on one hand, has maintained that the discharge of the two suspects did not signify the end of the case as the police have still been "hunting for the killers" (*The Heritage*, October 14, 2004). Interestingly, the President believes that it was becoming difficult for the perpetrators to be found and thus has been "... waiting for the time when God in his wisdom would expose those who committed the crime" (*Myjoyonline*, April 29, 2007), effectively sounding an end to any police hunt for the killers.

The mediation efforts of the eminent kings

As part of efforts to find a resolution for the Dagbon dispute and the causes leading to the crisis, the President, acting under his executive powers further constituted a Committee of Eminent Kings, under the chair of the Asantehene Otumfuo Osei Tutu II, to primarily look into the traditional issues relating to the conflict and to help find customary and traditional solutions to the Dagbon dispute. The committee's work involved trying to get the two disputants to agree to come to table and find common

[11] It is worth noting that the Defence Lawyer of the accused was the ruling NPP Regional Chairman for Brong Ahafo, and is presently a Minister of State in the Interior Ministry

ground. These efforts eventually led to what became known as the "Roadmap to Peace" which came into effect on March 30, 2006 (Committee of Eminent Chiefs, 2006). The acceptance of the "Roadmap to Peace," that was achieved with the support of other partners such as the United Nations (which intervened as a credible third party), led to the recognition by both disputing parties to agree to work towards a lasting peace. It further paved way for the Andani Gate to agree to bury the remains of the late Ya-Naa Yakubu Andani II, on April 10, 2006 (Albert, 2008).

With the acceptance of the "Roadmap to Peace," members of the Andani Gate who were initially unwilling to take part in any dialogue (Bombande, 2007) ultimately agreed to be part. Their involvement in the process thus led to extensive discussions and consultations with both disputants that eventually gave birth to the "Final Peace Agreement" brokered by the Committee of Eminent Chiefs, which was signed and released on November 18, 2007. The contents of the Agreement were mainly to deal with the outstanding issue which the Wuaku Commission identified as constituting the root cause for the March 2002 crisis – the observance of the final funeral rites of the late Ya-Naa Mahamadu IV (Republic of Ghana, 2002a, 2002b). The committee came up with a programme that would ensure that the funeral of Ya-Naa Mahamadu IV would precede that of Ya-Naa Yakubu Andani II, given that the former's death (1988) preceded the latter's (2002). Besides, the funeral programme ensured that the Abudu family, especially, would not take advantage of the period to install a king, a concern the Andani Gate had always entertained. Clause 'G' of the Agreement, for instance, states that:

> "During the period of the funeral of Naa Mahamadu Abdulai, the Bolin-Lana (*the regent*), members of the Abdulai Family and the kingmakers shall not perform any act (in particular, pulling any thatch from the roof of the old palace, or handing it over to anyone for any reason whatsoever or entering the "Katinduu") for the purpose of imposing a successor or designed to suggest or recommend anyone as successor to

the Namship. Any such acts shall not have any effect or meaning in relation to the Namship" (Committee of Eminent Chiefs, 2007).

Notwithstanding the above clause that seeks to insulate the peace process and ensure its implementation, the disputants seem unhappy with the funeral arrangement for the late Ya-Naa Mahamadu IV, as proposed in the Committee's Final Peace Agreement, leading to the current stalemate.

Deadlock of the resolution and its causes

Traditionally, final funeral rites of Ya-Naas are performed in the premises of the Ya-Naa's Palace (Gbewa Palace). Besides, for a funeral of a Ya-Naa to be performed, the palace has to be vacated for the purposes of the funeral ceremony. These are Dagbon customary traditions that the committee acknowledged in its report. The committee proposed that since Ya-Naa Mahamadu IV died before Ya-Naa Andani II, the former's funeral should precede the latter's. Thus in the agreement, the committee thought it wise to have the Abudu Gate perform the final funeral rites of their late king, Naa Mahamadu IV, at the old Gbewaa Palace which was set on fire during the crisis but was renovated by the government. Thus since a new palace had been built, in addition to the renovated old palace, the committee proposed in its Final Peace Agreement for the final funeral rites of Naa Mahamadu IV to be performed in the old palace, whereas that of the slain king, Naa Yakubu Andani II, be performed in the new palace (Committee of Eminent Chiefs, 2007) to avoid any direct confrontation between the two disputants. This proposal was meant to ensure that both parties got a fair deal in observing the outstanding funeral rites of the two former Ya-Naas.

However, this decision has not received the cooperation of any of the disputants. Indeed, none of them seems to be against the performance of the funeral rites for the two former Overlords of Dagbon (Andani Royal Family, January 9, 2003; Abudu Royal Family, May 29, 2008). Their only disagreement has to do with the

venue. The Abudu Gate in a press statement in reaction to the committee's funeral programme, for instance, were at a loss as to why the committee decided that they should perform their funeral rites in the old Gbewaa Palace and not the newly built palace. They insist that in Dagbon custom and tradition, there can only be one Gbewaa Palace and that it was unthinkable for the Eminent Chiefs to prescribe that the Abudus had their funeral at the premises of the old Gbewaa Palace, whereas the Andanis had theirs at the newly built palace (Abudu Royal Family, opp. cit). This therefore indicates the Abudu family's intention to have the funeral ceremony not in any other place than the newly built Gbewaa Palace, which is presently occupied by the Regent of the Andani family. This further suggests that the Andani family would have to temporarily vacate the palace for the Abudus to perform their funeral ceremony.

The Andani family, on the other hand, has also refused to cooperate with the position of the agreement. Their refusal to cooperate stems from their apprehension that any access given to the Abudus to the Gbewaa Palace would seal an enskinment of a successor by the Abudu Gate, thus denying the Andanis the right to enskin a successor to the slain Overlord (*Myjoyonline*, July 2, 2008). This apprehension seems to be fuelled by the perceived government support that the Andani family believes Abudus presently enjoy. Besides, the Andanis contend that the former Ya-Naa Mahamadu IV did not die in office, and by extension at the Gbewaa Palace. For that matter, the Andani family believes that his funeral does not necessarily have to be performed at the Gbewaa Palace and can thus be observed anywhere. This indicates the Andani Gate's resolve not to vacate the Palace for the funeral ceremony of Ya-Naa Mahamadu IV to be observed there, as their vacation of the palace might give the impetus to the Abudus to enskin an overlord during their stay.

Even though the Committee, in response to the rift, recently met the two sides and reduced the original period that the Abudu family was to be allowed to stay in the palace from twenty-six to twelve days (cf. The Final Peace Agreement, 2007, and *Joy Online*, July 4, 2008), the impasse still persists, as the Andani family still does not

seem to trust the Abudu royal family to abide by the terms of the agreement. From the above scenario, the deadlock seems to have been caused more by a dilemma that both parties find themselves in.

CHAPTER 4

INSTITUTIONAL STRUCTURES AND CAPACITIES FOR RESPONDING TO CONFLICTS IN GHANA AND THE SUB-REGION

Examining existing national infrastructure for conflict resolution in Ghana

Until recently when the National Peace Council (NPC) was set up by the Ministry of the Interior, with the support of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), Ghana has often relied mostly on the security forces - the military and the police - to respond to and manage violent conflicts. The main function of the security forces in the management of conflicts has usually been confined to the protection of lives and properties, as well as maintaining law and order (Bombande, 2007). This function of the security agencies can be seen as more of a reactive, rather than a response to signs of conflicts.

The involvement of the military and the police in conflicts usually succeeds in suppressing violent confrontations between the disputants, giving it the impression that the conflict has been dealt with and therefore a return to peace. This usually has not been the case, as most often than not, such conflicts do recur after some time, thus becoming cyclical (cf., DISCAP, 2002). Besides, the coercive strategies that are often applied in the enforcement of peace in conflict times by the military have also led to increased suspicion by communities against governments since independence. A classical instance is the use of the military both in the eviction of the Andani Regent from the Gbewaa Palace and the subsequent use of the same military in providing security during the installation of Ya-Naa Mahamadu IV of the rival Gate in 1969 (cf. Ladouceur, 1972; Tsikata and Seini, 2004). The consequences of the use of coercive strategies by the military and the police have been the erosion of confidence in governments as honest brokers of peace and intermediaries of violent communal conflicts (Bombande, 2007).

Another reactive method that has been used since independence to respond to conflicts in Ghana has been the setting up of ad-hoc committees and commissions of inquiry. These committees are usually formed with a mandate to investigate the circumstances that perpetuate such violent conflicts and make recommendations to the government for appropriate action. This approach has also not been entirely successful in responding effectively to conflicts, mainly because such committees are ad hoc and not institutionalized but only come into being on the whims and caprices of a sitting government. Besides, even where such committees have often come out with reports which seek to locate the perpetrators of violence, it has always been difficult for any group or disputing party to concede to being perpetrators of conflicts (ibid). Moreover, governments have often times not been able to gather the political will to implement most of the recommended sanctions by such committees of inquiry for fear of losing votes during subsequent elections. In the opinion of Bombande (2007) for instance, the "work of the commissions of inquiry is often never implemented, nor is any step taken beyond peace enforcement through the military to build and sustain peace".

Thus, the setting up of such committees and the use of the military in conflict management in Ghana have often been coloured by politics and as a result make them weak in responding decisively to issues of conflicts within the country. Resolution of ethnic-related conflicts goes beyond maintaining a peacekeeping presence – military and police presence – as well as setting up of ad hoc committees to identify perpetrators and recommend actions. Indeed, resolution of conflicts involves identifying and establishing the root causes in order to mend differences and achieve lasting peace rather than the cosmetic dealings with the immediate causes by means of militarily suppressing the use of violence.

The National Peace Council (NPC)

In an effort to de-politicise conflict management in Ghana, the government in 2005 developed a National Architecture for Peace as a "framework for peace-building and

for the amicable resolution of all conflicts in Ghana" (Kan-Dapaah, 2006)[12]. According to Bawumia and Ojielo (2007), the architecture came about "following a pilot programme to build peace and mitigate conflict in Northern region of Ghana, in response to an intra-clan dispute that led to the death of the king of the Dagombas and 40 of his followers in 2002." The development of the National Architecture for Peace led to the establishment and inauguration of a National Peace Council (NPC) in 2007, following extensive consultations with stakeholders which included political associations and civil society groups in Ghana. These stakeholder meetings were coordinated by the UNDP office in Ghana. The idea behind the establishment of the NPC was to serve as an autonomous advisory body to assist the government to engage parties in conflicts in dialogue towards peace. At its inauguration, the NPC was constituted by an eleven-member body which included eminent religious leaders, chiefs and private people of high repute, selected through broad-based consultation processes with all stakeholders including political parties, chiefs, youth and women's groups (*Ghana News Agency*, January 27, 2007).

The purpose of the NPC is to serve as an early warning mechanism on potential conflict. Its mandate, as captured under the Country Programme Action Plan (CPAP), is specifically to monitor conflicts and advise the government and its partners on how to mediate, deepen dialogue between conflicting parties and also to provide a policy framework within which to deal with conflict situations. To be able to achieve its mandate and also to engage state officials at different levels in ensuring timely response to the issues raised, the council has been replicated at the regional and district levels with the establishment of Regional Peace Advisory Councils (RPACs) and District Peace Advisory Councils (DPACs).

It is worth noting that the peace architecture is at its nascent stage which is yet to be put to test. However, some challenges have been identified that could impact negatively on the work of the council as an independent body. One of such challenges, as identified by Bombande (2007), is the lack of political will on the part

[12] Albert Kan-Dapaah was the Minister for Interior, whose term the architecture was put together

of government to ensure that the architecture functions fully on all the three levels. The DPACs are yet to be formed in addition to the fact that not all regions have the RPACs. Besides, budgetary support is absent, thus making it difficult for the councils to be effectively operational. Another major challenge currently facing the architecture is the lack of a legal instrument to validate the mandate of the councils. A parliamentary act was supposed to have been passed to give a legal backing which has still not been done, pointing again to the absence of political will of the government.

Thus the creation of the National Peace Architecture by Ghana can be said to be a good attempt to insulate management of conflicts from politics, and build effective capacity for responding to conflicts. However, conflict prevention, management and resolution cannot be left entirely within the ambit of the present peace architecture in its form, given the teething challenges it is experiencing. Sub-regional support in the prevention, management and resolution of conflicts would be required to enable the architecture work in sync with what ECOWAS has already put in place.

Examining conflicts management mechanisms of ECOWAS and its capacity in responding to intrastate conflicts of member states

The Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), a sub-regional group of fifteen West African countries, was formed on May 28, 1975 with the signing of the Treaty of Lagos (ECOWAS, 1993). Its mission has been the promotion of economic integration among member states. Thus it was founded primarily to achieve "collective self-sufficiency" for member states by means of economic and monetary union and creating a single large trading bloc. The formation of ECOWAS was actually influenced largely by the strong emphasis being placed on economic integration in some of the more advanced regions, most especially the then-European Economic Community (EEC). In 1976 Cape Verde joined ECOWAS and in December 2000 Mauritania withdrew.

However, over the past two decades a lot has happened, especially within the sub-region, forcing ECOWAS to revise its original mission of economic integration by expanding it to include political cooperation, which provided for the establishment of a West African Parliament, an Economic and Social Council and an ECOWAS Court of Justice. Given the security challenges that the sub-region experienced as a result of the civil wars in Liberia and Sierra Leone from late 1980s, the revised treaty formally assigned ECOWAS with the responsibility of preventing and settling regional conflicts (ibid), thus making it possible for ECOWAS to intervene in what could be considered as purely internal affairs of member states. The responsibility to prevent and settle conflicts within the sub-region further shows the realisation that economic development and progress could only be pursued in an atmosphere of peace and stability. Since the revised treaty of 1993, ECOWAS has continuously designed means of combating and stemming conflicts within the sub-region as a way of eliminating factors which are inimical to the successful achievement of its economic integration.

The ECOWAS Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management, Resolution, Peace-Keeping and Security

The Protocol establishing the Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management, Resolution, Peace-Keeping and Security came into force in 1999, thus effectively replacing the ECOWAS Protocols Relating to Non-Aggression (PNA) of 1978 and Mutual Assistance on Defence (PMAD) of 1981. The Mechanism seeks to institutionalize structures and processes that ensure consultations and collective management of sub-regional security issues (cf. Article 3 of the Protocol, 1999). Under the structure, the Heads of State and Government of Member States, i.e., 'the Authority,' is the highest decision-making body of the Mechanism but without prejudice has delegated its powers to the Mediation and Security Council (Articles 5-7).

The functions of the Mediation and Security Council under the Mechanism are comparable to those of the UN Security Council, but at a sub-regional level, and convenes at ambassadorial, ministerial and at Heads of State levels (Articles 11-14). Acting on behalf of the Authority of Heads of State, the Council takes decisions on all issues relating to peace and security of the sub-region. Under Article 10 of the Mechanism, the Council can thus authorize all forms of intervention, including the decision to deploy political and military missions, inform the UN and the OAU of its decisions (Article 27), provide and review mandates and terms of reference, appoint force commanders, among others. The Council can therefore, amongst others, appoint a Special Representative as Chief of a Mission, appoint a force commander and deploy the Standby Force - ECOMOG - on the recommendation of the President of the Commission (Article 15[a]).

Other components of the Mechanism and their functions include the Executive Secretary (Articles 4 and 15), Defence and Security Commission, Council of Elders and ECOMOG (Chapter III). The Executive Secretary (now the President), for instance, is empowered by the Mechanism to initiate fact finding, mediation, facilitation, negotiations and reconciliation actions in the effective prevention and management of conflicts in the sub-region such as implementing all decisions of the Mediation Council (Article 15). In addition to the above components of the Mechanism is the observation system, known as the 'Early Warning System' (Chapter IV), which main purpose is for conflict prevention within the sub-region. The Early Warning System, which consists of Observation and Monitoring Centre located at the Secretariat and Observation and Monitoring Zones within the sub-region have the onerous responsibility of data collection and analysis, as well as preparation of reports for the use of the President. The idea is to spot any potential conflict situation that may impact on peace and security within the sub-region at its early stage and raise the flag for the Council and through the President, to help nip it in the bud before it becomes engulfing and out of hand.

The Mechanism, however, is limited by the conditions that need to prevail for member states to make any intervention on issues of peace and security in the sub-region. Among the conditions that need to exist to pave way for the application of the Mechanism, as contained in Article 25 of the Protocol, include:

- Cases of aggression or conflict in any Member State or threat thereof;
- Cases of conflict between two or several Member States;
- Cases of internal conflict, which:
    - threaten to trigger a humanitarian disaster, or
    - pose a serious threat to peace and security in the sub-region;
- In the events of serious and massive violations of human rights and the rule of law;
- In the event of an overthrow or an attempted overthrow of a democratically elected government; or
- Any other situation as may be decided by the Mediation and Security Council.

The above conditions make clear under what circumstances that the Mechanism works within the context of the Peace Architecture of ECOWAS.

The ECOWAS Conflict Prevention Framework (ECPF)

As a follow-up to the 1999 Protocol Relating to the Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management, Resolution, Peace-Keeping and Security, and to further make the preventive aspects of the Mechanism very strong and focused, the ECOWAS Conflict Prevention Framework (ECPF) was enacted in January 2008 as a booster to the sub-regional peace and security architecture. To keep the preventive aspects of the Mechanism more focused, the Framework divides conflict prevention mechanism into two elements of *operational* and *structural* prevention as a way of situating the correct sources of violent conflicts and keeping a close lid on them (Section IV). In this way, the Framework intends to strengthen capacity of ECOWAS in order to harness resources and channel them to places where they are most

needed and on time, in a bid to eliminate conflict accelerators. The Framework places more emphasis on prevention and peace-building, and sees military intervention as a measure of last resort where all available avenues have been exhausted and violent conflicts look imminent. The Framework comprises fourteen components, among them Early Warning; Preventive Diplomacy, the ECOWAS Standby Force, Security Governance, Natural Resource Governance, the Media, Youth Empowerment, Humanitarian Assistance, and Women, Peace and Security. The ECPF can thus be seen as an addendum to the Protocol relating to the Mechanism for conflict prevention, management, resolution and security established in 1999, to re-emphasise the need for more attention to be focused on prevention than on intervention of violent conflicts in the sub-region.

Thus, in its entirety, the ECOWAS peace and security architecture envisages both intervention and preventive mechanisms as ways of stemming conflicts from escalating and spreading as well as eliminating conflict accelerators within the West African sub-region. However, the current trend, with the enactment of the ECPF, seeks to focus more on the preventive measures in combating violent conflicts, with military intervention as last resort. The security architecture, notwithstanding, establishes inextricable links between the primordial object of the establishment of the Community – economic and social development of the peoples [Article 2(a)] – and the security of the peoples and Member States. Thus, the capacity of ECOWAS to manage conflict within the sub-region, in terms of existing infrastructures and institutions, can be said to be well cut out. Indeed, its involvement in recent interventions and post-conflict reconstruction in countries such as Liberia, Sierra Leone and Guinea Bissau, as well as its mediation efforts in Cote d'Ivoire attest to ECOWAS' capacity to manage and respond to even complex conflicts within the West African sub-region. This therefore puts ECOWAS in a far better position to complement efforts of Member States in managing their own intra-ethnic conflicts which seem to have a debilitating consequence on their developmental efforts and drive.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Conclusions

This work has successfully worked on the assumption, from the above discussions, that undue interference by the elites in the society, most importantly politicians, has contributed largely to the continuation of the Dagbon dispute (cf. Ladouceur, 1972; Tsikata and Seini, 2004; Albert, 2008) and its present stalemate between the two royal gates. So intense has been the political interference that it has succeeded in incapacitating the institutions of the State to impartially and effectively deal with the issues involved in the dispute and the subsequent crisis in March 2002. The failure on the part of the state, especially the police and the Attorney-General's office to apprehend and successfully prosecute the perpetrators of the heinous crime since 2002, for instance, has been perceived by the Andani Gate as indicative of the state's complicity in the run-up to the crisis.

Besides, the subtle connivance of the government exhibited in the participation in and the subsequent provision of state security by the military and police for the Abudu Gate in the concurrent celebrations of the two major festivals (Bugum and *Eid-ul-Adha*), has been seen as a deliberate attempt by government to directly support the Abudu Gate to challenge the authority of the sitting Ya-Naa. This is because such events were hitherto completely under the authority of the Ya-Naa (Republic of Ghana, 2002a). The consequence of this has been the erosion of trust that the Andani Gate has in the state in its attempt to resolving the dispute in a manner devoid of bias. Indeed, the present stalemate can be seen as a direct consequence of the loss of faith by the Andani Gate in the state to effectively deal with the issues leading to the crisis and also resolve the dispute. The politicisation of the Dagbon dispute has therefore led to a situation where the capacity of the state to

resolve the conflict seems lacking, as it is no longer seen as an honest broker of peace by one of the disputing factions.

By extension, the inability of the state to resolve the dispute is further epitomised by the lack of cooperation from the disputants in agreeing on the Final Peace Accord brokered by the Committee of Eminent Kings and its subsequent stalemate (as vividly captured by the Prisoner's Dilemma Theory in Chapter Two). The non-cooperative stance is fuelled by the dilemma that both disputants find themselves in, with regards to the venue that the outstanding funeral rites of Naa Mahamadu IV should be performed. Even though the original accord (Final Peace Agreement, 2007) foresaw such entrenched positions being taken by the two sides and thus proposed that the Abudu Gate first held the funeral rites for its late King, Naa Mahamadu IV in the renovated Gbewaa Palace, whereas the Andani Gate subsequently held its funeral rites for the slain king, Naa Yakubu Andani II, at the newly constructed Gbewaa Palace, the Abudu Gate rejected this offer and branded that decision as an "aberration of the Dagbon custom and tradition" (cf. Press Conference by the Abudu Gate, May 29, 2008). In the view of the Abudu family, there can be only one *Gbewaa Palace* where all funeral rites of all former Ya-Naas are held.

The rejection of the Abudu family of the old palace and their insistence to have the funeral rites at the new Palace also suggests to the Andani family that their royal cousins are up to a mischief. The major apprehension of the Andani Gate is that should the Abudu family occupy the palace they would install their king within the time given them to perform the funeral rites. However, as it stands, in the Dagbon tradition once a king is enskinned he cannot be deskinned (Ladouceur, 1972; Tsikata and Seini, 2004). Such an action would amount to a 'coup d'état' against the Andani family since it is still their turn to enskin a king, as the slain Chief did not die a natural death, which thus suggests that the Andanis would still have to continue with the succession rotation.

Even though the Peace Agreement provides for the Regional Security Council to make available around-the-clock security to ensure that the Abudu Gate does not install a king, the lack of trust that the Andani Gate has of the state security makes them unwilling to cooperate with this. It is clear from the above that the underlying cause of the stalemate is mistrust. The only way out of this dilemma is to have a credible third party that is seen as an outsider and impartial which can gain the trust of the two disputants and also ensure that the major outstanding issue – the final funeral rites of the two former Ya-Naas – is resolved to pave way for the installation of a new Ya-Naa as per the Roadmap to Peace (Committee of Eminent Kings, 2006). It is in this regard that ECOWAS is seen as capable of offering its good offices in helping to resolve this old-aged conflict.

Policy recommendations

Even though several efforts, including outsider involvement, have been expended in bringing about a peaceful settlement to the Dagbon dispute, little has been achieved in this regard. The United Nations, for instance, has been involved in the resolution of the Dagbon conflict since 2003 (*Ghana News Agency*, November 3, 2003). Its role has largely been limited to capacity building and facilitation of meetings for the disputants (cf. Bombande, 2007; Bawumia and Ojielo, 2007). On the contrary, not much has been seen of ECOWAS, portraying the impression that the sub-regional organisation cares less about the conflict. However, given the present stalemate, the conflict thus lends itself to a resolution and this is the time that ECOWAS involvement would be most ideal. Since the current situation does not appear to produce any winner, this conflict can be said to be at a point where both disputants find themselves in a "mutually hurting stalemate" (Zartman, 2000), and therefore makes a third party involvement as an international guarantor become a handy diplomatic tool.

As international guarantor, ECOWAS' role will be three-fold. In the first place, it would act to alleviate any fears of a possible double cross on the part of any of the

disputants in the course of the implementation of the Peace Agreement. Secondly, ECOWAS' intervention would help to allay any misgivings being entertained by any disputant during the critical transition period of the Peace Agreement and its implementation. Finally, ECOWAS, as a credible and impartial guarantor would work to reassure the disputants of an existing dependable arrangement to ensure that any concessions given up until now (for instance, the Andanis vacating the Gbewaa Palace) would be exchanged for a predictable future (the Abudus would occupy and finish the funeral ceremony and return the palace intact to the Andani without any recourse to installing a new king).

ECOWAS can legitimately act as an international guarantor under paragraphs 41(a) and 49(d) of the ECOWAS Conflict Prevention Framework (ECPF). Under paragraph 41(a), for instance, ECOWAS has a "responsibility to prevent – actions taken to address the direct and root causes of intra and inter-state conflicts that put populations at risk." Indeed, this aspect of the Framework puts a greater responsibility on ECOWAS to ensure that solutions are not only found for intrastate conflicts but that their root causes are addressed and eliminated. The Dagbon dispute thus offers ECOWAS a clear test case to address its root causes as identified by the Wuaku Commission in its report (Republic of Ghana, 2002a). Thus for ECOWAS to act as an international guarantor in its bid to address the root causes of the 2002 Dagbon crisis would be seen as a step in its right direction.

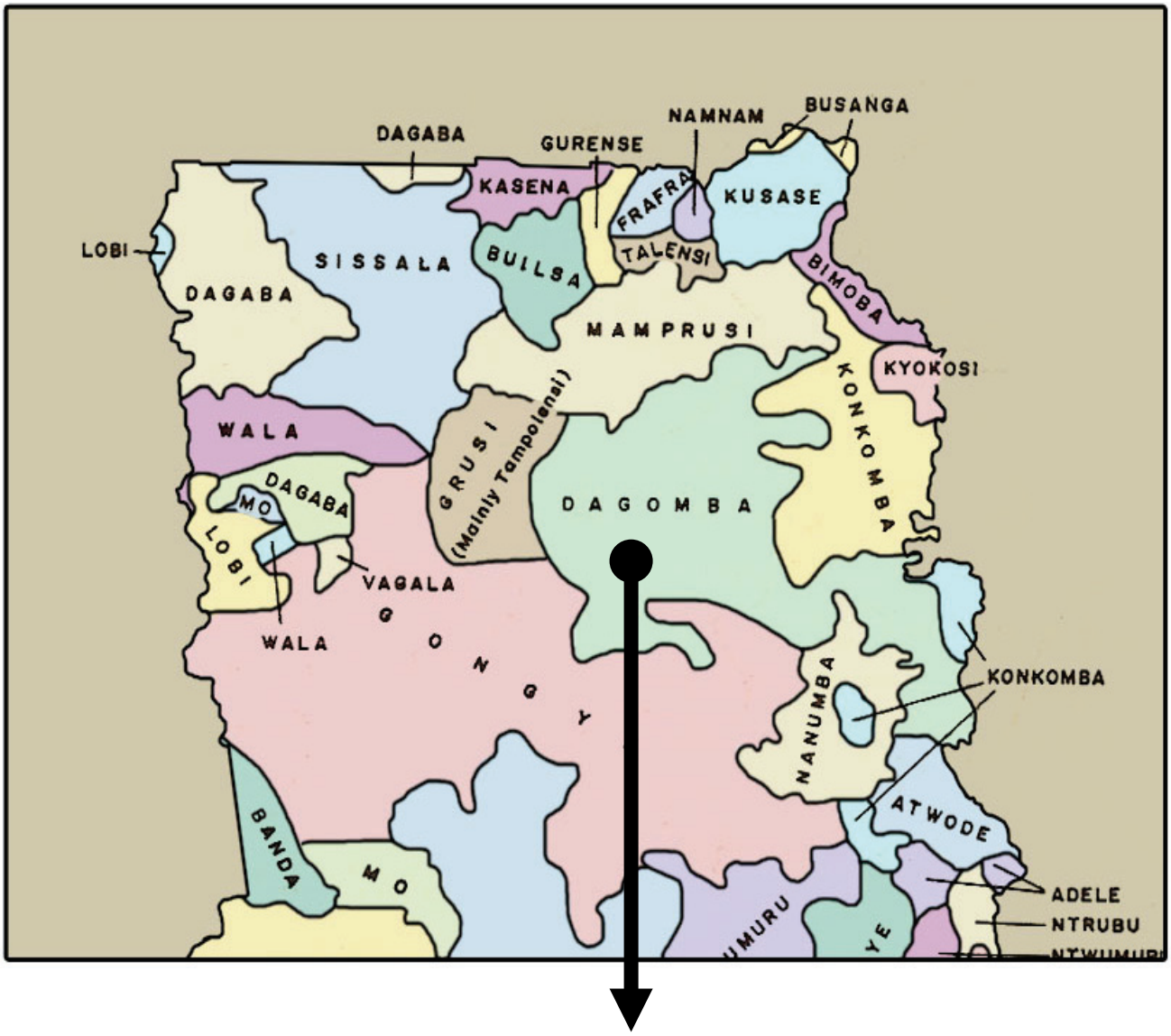
Besides, since acting as an international guarantor would involve reassuring both disputants that the use of the Gbewaa Palace by the two disputants as venue for the funeral rites would be secured, paragraph 49(d) of the Framework also becomes handy in giving the assurance and also gaining the trust of the disputants. Indeed paragraph 49(d) of the Framework allows for the deployment of the ECOWAS Standby Force (ESF) to "serve as a buffer in times of high tension or mediation between the feuding parties to ensure compliance of peace terms." This becomes very important since the apprehension being expressed, especially by one of the disputants, could be allayed with the use of the ESF as against the use of state

security which seems to have lost its trust in living up to the task of being impartial. This is because the ESF would have no direct stake in the dispute and thus unlikely to side with any of the disputants. Besides, it might not fall under the command of the state security and therefore would not be subject to any state manipulation for the interest of a particular faction. This would ensure a movement from a double defection (P,P) – a stalemate – into a double cooperation (R,R) – win-win situation (refer to Table 2.2) – thus ensuring a successful resolution and end to the present Dagbon conflict.

APPENDIX 1: Map of Ghana comprising all ten regions, major towns and cities

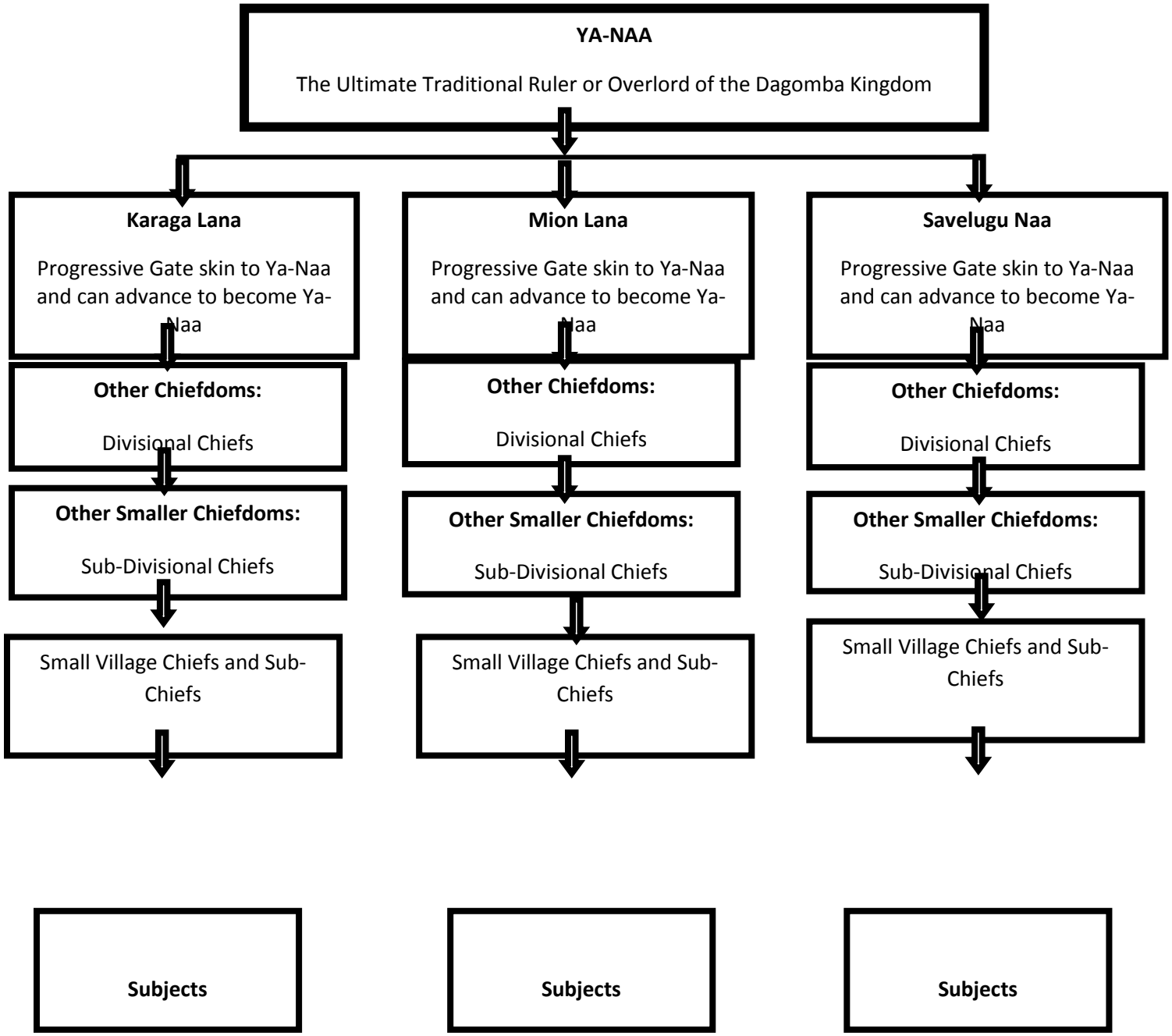
www.mapsofworld.com

APPENDIX 2: Map of major ethnic groups in Northern Ghana, including the Dagombas



The Dagombas are surrounded by other ethnic groups in the Northern part of Ghana. It is here that the Dagbon Chieftaincy Succession Dispute has been going on for almost half a century, which eventually led to the gruesome murder of Ya-Naa Yakubu Andani II (the Dagbon King) and 42 of his elders, on March 27, 2002

APPENDIX 3: The existing traditional hierarchy of the Dagbon Kingdom



APPENDIX 4: The genealogical tree of the Dagbon Skin and the origin of the conflict

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

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

Naa Abudulai I (1849 – 1876)

He ruled for 27 years. Upon his death succession went to the Aandani Gate

Naa Andani II (1876 – 1899)

He ruled for 23 years. Upon his death, succession rotated to the Abudu Gate

Naa Alasani (1899 – 1917)

Succession went to the Andani Gate upon his Death

Naa Bukari I (1920)

He abdicated within hours after enskinment due to old age and failing ill health. He nominated from the Abudu Gate to succeed him

Naa Abudulai II (1920 – 1938)

Upon his death succession reverted to the Andani Gate

Naa Mahama II (1938 – 1948)

Succession rotated to the Abudu Gate, upon his death

Naa Mahama III (1948 – 1953)

Upon his death succession did not revert to the Andani Gate, sparking the succession dispute

Naa Andani III (1968 – 1969)

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 L.I. 59 passed in 1960 by the Nkrumah government. However this L.I 59 was repealed, and in Busia's government the skin was given back to the Abudu Gate

Naa Abudulai III (1954 – 1967)

Upon his death, succession went to the Andani Gate as per L.I. 59, which called for the Andani Gate to have two successive turns

Naa Mahamadu IV (1969 – 1974)

In 1974, the National Redemption Council (NRC) regime revoked the decision to install him as the rightful King, and rather implemented the L.I. 59. As a result he was deskinned and instead Naa Yakubu Andani II enskinned in 1974

Naa Yakubu Andani II (1974 – 2002)

His reign ended in a regicide on March 27, 2002. Upon his natural death, succession would have reverted to the Abudu Gate. **However, since his life was cut short by a regicide, by the Dagomba custom, it's taken that he did not serve his entire term in office and therefore succession would have to remain in the Andani family. This is the present dilemma.**

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