

**UNIVERSITY OF CAPE COAST**

**CONFLICT PREVENTION STRATEGIES OF STATE AND NON-  
STATE ACTORS IN THE NORTHERN REGION OF GHANA FROM  
1992 TO 2012**

**FRANK WULADANYE DONKOR**

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UNIVERSITY OF CAPE COAST

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2012

BY

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## **DECLARATION**

### **Candidate's Declaration**

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

Candidate's Name: Frank Wuladanye Donkor

Candidate's signature ..... Date .....

### **Supervisors' Declaration**

We hereby declare that the preparation and presentation of the dissertation were supervised in accordance with the guidelines on supervision of dissertation laid down by the University of Cape Coast.

Principal Supervisor's Name: Dr. E. K. Ekumah

Signature..... Date.....

Co-Supervisor's Name: Dr. D.W. Essaw

Signature..... Date.....

## ABSTRACT

The study explored the conflict prevention strategies of state and non-state actors in the Northern Region of Ghana. The study employed qualitative strategy of inquiry. The study population included members and staff of the four institutions selected for the study (National Peace Council (NPC), Regional Security Council (REGSEC), West Africa Network for Peacebuilding in Ghana (WANEP-Ghana), and traditional authorities). Purposive sampling techniques were employed to sample 30 respondents for the study. Both primary and secondary data were used. Unstructured in-depth interview guides were used in interviewing the respondents. The constant comparative analysis was used to analyze the data.

The study revealed that both state and non-state actors played a pivotal role in conflict prevention in the Northern Region. They employed Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) mechanisms, use of mediation, appeals, legal action/court system and the deployment of military and police forces. The strategies used in conflict prevention included: effective targeting of various stakeholders, the broad base grassroots approach, evidence-based approach, meetings with the various groups, capacity-building workshops, seminars, visitations at the individual and community level. These strategies collectively or individually were used in preventing conflicts in the Northern Region by state and non-state actors. It was recommended that Government and Non-Governmental Organisations interested in peace and conflict prevention should provide appropriate support to the state and non-state actors to enable them play their role in conflict prevention in the Northern Region effectively.

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Special thanks go to respondents whose contributions have made this research work possible. Finally, to all those who have contributed in diverse ways to making this research a success, I say thank you.

## **DEDICATION**

I dedicate this work to my family and relatives for their support.

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## LIST OF ACRONYMS

ADR	Alternative Dispute Resolution
AU	African Union
BNI	Bureau of National Investigation
CBOs	Community Based Organisations
CDD	Centre for Democratic Development
CEWS	Continental Early Warning System
CSOs	Civil Society Organisations
DISEC	District Security Council
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organisation
GPS	Ghana Police Service
GSS	Ghana Statistical Service
HIV/AIDS	Human Immunodeficiency Virus/ Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome
IEP	Institute of Economics and Peace
IPI	International Peace Institute
LI	Legislative Instrument
MDGs	Millennium Development Goals
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organisation
NDC	National Democratic Congress
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
NORPAC	Northern Region Peace Advisory Council
NPC	National Peace Council
NPFL	National Patriotic Front of Liberia
NPI	Nairobi Peace Initiative

NPP	New Patriotic Party
OAU	Organisation for African Unity
OSCE	Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe
PPNT	Permanent Peace Negotiation Team
RCC	Regional Coordinating Council
REGSEC	Regional Security Council
RPF	Rwandan Patriotic Front
RUMNET	Rural Media Network
UN	United Nations
WANEP	West Africa Network for Peacebuilding in Ghana
WIPB	Women in Peace Building

## **CHAPTER ONE**

### **INTRODUCTION**

#### **Background to the Study**

All over the world, the quest for sustainable peace and security has continued to bother the minds of all stakeholders: international organizations, security agencies, state and non-state agencies, grassroots organizations and Community Based Organizations (CBOs)(Awedoba, 2009). This is because the various ramifications of conflict affect everybody and at all levels of society (Deutsch & Coleman, 2000). This concern is shared by the World Bank (WB) which emphasizes the importance of conflict prevention and views the concept together with post-conflict reconstruction as critical to the Bank's mission of poverty reduction. The Bank acknowledges the vicious circles in many of the world's poorest states, where poverty causes conflict and conflict causes poverty (World Bank, 2003).

As a result, conflict prevention has been the core objective of international, regional, sub-regional, state and non-state actors. And each of these agencies has specific units and strategies for dealing with conflict (Abdulrahman & Tar, 2008). It is in line with this that the goal of International Peace Institute's (IPI) Seminar in New York, 2011 was to enhance the effectiveness of multilateral conflict-prevention strategies (Mikulaschek & Romita, 2011).

Conflict prevention was the main objective for the structural and procedural arrangements such as the Marshall Plan, North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) and the creation of common European institutions. These structural and procedural arrangements intended not only to provide a bulwark against the Soviet threat, but also to prevent future wars among the states of Western Europe by bringing former antagonists together in collective decision-making and creating a liberal security community (Ackermann, 1994).

According to Craig and George (1995), conflict prevention was the dominant theme at the Congress of Vienna in 1815 that aimed at preventing new wars through a number of measures and principles such as the creation of demilitarized areas and neutral states and the peaceful settlement of conflicts. Conflict and crisis prevention also dominated the national security agenda of the two competing superpowers with the view to preventing a nuclear confrontation (Lund, 1996a), while preventing violent conflict was one of the major objectives of the United Nations (UN) throughout the Cold War (Ackermann, 2003a).

In the search for new means of conflict prevention discourse at the end of the Cold War, the concept of ‘preventive diplomacy’ which was introduced by the UN Secretary-General, Dag Hammarskjöld in 1960 (Djibom, 2008), was redefined. The redefined concept by the UN Secretary-General, Boutros Boutros- Ghali, took a prominent role in the conflict prevention discourse in the 1990s. In his 1992 Agenda for Peace, Boutros-Ghali (1992: 13) redefined ‘preventive diplomacy’ as “action to prevent disputes from arising between parties, to prevent existing disputes from escalating into conflicts and to limit

the spread of the latter when they occur.” He went further to identify some components necessary for successful implementation of preventive diplomacy which include confidence building, fact finding, early warnings, preventive deployment and the use of demilitarized zones.

He also described the term ‘post-conflict peace-building’ which he introduced into the UN prevention discourse as “comprehensive efforts to identify and support structures which will tend to consolidate peace and advance a sense of confidence and well-being among people” (Boutros-Ghali, 1992: 34). He noted also that the concepts of ‘preventive diplomacy’ and ‘peace-building’ should be viewed as tightly intertwined in that both concepts involve taking action to bring antagonistic parties to agreement through nonviolent means.

Since the end of the Cold War, international and regional organizations, policy-makers, governments and other actors have accepted the need to develop new means of conflict prevention (Juan, 2007). The Clinton administration viewed conflict prevention as a central element of the United States’ post-Cold War foreign policy (Juan, 2007). Many other governments are sympathetic to the idea of conflict prevention, while regional bodies such as the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) and the African Union (AU) now see conflict prevention as one of their key roles (Zellner, 2002; Flynn & Farrell, 1999; Ackermann, 1998). Irrespective of the continuous occurrence and recurrence of conflict situations, there are success stories of conflict prevention in areas such as Guatemala, Fiji, Macedonia, South Ossetia (Georgia), Moldova, the Baltic Area, Hungary and Slovakia, Libya and Chad (Eliasson, 1996)



However, the outbreak of violent and destructive intra-state conflicts increased dramatically at the beginning of the 1990s, and this had an important influence on the priorities of international organizations undergoing restructuring in the new security environment (Wallensteen & Möller, 2003; Wegner & Möckli, 2003). The inability of the international community to effectively prevent and then manage the conflict in former Yugoslavia, ethnic wars in Bosnia-Herzegovina, the genocide in Rwanda and state failure in Somalia, led to a growing consensus on the moral and financial desirability of finding means to avert tensions from escalating into conflicts, human disaster and regional instability (Jentleson, 2000; Feil, 1998; George & Holl, 1997).

Compared to the huge costs of conflict, the costs of preventing it are dramatically less. Many people are convinced that the horrific human costs of the Iraq War were avoidable. Statistical research on third-party diplomacy also supports the belief that acting before high levels of conflict intensity is better than trying to end them after their occurrence (Berkovitch, 1993; Miall, 1992).

Consequently, interest in conflict prevention blossomed throughout the 1990s and rapidly became a prominent focus of the new global security and global governance agenda with advocacy of preventive policies by state actors, non-state actors, international and regional organizations (Ackerman, 2003b). Thus, a major study on the prevention of deadly conflict was published by the Carnegie Commission in 1997 to address the looming threats to world peace of intergroup violence and to advance new ideas for the prevention and resolution of deadly conflicts (Carnegie Commission, 1997). The UN Secretary-General, Kofi Annan repeatedly emphasized the importance of conflict prevention, including the elimination of the root causes

of conflict and the need for a global integrated approach. In his 1999 report on 'Preventing War and Disaster: A Growing Global Challenge', Annan stated that the root causes of conflict, not merely their symptoms, must be addressed (Annan, 1999).

The international focus on conflict prevention led to a large number of contributions which gave birth to a wide range of definitions and theories. Despite the wide range of definitions, the guiding principle behind the thinking on conflict prevention is that very destructive and costly ways of dealing with conflict can be made redundant if effective preventive measures can be taken beforehand by third parties in a non-coercive manner (Melander & Pigache, n.d.). According to the Carnegie Commission (1997), conflict prevention includes actions and policies as well as non-violent means that are employed to prevent the emergence of violent conflicts, resolve tensions, stop ongoing conflicts from spreading and deter the re-emergence of violence.

Lund sees conflict prevention as any structural or intersectoral means to keep intrastate or interstate tensions and disputes from escalating into significant violence and the use of armed force, to strengthen the capabilities of parties to possible violent conflicts for resolving their disputes peacefully, and to progressively reduce the underlying problems that produce those tensions and disputes (Lund, 2002, pp. 37).

In this regard, a threefold way to look at the implementation of conflict prevention is often presented: operational prevention, structural prevention and systemic prevention. Operational prevention is explicitly directed toward the proximate or immediate causes of conflicts and imminent crises (Ackermann, 2000; Lund & Mehler, 1999). Structural prevention, on the other hand, is more long term in nature and incorporates measures that facilitate governance, adherence to human rights, economic, political, and societal stability, as well as civil society building (Annan, 1999; Miall, Ramsbotham

&Woodhouse, 1999). A third fold which has recently entered the field of conflict prevention is systemic prevention. This third approach attempts to address global risks that can contribute to conflict and that also transcend particular states (Annan, 2006).

Africa is the continent that has suffered the consequences of conflict more than any other continent(Annan, 2006). This is because most African countries have experienced violent conflict in one form or another: civil, ethnic, religious, chieftaincy or political. The continent has been plagued with violent conflicts and a number of countries that can easily be pointed to include Central Africa Republic (CAR), Mali, Liberia, Sierra Leone, Cote d'Ivoire and the most visible cases being Somalia, Sudan, Rwanda, Nigeria and the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) (Gurr & Harff, 1994). Chikwanha (2008) notes that these violent conflicts not only continue to undermine human security, but they pose a major threat to the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). Confronted with this challenge, various attempts have been done to articulate conflict management and prevention by the African Union's Continental Early Warning System (CEWS) and its various regional mechanisms.

Even though violent conflicts are currently at a much lower level than at the end of the Cold War (Gleditsch et al., 2002), and despite a decline in ethnic conflicts because of new practices in international conflict management, such as preventive action (Gurr, 2002), armed conflicts remain a characteristic feature of the international system. Threats of intra-state conflicts continue to exist, as closed regimes face violent oppositions; fledgling democracies destabilized; and post-conflict countries regress into conflict (Gurr & Marshall,

2005). Current events around the globe in respect of the outbreak of conflicts such as in Syria, Burma, Sri Lanka, to mention a few, support the views of Gurr and Marshall (2005). Again, trends such as environmental degradation, climate change, population growth, chronic poverty, globalization, and increasing inequality risk future conflicts (Annan, 2006). Moreover, the cost of violent conflicts, in both financial and human terms, and subsequent international post-conflict peacebuilding efforts remain staggering.

Facing such threats, state actors, non-state actors, regional and international organizations must pursue how to prevent escalation of emerging tensions into conflict in order to avoid the immense human suffering and problems that conflicts cause, both for the countries involved and the rest of the world. In view of this, the importance of conflict prevention continues to be emphasized. Kofi Annan's injunction to move from a culture of reaction to a culture of prevention implies a shift from conceptualization to practical implementation in order to reduce the unacceptable gap that remains between rhetoric and reality (Annan, 2006). This epitomizes the recent growing concern among state and non-state actors in advocating, designing, and implementing programs with a preventive core (European Commission, 2002; Griffin, 2001; World Bank, 1998).

Among the West African countries, Ghana is relatively peaceful. This is reflected in Ghana's political stability and the absence of civil wars as witnessed in her neighbouring countries such as Cote d'Ivoire, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Liberia, Mali and Sierra Leone. Unfortunately, however, the Northern Region of Ghana does not share the country's pride of peace and stability due to the frequent outbreak of violent conflicts in that part of the

country. According to Brukum (2001), Northern Ghana alone has recorded over 20 conflicts in the past two decades with the most devastating one being the 1994 ethnic conflict between the Konkombas and the Nanumbas and their allies. The frequent outbreak of conflict in the region has drawn the attention of conflict prevention actors, both state and non-state, to situations that can potentially degenerate into violence. Thus, these actors have been putting efforts in the region to arrest potential conflict situations with the aim of heading off future conflicts.

### **Statement of the Problem**

From the end of the Cold War until the present time, a time when most African countries are immersed in ethnic and civil conflicts as well as political instability, Ghana has been a safe haven (Jackson, 2007). This image of Ghana reflected in the Global Peace Index Project (GPIP) by the Institute of Economics and Peace (IEP) in 2011, which put Ghana as the 3rd peaceful country in Africa (IEP, 2011). However, the Northern Region of Ghana does not share this pride as pockets of persistent protracted communal and domestic conflicts continue to draw back poverty reduction and development efforts in the region (Awedoba, 2009). Brukum (2001) notes that, Northern Ghana alone recorded over 20 conflicts in the past two decades with the most devastating one being the 1994 ethnic conflict between the Konkombas and the Nanumbas and their allies.

The costs of resolving these conflicts when they occur are often huge since it calls for substantial amount of funds and other resources to deploy military platoons to conflict-affected areas to disarm combatants and set up

committees of inquiry to conduct investigations. The Ghana government has always diverted huge sums of funds and resources from development projects to set up various committees to investigate the causes of conflicts in the Northern Region of Ghana and recommend prudent measures to prevent future occurrences. Some of these committees include: the Justice Lamptey committee on the Konkomba-Nanumba conflict in 1981; the Permanent Peace Negotiating Team (PPNT) relating to the conflict between the Konkombas and the Nanumbas and their allies in 1994; the Ampiah Committee of Inquiry; the Inter-Non-Governmental Organization (NGO) Consortium and the Nairobi Peace Initiative (NPI); and the Committee of Eminent Chiefs as well as the Wuaku Commission of Inquiry to the Dagbon chieftaincy crisis in 2002.

Preventing conflicts at their early stages does not only address their root causes, but it is considerably more cost-effective in both human and financial terms than the alternatives of crisis intervention, full-scale peacekeeping and peacemaking efforts, post-conflict management or resolution (Louise, 2003). The strength of all preventive actions lies in engagement at the early stages of a conflict, during which disputing parties are more amenable to negotiation and peaceful resolution. Conditions and influences on parties and mediators during the early stages of disputes are fundamentally different and much less inflexible than during later stages when parties have become increasingly polarized. Therefore, preventive action holds great promise as a new method to protect our national security without high financial and human costs.

Both state and non-state actors have been involved in the prevention of conflicts in the Northern Region of Ghana. State actors in conflict

prevention refer to the agencies established by the state and charged with the responsibility of arresting situations that can lead to conflict. Some of the state agencies that are involved in the prevention of conflicts in the Northern Region of Ghana include: the National Peace Council (NPC) established by National Peace Council Act, 2011 (Act, 818), the Ghana Police Service (GPS) established by Ghana Police Service Act, 1970 (Act, 350), the Bureau of National Investigation (BNI), the formal court system, the Regional House of Chiefs (RHC), and the Regional and District Security Councils (REGSEC/DISEC) established by Security and Intelligence Agencies Act, 1996 (Act, 526).

The non-state actors in conflict prevention, on the other hand, refer to Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) that implement specific programmes with the aim of addressing situations that can degenerate into conflict. Such non-state actors that are operating in the Northern Region of Ghana include West Africa Network for Peacebuilding in Ghana (WANEP-Ghana), Ghana Centre for Democratic Development (CDD), traditional authorities, religious leaders, to mention a few.

In their conflict prevention activities in the Northern Region of Ghana, state and non-state actors employ several strategies to achieve their preventive objectives. But there is little or no information on these strategies to enhance our understanding of them. It is against this background that this thesis seeks to explore the conflict prevention strategies employed by the NPC, the Northern REGSEC, WANEP-Ghana and the traditional authorities in the Northern Region of Ghana so as to grasp a better understanding of these strategies.

### **General objective of the Study**

The general objective of the study was to explore the conflict prevention strategies of state and non-state actors in the Northern Region of Ghana from 1992 to 2012.

### **Specific objectives**

Specifically, the study sought to:

1. Describe the conflict prevention strategies of state and non-state actors in the Northern Region of Ghana;
2. Examine the role of key state and non-state actors in conflict prevention in the Northern Region of Ghana;
3. Examine the design and implementation of conflict prevention strategies in the Northern Region of Ghana from 1992 to 2012;
4. Assess the strengths and weaknesses of conflict prevention strategies employed by state and non-state actors in the Northern Region of Ghana from 1992 to 2012; and
5. Make recommendations for improving conflict prevention strategies in the Northern Region of Ghana.

### **Research Questions**

The study was guided by the following research questions.

1. What are the conflict prevention strategies of state and non-state actors in the Northern Region of Ghana?
2. What is the role of key state and non-state actors in conflict prevention in the Northern Region of Ghana?



3. How do state and non-state actors design and implement conflict prevention strategies in the Northern Region of Ghana?
4. What are the strengths and weaknesses of conflict prevention strategies of state and non-state actors in the Northern Region of Ghana?
5. What can be done to improve conflict prevention strategies in the Northern Region of Ghana?

### **Scope of the Study**

The study focused on only four state and non-state conflict prevention actors in the Northern Region of Ghana: NPC, REGSEC, WANAP-Ghana and traditional authorities. The study could not be extended to a larger number of actors because it was carried out within limited time and limited financial resources. The study covered the key staff or members of the aforementioned four actors in conflict prevention. Also, the study considered a time frame of ten years (1992-2012) during which the selected four state and non-state actors have been involved in conflict prevention in the Northern Region of Ghana.

### **Significance of the Study**

The results of the study will provide information that will contribute to the existing knowledge and literature on conflict prevention strategies in Ghana. Thus, the findings of the study which will constitute new information in the literature on conflict prevention strategies will be useful to conflict prevention actors, security agencies, government, researchers and students. Conflict prevention actors, both governmental and non-governmental, can use the findings of this study to improve upon their own conflict prevention

strategies and methods. The security agencies can incorporate some of the conflict prevention strategies proven to be effective per the results of this study in their efforts to maintain security.

Again, the findings of this study will provide for government and stakeholders clear directions for policy formulation in national peace and security issues. For researchers in the field of conflict prevention, the results of the study will serve great importance in the area of literature review. Finally, the results of the study will serve as an important source of information to students who are either pursuing conflict related programmes or puzzled with questions of how conflicts can be prevented.

### **Organisation of the Study**

For purposes of sequential presentation and easy comprehension of issues to readers, the study was put into five chapters. Each chapter dealt with a series of relevant themes. Chapter One presented an introduction to the study. It did not only offer information on the main themes of the study and justification for the research problem, it also outlined the objectives of the study.

Chapter Two presented the review of relevant literature. The chapter provided definitions for the key concepts in the study and the relationships between these concepts as well as the theoretical themes relevant to the study. The methodology that was employed to achieve the objectives of the study was outlined in Chapter Three. It discussed and justified the choice of the methodology employed and described the sources of data, data collection techniques, methods of data presentation and data analysis. Chapter Four

presented the results and the accompanying discussions of empirical and emerging data. The fifth and final chapter focused on the summary, conclusion and recommendations based on the research findings.

### **Chapter Summary**

This chapter has explained the relevance of the study. The chapter has also discussed the background of the study, the statement of the problem, research objectives, research questions, significance and scope of the study. The chapter also provided the organisation of the study.

## CHAPTER TWO

### REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

#### INTRODUCTION

This chapter deals with the review of the findings of other research works that are related to the issue under investigation. Thus, the literature review in the chapter is an evaluation of the existing literature on the subject of conflict prevention. The review is based on the understanding that literature review attempts to survey scholarly articles, books and other sources such as dissertations and conference proceedings that are relevant to a particular issue, area of research, or theory.

The review of related literature in this chapter, therefore, provides a description, summary, and critical evaluation of the theories of conflict, the concept of conflict prevention, the concept of early warning, conflict theories, especially, Johan Galtung's model of conflict formation and conflict transformation, and Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) Mechanisms.

#### **The theories of conflict**

There are several theories to the studies of conflict. Conflict theories are especially useful in understanding conflict, wealth and poverty, political strife, exploitation, discrimination and prejudice. These theories provide useful analytical views to the factors that cause conflicts and means through which these conflicts can be managed and resolved amicably.

#### *Structural Violence Theory*

Structural violence is most often not visible, implicit, and can be formed by some structures in the community and leaders. Structural violence

occurs “whenever people are disadvantaged by political, legal, economic, and cultural traditions” (Winter & Leighton, 2001, p. 4). Inequality and injustice causing a deep harm to individuals within structures cause structural violence against people living within a particular area. This eventually manifests and brings about direct violence on the personal level since those oppressed are those to resort to direct violence in accordance (Winter & Leighton, 2001).

Saidemen (2010) supported the view that concentrated groups in divided societies are more likely to demand self-determination and to be engaged in violent conflict in order to get access to scarce resources and power. In a circulation, structural violence is greatly attached to human rights violations and human needs detainment (Winter & Leighton, 2001). Structural violence matches up with human rights violations and unmet human needs. Human rights violations revolve around the idea that if these two come together, they must create conflict and violence in a relative degree.

The above analysis demonstrates how well unmet human needs and human rights violations are related to structural and direct violence. This is supported by Scarborough (1998) when he points to the fact that in situations where existing structures in a society are tilted in favour of a particular group to the disadvantage of others, and when people find it difficult to identify with political and economic ideas of the society, violent communal conflict is likely to emerge and escalate when not properly managed.

According to this theory, conflicting groups tie conflicts to the social, political, and economic organisation of society and the nature and strength of social networks within and between community groups. When social, political, economic, and cultural processes are monopolized by a group, it increases the

conditions that make people to adopt adversarial approaches to conflict. According to Kothari (1979), resources are the major cause of conflict between individuals and groups and within nations. The control and use of natural resources lies at the heart of the deepening crisis in the world.

Scarborough (1998) postulates that in situations where existing structures are tilted in favour of one group, whilst putting others at a disadvantage will lead to escalation of conflict if nothing is done to correct such anomalies. The limitation of this theory is that it emphasizes material resources and power as the cause of conflict but they are not always the case.

The main argument of structural conflict theory is that conflict is built into particular ways societies are structured and organised. The theory looks at social problems like political and economic exclusion, injustice, poverty, disease, exploitation, inequity and others as sources of conflict (Gaya, 2006: 41).

Structuralists maintain that conflicts occur because of the exploitative and unjust nature of human societies; namely the domination of one class by another. This case is made by scholars such as Fredrick Engels, Karl Marx and Joseph Lenin, who blame capitalism for being an exploitative system based on its relations of production and the division of society into the proletariat and bourgeoisie. Thus, capitalist societies are accused of being exploitative, and such exploitation is a cause of conflict (Gaya, 2006: 42). This indeed is the radical approach to conflict theory. However, as indicated above, one could deduce that natural resources conflicts involve issues of survival and therefore the Human Needs Theory is appropriate to be used as a theoretical framework of the study.

### *Relational Theory*

Relational theory analysis provides the significance of relationships in social and political interactions between communities themselves and between them and states in a specific geopolitical context (Schluter & Lee, 1993). Well-being of individuals, groups, states, and communities is defined in terms of the factors that determine relationships among them. The basis of understanding conflict, security and collective well-being of people includes relationships that dominate interactions of two or more entities in contact with one another at a particular place within a period of time.

The Relational Conflict Theory attempts to explain violent conflicts between groups through the lenses of sociological, political, economic and historical relationships between such groups. It emphasizes that cultural and value differences including group interest all influence relationship between individuals and groups. Relationship influenced by these differences creates a tendency to see others as intruders who have to be prevented from encroaching on established cultural and political boundaries.

Writers on relational theory contend that at the sociological level, differences between cultural values are challenges to individuals or group's identity formation processes and tend to create the tendency for groups or individuals to see each other as intruders who have to be prevented from encroaching upon established cultural boundaries (Felati, 2006).

Power and the advantage that it confers is a key source of conflict or tension between different interest groups with a political and economic system. It may culminate in a struggle to control a common resource that each

may attempt to eliminate, neutralize or injure others raising a tendency for negative relationships. In situations where multiple groups exist and share a common resource that is fixed in nature such as land, the chances that each of the groups will attempt to eliminate, neutralize or injure the other, or to monopolize such a resource is high. Also, there will be a tendency to enter into a negative relationship (conflict).

The theorists contend that a number of conflicts grow out of a past history of such negative relationships (conflict) between groups which have led to the development of negative stereotypes, racial and/or ethnic intolerance and discrimination. Thus, such a history of negative exchanges between groups may make it difficult for efforts to integrate different ethnic and religious groups within society to succeed because their past interactions make it difficult for them because of mistrust. Once people begin to see themselves as “us” and others as “they”, there is a high possibility of the “they” to be treated differently from the “us” for that matter, creating conditions that increase the chances of conflict occurring when interaction between such groups takes place (Shedrack, 2006).

The Rwandan civil war between the Tutsis and the Hutus is enough evidence of a conflict of a relational nature. A cattle-rearing population (Tutsis) that arrived in the east of Lake Kivu from the upper reaches of the Nile infiltrated the area and established dominance over the food cultivating population residents (Hutu). Its history dates back to around the 1860s when the ruling class (Tutsis), upon their arrival organized society on a feudal basis with the Tutsis as aristocrats and Hutus as vassals. This historical organization deemed improper by the Hutus was to have devastating effects in the future.



The Tutsi, despite being a minority in numbers assumed the upper class position and directed the social organisation (Prunier, 1995).

In summary, the relational theory attempts to understand ethnic or identity-based conflicts that have overwhelmed a number of countries. Why do people resent those who are different from them? It shows that groups who share a common resource are likely to engage in violent conflict more than groups who do not. Also, perceiving oneself as the centre of the world, the presence of another person or group challenges one to rethink this identity as sharing the centre with another person. One group perceiving one or several of their inter-relationships with other groups as illegitimate; e.g. indigenous vs. settler conflicts

#### *Dynamical System Theory*

System theory looks at conflict in relation to the contexts in which conflicts erupt. The issues involved and the relationships between the processes that shape the issues are of great concern. A system is a group of interrelated body interacting with each other at different levels within time and space and as such conflict is bound to occur. According to Coleman, Vallacher, Nowak, and Bui-Wrzosinska (2006), intractable social conflicts are viewed as destructive patterns of social systems, which are the result of a multitude of different hostile elements interacting at different levels overtime, culminating in an on-going state of intractability. In their view, power and influence in these social systems are multiply determined, and substantial change is thought to occur only through transformative shifts in the deep structure or pattern of organisation of the system.

There are three basic assumptions underlying general systems theory. These include: the non-linear nature of the relationships between elements in a system; systemic openness and the importance of the internal and external environment; and the structure of nested systems within systems. Coleman (2006) asserts that, a systemic approach to social conflict assessment not only captures the multiple sources and complex temporal dynamics of such systems, but it can also help identify central nodes and patterns that are unrecognisable by other means.

However, general systems theory has been criticised for its imprecise definition, lack of specificity, and contributing relatively little to the generation of testable hypotheses in research in the social sciences (Kozlowski & Klein, 2000). It is as a result of these criticisms that the dynamical systems' principles and methods for applications to conflict and peace dynamics have been developed. Dynamical systems have been used to gain a better understanding of how local interactions between small parts in a physical system can produce "emergent" global behaviour (Brown & Liebovitch, 2010).

Dynamical systems have been useful in analysing physical and biological systems to understand threshold effects, how emergent patterns self-organise, sensitivity to initial conditions, whether chance is really needed to explain seemingly random data, and the statistical properties of the variables of those systems. This suggests that the use of dynamical systems may be equally valuable in understanding similar important issues in the social psychology of conflicts.

*Social Identity Theory*

Most social conflicts become deeply anchored in the way people define themselves and their own groups. This contributes greatly to their intractability and resistant to change. Tajfel and Turner (1979), supporters of Social Identity Theory (SIT) argued that the understanding of the individual psychological processes is at the root of ethnocentrism and intergroup conflict. These authors emphasise the link between group identification and intergroup relations in the context of research on realistic conflict theory, where intergroup hostility is viewed as the result of competition over real or perceived scarce resources. In their study, it was realised that simply categorising people into arbitrary groups seemed to elicit ethnocentric in-group bias.

From this point of view, it is clear that social identity theory suggests that people are motivated to achieve and maintain their positive self-esteem, and one avenue for them to achieve this is through positive in-group associations when compared to out-groups. In extreme cases, the mere presence of an out-group may be seen as a threat to a positive social identity or even to a group's existence (Kelman, 1999), and thus fuel conflict intractability due to a zero-sum perception of the opposing group identities.

De Zavala, Cichocka, Eidelson, and Jayawickreme (2009) in their study have established an intricate link between self-esteem and intergroup conflict at the individual and group level. Social identity theory in their opinion has therefore contributed to better understanding of collective behaviour including in-group bias, responses of subordinate groups to their positions of unequal status, and intra-group homogeneity and stereotyping. Though, the

relationship between group identification and in-group bias is still unclear (Brown, 2000).

### *The Human Needs Theory*

The Human Needs Theory's main assumption is that, all humans have basic needs which they seek to fulfill and that the denial and frustration of these needs by other groups or individuals could affect them immediately or later, thereby leading to conflict (Rosati, Carroll, & Coate, 1990).

The theory locates the cause of conflict in society in the inadequate satisfaction of any of the fundamental human needs. The relevant basic human needs in question comprise physical, social and spiritual needs. According to the human needs theorists, human needs should be understood as a system of inter-related parts. Accordingly, all human needs are inter-related such that providing access to one while at the same time denying access or hindering access to other amounts to denial of all which could form the basis for conflict. Recognition, identity, security, autonomy and bonding are human needs that are non-negotiable. Maslow in his motivation and personality theory identified physiological needs, safety needs, belongingness and love, esteem and self-actualization as basic needs. Proponents of the human needs theory further contend that these human needs are satisfied differently; that is, different "satisfiers" are required for the different human needs.

In this regard, to prevent conflict from emerging and further degenerating into violence, trade-offs must be the guiding principles in the process of needs satisfaction. The lack of access to, not necessarily the unavailability of, "satisfiers" of needs becomes the major catalyst to conflict.

Gurr (1970) examines that, when parties in a needs-based conflict perceive that the circumstances of their lives are not providing benefits to which they are justly entitled, such parties are experiencing relative deprivation. Relative deprivation refers to a sense of being underprivileged relative to some other person or group. Under the concept of relative deprivation, the basics of life are not so much in question, but rather the sense that others are doing better and that one group is losing out on something. The feeling of relative deprivation intensifies not only when benefits (including political, religious, and ethnic rights as well as economic well-being) decline, but also when expectations increase. Consequently, when large sections of a group experience relative deprivation simultaneously, the potential for conflict directed at rival groups intensifies.

Burton (1990), another proponent of the human needs theory, also identifies a link between frustration which forces humans into acts of aggression, and the need on the part of such individuals to satisfy their basic needs. Burton contends that individuals cannot be taught to accept practices that destroy their identity for example, and as such are forced to react against the factors, groups and/or institutions that they perceive as being threats to their needs. Human needs such as survival, protection, affection, understanding, participation, creativity and identity are universally shared by all humans; are irrepressible; and have components such as the need for recognition and bonding with others which are not easy to give up. Thus, any person, group or political or social system that tries to frustrate or suppress these needs will cause conflict.

Though the human needs theorists identify a wide range of human needs, they generally express the same view that the frustration of these needs hampers the actualisation of the potentials of groups and individuals, and subsequently lead to conflict. They contend that at the heart of conflict is the tension between deprivation and potential. The over-riding idea in the human needs theory, therefore, is that conflicts in society are goal-driven and target-specific: individuals and groups engage in conflict to satisfy their basic human needs, and the resultant aggression is targeted at rival individuals or groups, or institutions perceived to be frustrating the satisfaction of such needs.

#### *Economic theory of conflict*

Berdal and Malone (2000) has conducted in-depth study into conflict related matters and provided an economic explanation for the existence and endurance of conflict. In their work, they agreed that social conflicts are generated by many factors, some of which are deep-seated. For them, across the ages, conflicts have come to be seen as having a 'functional utility' and are embedded in economic disparities. This means that there is always some group who benefit from conflict in one way or another, either through the sale of guns or other economic gains (Enu-Kwesi&Tuffuor, 2010). According to them, the importance of economic factors to the understanding of conflicts will always be contentious issues. Economic theory highlights resources as the cause of conflict in societies.

Collier (2000) argues that incompatible interests based on competition over resources, which in most cases are assumed to be scarce are responsible for the conflict. In his view, conflicts have functional utility and are embedded

in economic disparities. This means that there is always some group who benefit from conflict in one way or another, either through the sale of guns or other economic gains.

### **The concept of conflict prevention**

Conflict in itself is a constructive element of a dynamic society (Coser, 1956), but it becomes very problematic when the parties to a conflict resort to violent means to advance their cause. A conflict requires a disputed incompatibility where two parties strive to acquire at the same time an available set of scarce resources, which can be either material or immaterial (Wallensteen, 2002). Conflict resolution requires not only the reduction of the use of violence, but above all the dissolution of the underlying incompatibility so that the conflict cannot erupt again in the future. One way of preventing parties to a conflict from fighting each other could in some circumstances be to destroy their means of fighting, or to deter them from using force with a credible threat of military intervention. However, the literature on conflict is mostly concerned with preventive measures that can be undertaken by third parties in a non-coercive nature to address the underlying causes so as to avert conflict from escalating into violence (Erick & Claire, n.d.).

Until the end of the 1980s, only a small group of states and some international governmental organizations pursued conflict prevention activities with the aim of avoiding conflict, particularly wars between states (Juan, 2007). The traditional state system characterized the international political system and the disputes that emerged at the time.

The methods to manage disputes were thus framed by the conception of power and governance. Since then until the collapse of the Soviet Union, many efforts to avert conflicts were preventive in nature. However, those efforts were not nominally regarded as conflict prevention. Wegner and Möckli (2003) point to the good offices of the World Bank in the Indus water conflict between India and Pakistan (1947-1960) and the mediation efforts of Ethiopia's Haile Selassie in the territorial dispute between Algeria and Morocco (1962-1970) as testimonies of this argument. Again, several efforts that states took to address conflict situations were concerned with the management of disputes that had already escalated into violence with the aim of containing the situation. It was not common practice to embark on preventive activities that geared towards addressing the root causes of potential wars (Wegner & Möckli, 2003).

The concept of conflict prevention and its empirical value began to receive attention in conflict and security issues at the end of the Cold War. This was the period during which preventive actions were reduced to pre-emptive operations and super-power politics. Wegner and Möckli (2003) argue that no other issue during that period had received as much attention from scholars and policymakers as conflict prevention. The increased attention on conflict prevention offered the international community a new responsibility and authority to intervene in disputes and conflictual situations so that tensions producing those disputes and conflictual situations do not degenerate into violence and destructive armed confrontations. Thus, there was the need to develop new methods to manage crisis in human societies.



The new methods were to be based on the re-emergence of multilateralism as a prominent framework in international politics.

However, the hope for a post-Cold War peaceful international environment was dashed since the 1990s was characterized by violent conflicts in most parts of the world, especially in Africa. The 1990s proved to be the most violent decade since the Second World War. Cases such as the genocide in Rwanda, ethnic wars in Bosnia-Herzegovina and state failure in Somalia, to name a few, point to the necessity of finding means to avert conflicts from escalating into war, human disaster and regional instability (Wallensteen & Möller, 2003). Those conflict situations were an indication that the existing instruments for averting violence were no longer adequate for managing the security threats of the time.

In order to stimulate preventive thinking, the tendency was to develop a conceptual understanding and viable empirical tools for addressing differences and tensions that could degenerate into violence (Åkerlund, 2005). Conflict prevention is based on the premise that averting a conflict at an early stage is easier and that acting in a full-blown conflict is the costliest and most dangerous way of intervening and also the one that offers the least possibility of success (Murray, 2001). Hamburg (2002: 117) states that “the onset of mass violence transforms the nature of a conflict. Revenge motives severely complicate the situation. Resolution and even limitations of conflict are then less likely to be effective. So, early preventive action is exceedingly attractive.”

The post-Cold War conceptualization of conflict prevention is not significant only in the sense that attempts to prevent violent disputes did not

exist before, but in the attention it is receiving in international politics and in the inclusion of a broad variety of actors in its conceptual development and subsequent operationalisation. The increased attention to the field of conflict prevention is the result of the contribution of two main actors: state and non-state actors.

The guiding principle behind the term ‘conflict prevention’ is that intervention in a conflict at an early stage to avert it from escalating into violence is cost-effective and has a high possibility of success (Louise, 2003; Murray, 2001). Though this principle is shared by all researchers in the field, the meaning of the term is not agreed upon among them. In addition to the three definitions indicated earlier in this work-Boutros-Ghali (1992), Carnegie Commission (1997) and Lund (2002), the term ‘conflict prevention’ suggests different meaning to different scholars as indicated below.

- Munuera (1994: 3) conceives conflict prevention as “the application of non-constraining measures (those that are not coercive and depend on the goodwill of the parties involved), primarily diplomatic in nature.
- Lund (1996b: 37) defines ‘preventive diplomacy’ as “actions taken in vulnerable places and times to avoid the threat or use of armed force and related forms of coercion by states or groups to settle the political disputes that can arise from destabilising effects of economic, social, political, and international change.”
- Wallensteen (1998: 11) sees conflict prevention as “constructive actions undertaken to avoid the likely threat, use or diffusion of armed force by parties in a political dispute.”

- Miall, Ramsbotham and Woodhouse (1999: 96) state that conflict prevention refers to “actions which prevent armed conflicts or mass violence from breaking out.”
- Carment and Schnabel (2003: 2) see conflict prevention as “a medium and long-term proactive operational or structural strategy undertaken by a variety of actors, intended to identify and create the enabling conditions for a stable and more predictable international security environment.”

An argument by Lund (1996) calls for a more rigorous definition which should distinguish conflict prevention from such close related concepts as preventive diplomacy, foreign policy and intervention. For him, such a rigorous definition should be applicable to different contexts, but be specified enough to be able to operationalise (Lund, 1996). Carment and Schnabel (2003) also argue that the definition of conflict prevention should be broad in meaning and malleable as a policy. They claim that a broad definition has empirical validity because it can be applied to a variety of cases as well as phases of conflict. Wallenstein and Möller (2003), however, argue that most definitions are used very loosely in order to make them broad to be researchable and useful. Many of such definitions serve a policy purpose, rather than delimiting a field of inquiry into conflict prevention. However, a more concise definition is needed for the research community to develop the prevention agenda.

### **Approaches to conflict prevention**

In dealing with the concept of conflict prevention, three approaches are usually identified. Strategies for prevention fall into these three categories

according to the scope of their focus. For the purposes of clarification and understanding of the concept of conflict prevention itself, these approaches must always be presented in greater detail. They are operational prevention, structural prevention and systemic prevention. The first two are distinct, but are intimately complementary approaches.

Reychler (1994) refers to operational prevention as peacemaking in his typology of preventive measures, which according to him is the search for a negotiated resolution to perceived conflicts of interest between parties. This approach is based on the treatment of the direct forces that fuel a dispute, and “its focus is on the immediate avoidance of violence and killing while the resulting order becomes an issue to be dealt with later” (Wallensteen, 1998:9). As indicated earlier, operational prevention is explicitly directed toward the proximate or immediate causes of conflicts and imminent crises (Ackermann, 2000; Lund & Mehler, 1999). Other names given to operational prevention are ‘direct’ or ‘light’ prevention. It is a short-term approach with the aim of curtailing the escalation of a conflict into full-blown violence. Operational prevention employs such measures as fact-finding and monitoring missions, negotiation, mediation, arbitration, the creation of channels for dialogue among contending groups, preventive deployments, and confidence-building measures (Ackermann, 2000; Lund & Mehler, 1999). According to Wenger and Möckli (2003), the main objective of this approach is to avoid and/or discourage actors from crossing the threshold of violence.

Structural prevention is a long-term approach which is based on the idea that the creation of certain conditions and institutions in society can ensure that disputes and conflicts do not arise. According to the Carnegie

Commission (1997), this approach does not only aim at reducing violence, but at addressing its root causes and the environment that generates it. Structural prevention also addresses the latent conflicts and the final goal is to ensure human security, well-being and justice. It incorporates measures that facilitate governance, adherence to human rights, economic, political, and societal stability, as well as civil society building (Annan, 1999; Miall et al., 1999). Structural prevention operates in a wider perspective than operational prevention in terms of its targets, instruments and the actors involved (Wenger & Möckli, 2003). Ramsbotham, Woodhouse and Miall, (2005) refer to this approach as deep prevention.

By focusing on developing structural conditions to avert disputes from resulting into violence in human society, efforts can be included within a coherent definition of conflict prevention. To achieve this, democratic institutions must be strengthened and the respect for the rule of law and human rights must be promoted within a state. This is what is referred to as peacebuilding by Reychler (1994), which he describes as a strategy that tries to avoid or resolve conflicts through measures of an attitudinal, socio-economic and political nature. Other important issues that structural prevention must incorporate are gender issues such as the role of women in conflict prevention (UN, 2000), economic development, sustainable use of natural resources and reduction of poverty which creates grievances.

A third approach which has entered the field of conflict prevention recently and has no extensive literature is systemic prevention. It was introduced by Kofi Annan to refer to efforts or measures to address global risks that can contribute to conflict and that also transcend particular states

(Annan, 2006). Annan observes that systemic prevention should involve efforts by global partnerships and frameworks on an international scale. He thus suggests that this approach should employ measures that aim at addressing war crimes, climate pressures, illegal financial flows, drug trafficking, HIV/AIDS, conflict diamonds, human rights violations and transnational organized crime (Annan, 2006).

Annan believes that the institutionalization of the International Criminal Court (ICC) can help achieve the objective of systemic prevention. He points to a success story about the issue of conflict diamonds and the so-called “Kimberley process” which has now become a widely recognized and institutionalised process covering 99.8% of the global production of rough diamonds. The “Kimberley process” is a joint initiative of governments which was launched in 1992 with the aim of stopping the trade with conflict diamonds through an international scheme in order to guarantee conflict-free origins (Annan, 2006).

Conflict prevention should be perceived as a continuous process in which both operational and structural approaches play important complementary role. It is important to indicate that operational conflict prevention cannot take place by itself. It is used as a starting point or as part of a broader effort to achieve structural change. In cases where hostile relationships are escalating, it is important to avoid tensions that adversely affect efforts to achieve a more sustainable and long-term result in the process. It is from a research perspective that the two approaches are analyzed differently and studied separately (Juan, 2007). Taking into consideration the complementary role of operational and structural approaches, it will not be out

of place to define conflict prevention at this stage as operational and structural efforts to avoid the occurrence and reoccurrence of violence in human society.

### **Tools for conflict prevention**

In discussing conflict prevention tools, attention will be put more on operational prevention tools and methods, while stressing the importance of structural prevention as the ultimate means for achieving peace and security. This is because in their complementary role, operational prevention is used as the starting point or as part of a broader attempt towards the ultimate achievement of a structural change. It is not simple to evaluate the success of operational conflict prevention, and there are no available theoretical and methodological guidelines to measure what is success and what is failure in the field of conflict prevention.

However, Miall et al. (1999) observe that the success of operational conflict prevention is determined by the de-escalation of the dispute and by the promotion of efforts to transform the conflict in order to find a solution in the medium and long-term. Thus, the success of operational prevention measures is the curtailment of armed conflict. It is, therefore, essential for research to study the tools or measures that conflict prevention uses to achieve its objective.

The review of literature on measures and tools for conflict prevention is significant in this study because they relate to the strategies conflict prevention actors use to achieve their preventive objectives. The tools and measures used to prevent parties in a dispute from using violence to advance their cause can either be peaceful or coercive. Three approaches to measures

or tools for conflict prevention are considered in this study. These are the works of Michael Lund, Jan Eliason and Möller, Öberg, and Wallensteen.

Lund (1996) provides an elaborate toolbox of preventive instruments based on the sources of preventive actions. He tries to synthesize a set of observations on what is actually done in particular conflict situations, and thus arrives at this typology. He identifies three main categories of the toolbox for preventive action. The first category is military approaches which involve restraints on the use of armed force and threat of use of armed force. The second category is nonmilitary approaches which employ coercive diplomatic measures (without the use of armed force) and non-coercive diplomatic measures (without the use of armed force). The third category is development and governance approaches which include such measures as policies to promote national economic and social development, promulgation and enforcement of human rights, democratic standards and national governing structures to promote peaceful conflict resolution. Lund's terminology neither shows a systematic application of the approach nor indicates the relationship between the situation at hand and the means to treat it. This makes it difficult to identify the reasons for the success of preventive measures.

Eliasson (1996) takes a different approach to the tools for conflict prevention which shows a methodic presentation of the relationship between preventive measures and a conflict cycle. He suggests a ladder of increasingly coercive actions that could be undertaken by the international community to prevent conflictual situations from getting out of hand. This has become known as Eliason's Ladder of Conflict Prevention. This approach indicates how preventive measures must change to manage each level of aggression as a



conflict's degree of tension escalates. As a career diplomat, and a former UN high official, his approach directly relates to the operationalisation of conflict prevention measures. The approach can be understood as a step-by-step guide for the UN system to prevent conflictual situations that lead to violence.

The seven steps suggested by Eliason in his Ladder of Conflict Prevention are indicated below:

- Early warning;
- Fact finding missions;
- Stimulate the parties to use the eight measures in article 33 of Chapter VI of the UN Charter (negotiation, enquiry, mediation, conciliation, arbitration, judicial settlement, resort to regional agencies or arrangements, or other peaceful means of their own choice);
- Use the new generation of peace keeping operations, including preventive deployment;
- Use Chapter VII of the UN Charter peaceful coercive measures such as sanctions, not the least targeted sanctions;
- Threaten the use of military force, on the basis of Chapter VII of the UN Charter; and
- Actual use of military force, on the basis of Chapter VII of the UN Charter.

His approach seems to focus more on the coercive measures though; it is similar to the approach developed by Lund. What are more significant about his approach, apart from its systematic way of presenting the measures, are the ideas of early warning and preventive deployments that were not conceived by

Lund. However, they both seek to describe the nature of the available measures in conflict prevention and how they are applied in conflict situations.

Möller, Öberg, and Wallensteen (2005) divide peaceful measures for conflict prevention into verbal attention, relief efforts, facilitation, third-party coordination, proposals and decisions. The verbal attention implies the use of public appeals of concern about a situation. Verbal attention is not necessarily negative statements, and something such as praise to a given behaviour of a conflict party can lead to de-escalation of tensions. Relief efforts are material expressions of goodwill that can reduce the misunderstanding that is causing two parties to come into conflict with each other. Facilitation refers to efforts that provide communication atmosphere for parties to a conflict to discuss with each other. Included in facilitation are mediation and fact-finding missions. Third party coordination involves the activities that actors neutral to the conflict use to organise other peaceful conflict prevention measures.

Finally, proposals and decisions lend themselves to the entry points through which the attempt of a third party is able to directly affect the outcome of the negotiation process. Proposals and decisions are to some extent invasive though, they are taken with the consent of the parties in a dispute. The suggestions that a third party offers as a possible solution to a dispute which the conflict parties can accept willingly form proposals. On the other hand, decisions refer to a possible solution to a situation that has been decided by a third party. In cases such as arbitration, the parties to the conflict are usually obliged to accept the decision of the third party.

Möller et al. (2005) on the side of coercive measures for conflict prevention, identify two main tools or measures. These are ‘carrot and stick’

and imposition of sanctions. The 'carrot and stick' approach is the use of conditional offers as a means to persuade a party to a conflict to change its pattern of behaviour. These conditional offers can either be positive or negative sanctions. The positive sanctions represent rewards or recognitions for the implementation of a certain demand while the negative sanction is a threat. The authors label reward as a 'carrot' and threat as 'stick'. This approach can be equated to "comply or consequences" negotiations. The other tool is the imposition of sanctions or the actual use of force or threat if the situation so demands. For instance, the means available to the international community within the international law in respect of inter-state disputes are enshrined in Chapter VII of the UN Charter, particularly articles 41 and 42.

Article 41 states that the Security Council may decide on the employment of measures that are devoid of armed force and may call upon the members of the UN to apply them. These among other things may include complete or partial interruption of economic relations and of rail, sea, air, postal, telegraphic, radio, and other means of communication, and the severance of diplomatic relations. Similarly, article 42 states that when the measures provided for in article 41 are inadequate or have proved to be inadequate, the Security Council may take action by air, sea, or land forces as may be necessary to maintain or restore international peace and security. Such action may include demonstrations, blockade, and other operations by air, sea, or land forces of members of the UN.

It should be noted that the UN is not the only actor that is directly enforcing this approach. When regional or sub-regional level agrees upon coercive measures, corresponding inter-governmental organizations have the

authority to implement their own actions in compliance with the principles set forth in the UN Charter (UN, 1945). Having discussed the two categories of tools for conflict prevention: peaceful measures and coercive measures, I now present the typology of peaceful measures. The typology is adopted from Möller et al (2005: 6).

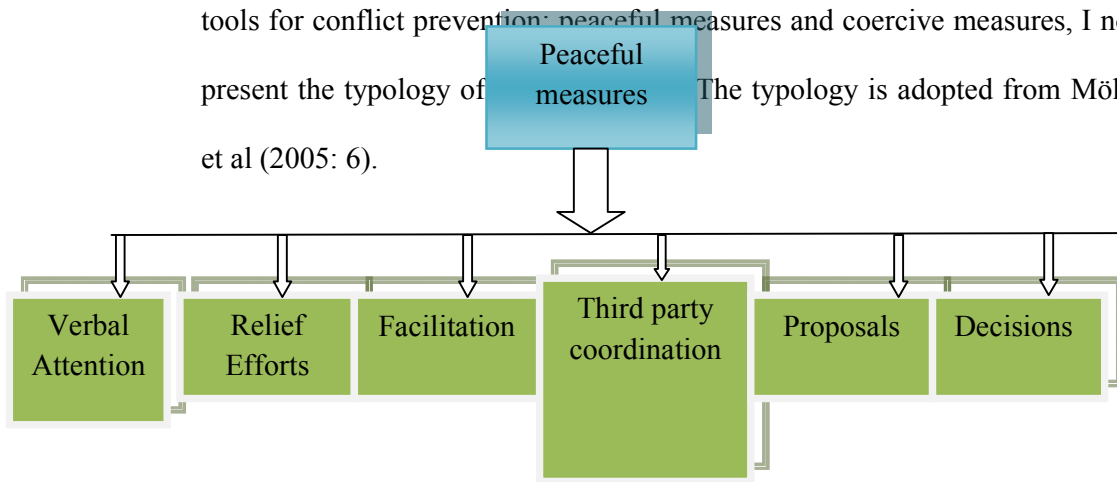


Figure 1 (A): Peaceful measures for conflict prevention

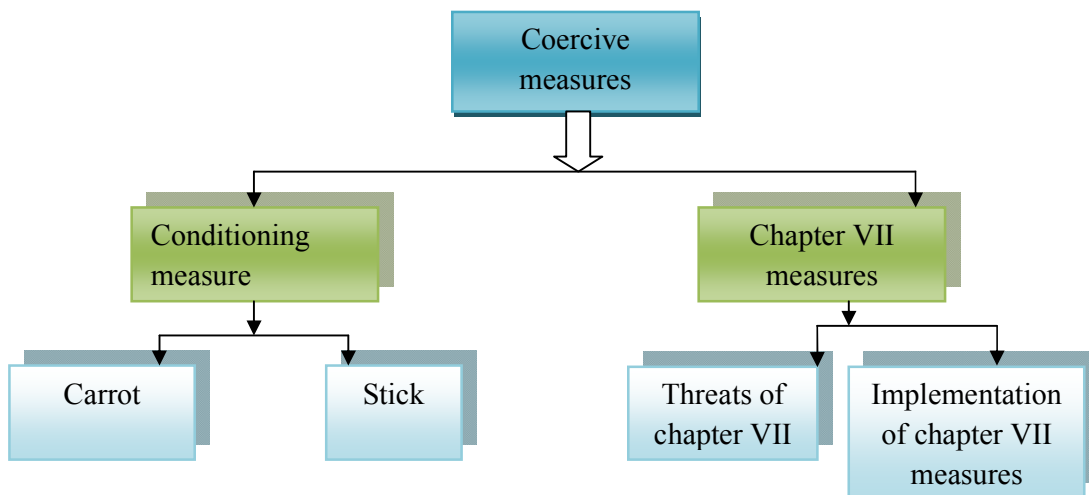


Figure 1 (B): Coercive measures for conflict prevention

**Figure 1 (A&B)**

## **Typology of Conflict Prevention Measures**

What must be noted is that a balance between coercive and non-coercive measures is met in the three approaches discussed above. It is now clear that operational and structural efforts are approaches to conflict prevention while coercive and non-coercive measures are means for preventing conflict. Taking this into consideration, it will not be wrong to conceptualise conflict prevention at this stage as operational and structural efforts taken to avoid the occurrence and recurrence of violent conflict in society, through the use of coercive and non-coercive measures.

## **Stages of a conflict**

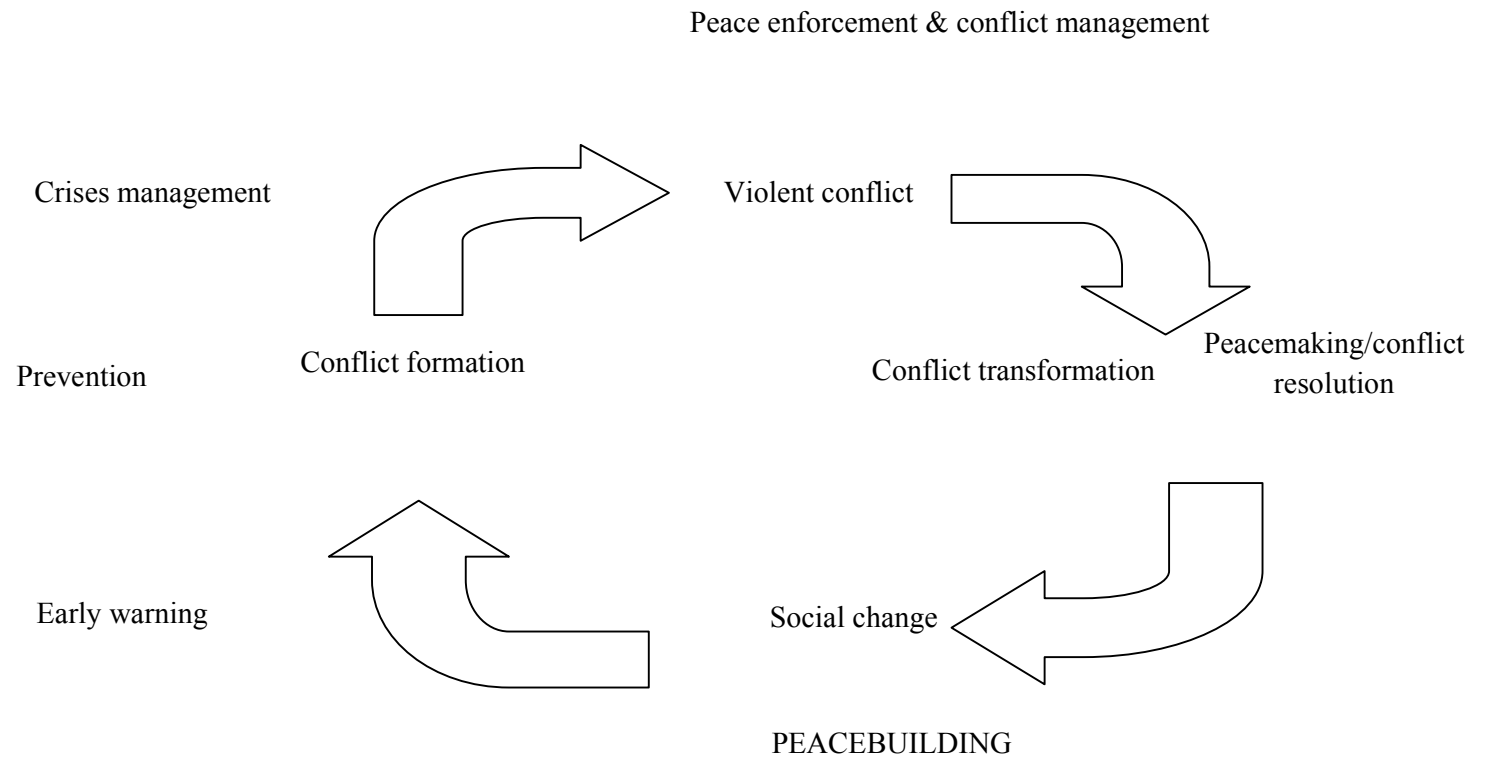
From Lund's toolbox and Eliasson's ladder of conflict prevention, it is apparent that conflicts move into phases or stages of different hostilities in the conflict cycle. It is therefore important to discuss the analysis of these phases as an important aspect in the conceptualization of conflict prevention. The focus on the phases of conflict is seen as useful as it makes it possible to analyze what resources and measures or strategies are necessary and at what phase they should be implemented (Wallensteen & Möller, 2003). Different scholars have identified phases of different hostility in the conflict cycle. However, the dynamics of a conflict are case specific and for that matter it is difficult to generate a broad understanding of the phases that characterise a conflictual process.

Reychler (1997) presents a more detailed model that identifies 17 phases in a life cycle of a conflict. These include: conflict gestation, latent conflict, peaceful protest, peaceful confrontation, hard-line confrontation, low

intensity war, intense war (over one thousand deaths in one year), chances of escalation predominate, scaling-down the conflict, victory, pre-negotiations, negotiations, truce, peace agreement, implementing the peace agreement, building peace, and sustainable peace. His framework is a comprehensive analyses of the different stages through which a conflict can actually evolve. However, it is difficult to find an actual case study that follows the steps proposed by the author. Some conflicts can follow his steps completely, but majority are most likely not to follow his outline.

Rothchild (2003) contributed to this subject by mentioning four different phases in the life cycle of a conflict. These are potential conflict, gestation, trigger and escalation and post-conflict. Rothchild's phases of a conflict represent a logical conceptualisation of the way a conflict moves through different hostility phases in the conflict cycle. Although he did not go into any degree of detail, his conception is useful in placing conflict prevention as a concept and a practical tool within an actual crisis. The problem with his proposal is that it does not indicate the process through which a conflict de-escalates from its highest level of intensity to a period of no violence. Well, this suggests that there are limits of conflict prevention.

Given that intervention at an earlier stage is always a better option, it is most important to implement preventive actions at a pre-violence stage such as during potential conflict and gestation phases or during post-conflict phase, before hard-line confrontation or after a peace agreement is signed. The figure below is a conflict cycle which the study has employed to enhance our understanding of the stages of a conflict and the preventive measures to employ at each stage.



**Figure 2: Conflict Cycle**

**Source: Svanström & Weissmann (2005: 9)**

Figure 2 shows a schematic illustration of phases of conflict and forms of intervention that may be feasible at different stages. Conflict formation arises out of social change and leads to a violent conflict. The violent conflict transforms and results in further social change which comes about as suppressed or marginalised individuals or groups come to articulate their interests and challenge existing norms and power structures. At the social change stage, the necessary intervention should be peacebuilding efforts. But when individuals or groups begin to challenge existing norms and power structures, early warning and response should be the intervention. At the conflict formation stage, prevention is the necessary intervention while crises management should be employed when tensions arise in the formation of conflict. The intervention at the violent conflict stage is peace enforcement and conflict management. Finally, when conflict de-escalates and transforms from violence, peacemaking and conflict resolution should be the intervention.

### **The concept of early warning**

The operationalisation of conflict prevention depends on the ability to identify impending situations that can lead to the generation of violent confrontation, and the capacity to influence these situations in a positive way. This is based on the assumption that “it is possible to read a conflict before it erupts and proper measures can be taken for its early engagement” (Karuru 2004:265). Therefore, conflict prevention must be built around a series of support elements such as early warning that makes prevention possible. Early warning can serve as essential information that can be a pre-requisite for



conflict prevention both as a concept and as a practical tool in international politics.

The need for practical information that warns of likely danger, and the need for such information to be timely enough for preventive actions to be taken necessitated the study of the concept of early warning as well as the development of effective early warning systems. Also, the failure of the international community to prevent the particular conflict situations mentioned earlier in this study resulted in the realisation that more effective methods for the collection of early warning information need to be developed. This is based on the idea that effective early warning systems directly influence early preventive action.

The effectiveness and authoritativeness of early warnings encourage policymakers to feel committed and responsible to act. In this regard, Schmeidl and Adelman state that “early warning needs to be seen as a precondition to developing political will and thus initiate (or better inform) reasonable response strategies. This makes early warning the sine qua non of effective conflict prevention, for humanitarian action cannot be undertaken without it” (Schmeidl, 2002: 72).

The roots of early warning can be traced to two main sources: disaster preparedness and the gathering of intelligence. Military intelligence gathering was based on the need for advance knowledge of hostilities where an actor collected intelligence to produce early warning information about possible danger to its own integrity and to protect its national interests and the integrity of its state borders (Schmeidl, 2002). Disaster preparedness focused on the systematic collection of information which could be used to anticipate the

likely causes of natural calamities such as hurricanes, volcanic eruptions, droughts and famine (Hough, 2004).

According to Juan (2007), military intelligence gathering has been used by the UN system to protect its peacekeeping forces from hostilities in Africa, while disaster preparedness has been used by Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) in its attempts to anticipate famines. This initial conceptualisation of early warning was largely based on the analysis and processing of information from such open sources as news reports and readily available statistics (Annan, 2006).

This conceptualisation proved inadequate since it faced serious limitations in the face of the complexities of deeply rooted conflicts and remote local situations about which little public information existed. Cilliers (2005) observes that military intelligence utilised open sources to gather data with the aim of serving human security, but not state or national interests, and that the method did not depend on transparent methods of information sharing. Consequently, the combination of the two initial ideas of early warning led to the emergence of a discourse on the need to connect early warning with response measures and specific recommendations for target groups. Thus, the contemporary early warning as a concept and as a tool is understood as means to protect third parties, particularly innocent civilians, from the dangers of violence and violent confrontations.

Contemporary early warning embraces collaboration and information sharing procedures acceptable to a wide variety of actors, including representatives of CSOs. The understanding that no single state or organisation can hold monopoly of early warning to make it successful is

central to the principle of collaboration and information sharing (Schmeidl, 2002). Such thinking gave rise to the emergence of various early warning systems around the world, some of whom have been integrated with a capacity for early response and others with a mission to provide analysis and recommendations for other actors. According to Van Walraven (1998), the contemporary understanding of early warning differs from the concept used by FAO as it focuses on human made disasters and in particular deadly conflicts with the ultimate goal of eliminating or reducing human suffering.

In a policy workshop at the Organisation for African Unity (OAU), now African Union (AU), Gouden (1995: 43) presented the concept of early warning and defined it as “simply a warning at an early stage of an event or a set of circumstances that will have negative consequences.” This definition implies impending danger or a signal of something to happen badly. However, it does not provide insight on the practical implications of the concept and its relevance to the field of peace studies. Van Walraven advances the definition of the concept and states that early warning is a

process that would involve the collection of data on the basis of uniform, systematised procedures; their analysis according to a proper scientific methodology, and if it would be concluded that those data pointed to a high probability of impending violent conflict, the transmission of a warning to political decision-makers (Van Walraven, (1998, pp. 3).

What is highlighted in Van Walraven’s (1998) definition is that early warning is an operational tool and should follow methodological procedures that would ensure the relevance and accuracy of the information being produced. It also indicates that early warning is a process that is carried out in three stages: collection of information, analysis of the information, and communication of the information. Again, this definition acknowledges that

the ultimate purpose for performing early warning activities is to facilitate decision-making processes as regards emerging security threats and violent conflicts. The definition that complements Van Walraven's (1998) is the one by Howard Adelman which sees early warning as "the communication of information on a crisis area, analysis of that information, and the development of potential, timely, and strategic response options to the crises" (Adelman, 1998 in Hough 2004: 25). Just like van Walraven (1998), Adelman does not only highlight the worth of both communication and analysis of information as stages in the early warning process, but he adds the policy-relevant aspect of early warning information.

It can be deduced from Adelman's (1998) conception that early warning is a useful means of prevention, mitigation or management of conflictual issues at different stages of escalation (Adelman, 1998). Unlike the concept of conflict prevention, early warning is not restricted to any specific stage in a conflict cycle as it is applied without altering its purpose of warning of imminent events at any moment in time within the dynamics of evolving violence. Early warning does not only serve as a tool for conflict prevention, it is also used to manage already violent confrontations by foreseeing actions that can further escalate the conflict. Although both authors focused on information as a general concept, they failed to specify the kind of data that is necessary for effective early warning to take place.

Davies (2000: 1-2) strengthens the understanding of the concept of early warning by introducing the core elements of the concept. He states that "early warning can generate analyses that identify key factors driving instability, assess future scenarios, and recommend options oriented to

preventive action.” His notion of the concept is more systematic and suggests what kind of analysed information should be provided to policy makers. It is embedded in his conception that early warning information must indicate the factors that are capable of triggering the escalation of a dispute into violence. Taking into consideration the analysis of the key factors fueling instability, descriptions of possible happenings if situations continue to deteriorate can be generated as a means to establish a variety of possible measures that can be applied effectively and efficiently. He also relates the concept of early warning and argues that it is possible to establish a direct relation between early warnings with the stages in the life-cycle of a conflict.

Cilliers (2005) provides a complement to Davies’ approach and identifies four factors that early warning in its most fundamental form should always analyse. Thus, early warning should analyse issues that underpin and drive the conflict (manifestations and causes), factors that can serve as catalysts for peace, the stakeholders in the conflict and the best practical options to prevent the situation from becoming violent. Given the conflict prevention measures discussed in this study, it is important to focus on the manifestations and causes of conflicts as the principal source of warning. Therefore, it is necessary to emphasise that the collection of accurate information on the factors that drive insecurity can help to distinguish measures that can act in response (Last, 2003).

The types of information to be collected as part of early warning efforts should be based on the timing at which they are perceptible. Davies and Gurr (1998) identify three main stages in the escalation of a conflict for this purpose. They mentioned structural tensions, escalation and crisis. Structural

tensions refer to the underlying causes of conflicts and include conditions that change slowly and can thus be seen as long-term early warning indicators. The authors point to a history of state repression, exclusionary ideologies, land desertification, and population pressures as examples of structural tension. Escalation stage is a period when some elements accelerate the progression of the dispute towards violence. Examples of such data are such dynamic factors as human rights violations, refugee flows and internally displaced people, mobilisation of local youths, the proliferation of small arms and arms trade, environmental degradation and the scarcity of shared resources. The crisis stage is a period during which triggering factors are identified as early warning signals.

Gouden (1995) suggests three main criteria through which information on early warning indicators must be valued. These include the quantity and quality of information, the urgency or long-term perspective of the information, and the multi-disciplinary background of the information. Considering the situation in which it is being managed, it is important to have a balance between quantity and quality of early warning information. Thus, the information should be detailed and shared adequately so as to allow for apparent understanding of the evolution of a certain situation and to enable analysts and policymakers to devise comprehensive preventive strategies. The early warning information must be presented in a manner that the urgency for action or response is understood. This is because too much information need much time for analysis, and that quantity might challenge the level of attention policy-makers might give to certain early warning information.

A decision-maker who has limited time at his/her disposal must be provided with information in a way that he/she is able to make an informed decision within a relatively short period of time. Early warning information should also meet certain quality standards with respect to time, accuracy, validity, reliability and verifiability. In this wise, it is possible that the sources of information can be trusted and the process for the collection of information can be tracked in an open manner (Schmeidl, 2002). However, this depends on the experience, the methods for interpretation, and the level of objectivity by the generators of early warning information. From our understanding of deep rooted conflicts that are being managed today, particularly in Africa, it is important to stress the analysis of these situations as such analysis facilitates the achievement of higher degrees of predictability of their dynamics.

Again, the multi-disciplinary dimension of information is essential. The early warning information must correspond to a wide range of fields of knowledge such as political science, anthropology, environmental studies, military intelligence and economics among others (Gouden, 1995). Therefore, the establishment and operationalisation of an effective early warning system demands the cooperation between an open and reliable network of actors who offer expertise at different levels of society. The early warning information generators and their diverse expertise, the categories for naming and classifying, the standards of evaluation, the elements of confidentiality and the modes of transmitting the information all significantly matter within the network that makes up an early warning system (Adelman, 1998).

Rupesinghe (2005) identifies three generations of early warning systems: first generation, second generation and third generation early warning

systems. The first generation early warning systems were the ones which were entirely based outside the conflict region, particularly in the West. The second generation early warning systems improved upon the first approach and made it possible for the monitoring mechanisms and the gathering of primary event data to take place in the conflict zones. However, the analysis continued to be conducted outside the conflict region. The third generation early warning systems are entirely located in the conflict regions and integrate early warning and early response together as simultaneous processes.

It is within the framework of the third generation that the concept of early warning has been defined as “the collection and analysis of information about potential and/or actual conflict situations, and the provision of policy options to influential actors at the national, regional and international levels that may promote sustainable peace.” (WANEP, 2000: 11). This definition contains the goals of identification and assessment of the most salient conflict indicators, prediction of likely conflict trends and scenarios, identification of strategies and opportunities for peace, mobilisation of resources and building the capacity of local actors in awareness creation of impending conflicts.

As it can be understood from the diversity of information that has to be collected and analysed in an effective early warning process, it is commonsense to recognise that a vast network of actors must come into play in the collection, analysis and sharing of the data. These actors are as important to early warning as the information itself, as they are the first link in the process of analysis of the collected data.



### **Johan Galtung's model of conflict formation and transformation**

The analysis of Galtung's model of conflict formation and transformation seeks to present an idea based on which actors in conflict prevention have often used their experience and expertise in early warning to create the most favorable atmosphere for actual conflict transformation to take place. The analysis focuses on the pre-violence stages of conflict formation with the aim of identifying the elements in the model that serve as early warning indicators for actors in conflict prevention. This is essential because there are certain components in the formation of conflicts that can be used to predict the occurrence of violence before it erupts.

Galtung (1996) posits that within the factors that drive the escalation of conflict are forces that can be managed in order to transform a dispute into a positive argument for the resolution of the issues that are generating tensions. According to him, conflicts form when certain underlying problems impede the achievement of certain goals by an actor or a series of actors in society. He argues that conflicts can take two forms depending on the number of actors involved and the number of issues creating the conflict. A conflict can take the form of a dispute, in which case two actors compete for the attainment of the same scarce goal. A conflict can also take the form of a dilemma, a situation where one actor pursues two incompatible goals. Although both forms of conflict can generate violence, the focus of this study is on disputes as sources of conflict since they can easily lead to attempts to harm or hurt the integrity of the "other".

He suggests that a conflict generated from a dispute can be viewed as an outcome of behaviour (B) and attitude (A) of the parties and contradiction

(C). The characterisation of the behaviour of the conflict parties by Galtung is seen to be destructive not in violent physical acts, but in verbal acts and hostile body language. The behaviour also describes the manner in which antagonism can be exposed and can easily be interpreted as actual destruction of things and lives. The emphasis is that certain behavioural patterns can damage the relations and perceptions between two social actors. It is not seen as an action itself, but as the readiness and capacity to act. Although the behaviour component in the conflict formation process is visible, empirical, overt, and can be observed, it does not by itself lead to actual violence. It can also take the form of forced “economic, social, political or symbolic costs, with no physical injuries or deaths” (Leatherman, DeMars, Gaffney & Väyrynen, 1999: 60).

Galtung points to two instances where behavioural patterns fueled the deterioration of dispute into civil war and subsequent genocide in Rwanda. The first exemplifies visible and evident conflict behaviour. The mobilisation and preparation of the Rwandan Patriotic Front’s (RPF) militant refugees in Uganda in 1988 was a signal of impending violence in the border-line regions between Uganda and Rwanda. Again, the failure of RPF’s incursion in Rwanda in late 1989, and the subsequent successful invasion of 10,000 well-armed combatants under the leadership of Major General Rwigyema, was a visible action that would lead to the start of the Rwandan Civil War (Otunnu, 1999). The behavioural pattern in the second instance was not openly visible, but it served as a precondition for the violence. According to Austin (1999), the build-up of arms stocks by parties to the dispute in Rwanda and the covert

transfer of arms from the Ugandan government to the RPF forces was a signal that the group was preparing for an armed conflict.

Attitudes as an element in the conflict formation process include the parties' perceptions and misperceptions of each other and about the dispute itself. These can be positive or negative, but in violent conflicts parties tend to develop demeaning stereotypes of the other, and attitudes are often influenced by emotions such as fear, anger, bitterness and hatred. Attitudes cover emotive (feeling), cognitive (belief) and conative (desire, will) elements. The perception of oneself in relation to the other and the perception of the other is a driving force for conflict and violence (Galtung, 1989), but again, it does not necessarily lead to violence in isolation. There have been several instances where attitudes have propelled the escalations of disputes into conflicts, especially those that evolved along ethnic divisions.

The Liberian Civil war between 1989 and 1997 was driven by an account of ethnic oppression from the Americo-Liberian elites towards the rural, inland and population of ethnic African descent. The ethnic divisions in 1980 that was exacerbated by economic problems resulted in a military coup d'état led by Master-Sergeant Samuel Doe during whose leadership the government was motivated by ethnic hatred against former elites in power and other ethnic communities of Liberia. The fear from Doe by other native communities that suffered ethnic hatred generated conditions of internal chaos that allowed Charles Taylor and his National Patriotic Front of Liberia (NPFL) to invade the country in 1989 which resulted in an eight-year civil war (Adebajo, 2002)

Attitudes also played a vital role in the Rwandan genocide case. The use of public media such as the Kangura magazine and Radio Rwanda by Hutu elites to promote exaggerations, falsehood and sentiments of apprehension against the Tutsi provoked the beginning of the Rwandan genocide. The messages of hate spread by Radio Rwanda incited the Interahamwe militias to start a campaign for the assassination of Tutsis in the Bugesera region, which left a death toll of 300 in four days. This media campaign did not stop until the genocide took place in 1994 (Chalk, 1999). The United States Congress states that “the encouragement of ethnic hatred in the radio, together with the creation and arming of militias, was one of the clearest early warning signals of an imminent genocide” (Chalk, 1999: 94).

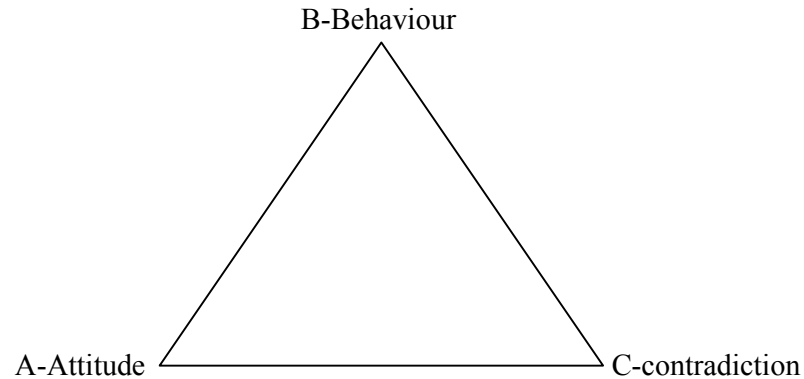
The contradiction represents the underlying problem that is generating the conflict situation. This includes the actual or perceived incompatibility of goals between the conflict parties. This is the desire of one group to achieve a certain goal in competition with the desire of another group to achieve the same objective. The existence of a particular contradiction between two parties has to be justified before conclusion can be drawn that there is a conflict between them. A contradiction is defined in Galtung’s model as “incompatible goal-state in a goal-seeking system” (Galtung, 1956: 71). According to Leatherman et al. (1999), the variety of sources that generate contradictions can be grouped into three main categories as material-structural, cultural and institutional. The material-structural category of contradiction appears as conceptual contradiction and offer explanation to the emergence of conflicts from a very comprehensive perspective. Structural category of contradiction explains conflicts according to how society is organised, and

material category of contradiction defines conflict based on the distribution of resources.

All the three categories put together shed light on how “various social groups, their interests, and resources are related to each other” (Leatherman et al, 1999: 51) and how a conflict can ensue between or among these groups. The three categories of contradiction are further divided into entitlements such as access to food, shelter, education, territory; and social cleavages. These sub-divisions of the categories of contradiction interplay to generate structural-material sources of conflicts, especially in situations where resources are scarce (scarcity conflicts). There is also a cultural explanation to contradiction which is based on interaction between culture and identity. Political factors that are born by unjust political representation, politics of exclusion and discrimination, illegitimate and undemocratic governing systems are derived from institutional factors that can generate a contradiction.

The pastoralist conflicts of the Horn of Africa, especially the border regions of Uganda, Sudan, Ethiopia, Kenya and Somalia are examples of conflicts that have resulted from the appearance of powerful contradictions. These conflicts emerged from scarcity of livelihood resources and the change of communal and social patterns of the pastoralist communities. In line with the conception of contradictions presented by Galtung, pastoralist conflicts of this kind are a representation of competing interests and the incompatibility of goal-states in a goal-seeking system. Just like other elements, contradictions do not necessarily lead to violence in isolation in the process of conflict formation. A fully expressed conflict is thus a blend of behaviour, attitudes and contradictions. With this conception, Galtung views a conflict as a triangle

and this conflict triangle is seen as a visual tool for analyzing the dynamics that exists among the three elements in the process of conflict formation.



**Figure 3: Conflict triangle**

**Source: Galtung (1996: 72)**

The conflict triangle demonstrates the dynamics of conflict formation which come about as a result of the interaction among the three elements. Each element influences another in the model as they interact. The behaviour which represents aggression of parties to a dispute influences the attitude of the other as well as the contradiction. Similarly, the emotions and cognitions which are found in the attitudes of the parties to a dispute together with the contradictions can determine the kind of behaviour one party to a dispute has towards another. Attitudes and behaviour in the same vein can affect the nature of the problem itself (contradiction). Therefore, as the three factors interact with one another the complexity and aggressive nature of the conflict increases until violence emerges.

In a case where a dispute is increasing into a fully articulated conflict, negative attitudes and violent behaviour can be controlled by means of conflict prevention. The conflict triangle and the study of the interaction of the

elements in it offers the practitioners in the field of conflict prevention the opportunity to be able to influence the dynamics of a dispute in order to either de-escalate it or solve the underlying problem that created the dispute. Influencing the behavioural message of a conflict, and its negative attitudes is a way to handle a conflict in a manner that the sources of the violence can be eliminated. This attempt can freeze the conflict while a more complete solution can be constructed and negotiated. Similarly, the treatment of the contradiction that is creating the dispute is the most constructive strategy to solve the conflict in its entirety (Galtung, 1978).

The focus of Galtung's idea is on the rationalisation of a framework to examine the positive forces within conflicts and how they can be used to transform unconstructive disputes into favourable relations. Based on the conception of conflict as a unifying force within society, he points to those opportunities in conflicts that can permit them to be transformed into a relationship of shared dependency between the conflict parties. Given his interpretation of conflict as being composed of danger and opportunity, it is not impossible to find room for conflict prevention as a means for opening the most favourable environment for conflict transformation, especially at a time that disputes have not deteriorated into violence.

It has already been acknowledged in this study that effective and efficient conflict prevention is based on comprehensive early warning information. Within the conflict triangle, it is possible for actors in conflict prevention to identify the dynamics in the formation of conflicts that can be regarded as indicators of emerging violence. By placing the conflict triangle framework at pre-violent stage in the life-cycle of a conflict, its three main

elements can serve as early warning indicators. Therefore, conflict prevention actors who have the capacity to understand social dynamics at a local level must equally have the capacity to identify when attitudes and behavioural manifestation of certain groups within the community can lead to violence in the future. It is important for conflict prevention actors to understand which abnormal behaviour that is indicative of distrust or aggression, notice changes in the way some parties perceive others and identify contradictions at an early stage in order to allow preventive measures to take place.

### **Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR)**

Formal litigation, grounded in an adversarial process, is often limited in ensuring fairness and satisfaction for disputants. Also, the formal legal system is usually overloaded and cannot provide timely and effective closure, and due to this it is not uncommon in African countries for a dispute to take a decade or more to reach resolution. Even when courts are able to find a solution to a dispute in time, they may only address the legal question and ignore the underlying catalyst since their focus is not on conflict resolution or mitigation. At times too, court decisions can escalate disputes as noted by Kekarias (2007). According to him, the proclamation of a winner by a judge in litigation process is the beginning of the actual conflict. In such circumstances aggrieved disputants usually take justice into their own hands which comes with violent consequences.

In post-conflict and fragile contexts where societal tensions are already high and justice systems typically do not function, the need for prompt resolution of disputes is particularly critical. Without timely, accessible, affordable,



and trusted mechanisms to resolve differences, localised disagreements or crimes can degenerate into broader conflict and this can contribute to a culture of violence (Uwazie, 2011). Due to the inability of the litigation system to prevent most disputes from degenerating into violence, the attention of most disputants have shifted to Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) which they believe can offer them solutions to their disputes. If ADR can be used to settle disputes so that they do not degenerate into violent conflicts, then it is an essential component of conflict prevention strategies and thus relates to the topic of this study.

ADR encompasses a series of nonconventional peaceful methods of settling disputes and resolving conflict situations in ways that satisfy disputants and preserve relationships. It is seen as an alternative to the formal court system and this is confirmed by Shedrack (2006: 96) who states that “ADR is specially meant to serve as an alternative to the official conventional means of settling disputes mainly through litigation and the courts.” In other words, ADR is informal processes of resolving disputes in which a professional third party assists disputants to settle their dispute in a way that is mutually accepted by both disputants (Sprangler, 2003).

In the African context, the application of ADR differs from one cultural setting to another and from one level of conflict to another. Whichever way, however, the ADR process involves a neutral third party who either assists disputants to take their own decision or impose a binding decision on disputants to resolve the dispute. In Africa and Ghana in particular, these neutral third parties are usually traditional leaders such as chiefs, earth priests,

community elders, clan heads, senior members of the community, to mention a few.

The importance of ADR to this study is its ability to resolve disputes that have the potential of escalating into violence. Even where a dispute has already escalated into violence, ADR is still appropriate because it is applied to reduce tensions to pave way for a lasting solution to be found. This is because ADR is a win-win method which depicts a joint decision making approach to dealing with social conflicts (Ramirez, 2002 in Sackey 2010). Although ADR offers opportunity for disputes to be settled in situations where the conventional litigation process cannot provide solutions, it only works effectively where both disputants are not prepared to use formal court system (Lederach, 1997). This is an indication that ADR recognises the rules of a cultural setting.

Alden-Wily (2003) has observed some fundamental features of ADR. According to him, ADR process is participatory, voluntary, confidential, rights preservation, and that third parties are neutral. Other features of ADR are that it is informal and flexible, it is dialogue in nature, it has no fixed venue, and its decisions are not binding except in arbitration. The goal of ADR mechanisms is to achieve a mutual agreement between the disputants. As a result, the strengths and weaknesses of the mechanisms are usually explained to both disputants in order to persuade or convince them to accept the outcome of the resolution process. Each disputant is made to know what he/she stands to lose or gain in the process. But what has been stressed by Herrera (2006) is that consensus building in conflict resolution is more sustainable when community decision making process is supported by legal frameworks.

In the application of ADR to the settlement of disputes, several methods and techniques are employed (Fisher, 2000) and these methods are commonly referred to as ADR mechanisms. Herrera (2006) observes that some of these mechanisms are consensual while others are nonconsensual. With the consensual mechanisms it is the disputants themselves, who decide on the final solution to the problem, but that is done with the help of a third party. With the nonconsensual mechanisms, on the other hand, it is the third party who makes a final decision to the settlement of the dispute. Thus, the success of nonconsensual methods such as arbitration and adjudication depends largely on the influence and authority of the third party. Daniel and Walker (1997) identify a variety of ADR mechanisms to include negotiation, conciliation, mediation, arbitration, and facilitation among others.

Fisher and Ury (1991) define negotiation as a structured process of dialogue between disputants who hold different opinions about an issue. For Miall et al (1999), negotiation is a process whereby the parties to a dispute seek to settle or resolve their dispute. The United Nations University of Peace sees negotiation as communication that is usually governed by pre-established procedures between representatives of parties to a dispute (Miller, 2003). Negotiation is a consensual method in which two parties directly dialogue and discuss a conflict situation or a dispute they are faced with. Both parties get to know there is a dispute between them and come to realise that they can settle or resolve it by talking to each other. This means that there exists communication between the disputants in negotiation process and it is the nature of this communication that determines the effectiveness of the outcome. Therefore, the decision making authority and power in negotiation are directly

in the hands of the disputants since they have control over the process and outcomes. The disputants usually employ such tactics as bargaining, compromises and concessions in the resolution process. The process is bound to be difficult when there is imbalance of power between the disputants.

Negotiation can be positional or collaborative. It is positional when disputants make demands that are inconsiderate with the interests of others. Positional negotiation makes the resolution process look aggressive, adversarial and competitive since parties want their interests to be met at the expense of the concerns of others. Negotiation is collaborative when both disputants co-operate in the search for the best solution to their problem in ways that their interests and fears are met. Disputants educate each other about their needs and concerns with the aim of building a sustainable relationship. In negotiation, there is no third party who facilitates the resolution process. Although negotiation does not fit in some of the definitions of ADR that emphasise third party intervention, it is an appropriate ADR mechanism since it is used as an alternative to the formal court system.

Conciliation is a consensual method of ADR mechanism which covers intermediary efforts that are aimed at persuading the parties in a conflict to work towards a peaceful solution. It is a third party activity and involves facilitation. It is for this reason that Miller (2003) sees it as the voluntary referral of a dispute to a neutral third party who either suggests a nonbinding settlement or conducts explorations to facilitate more structures or techniques for disputants to resolve the dispute. In conciliation, a neutral third party engages the disputants separately in a network to enhance communication and assists them to jointly take a decision that can resolve the dispute (Herrera,

2006). This is the reason why conciliation is recommended for conflict situations where disputants are not able to envisage the possibility of an agreement due to the absence of communication.

Another ADR mechanism is mediation. Although it is a third party interventionary method, it is consensual in nature. According to Miall et al (1999), mediation is a voluntary process which involves the intervention of a third party who plays an advisory role to help disputants find a solution to their dispute. The outcome of the process is solely controlled by the disputants. The third party who is referred to as the mediator does not impose a solution or decision; rather, he/she facilitates the resolution process. Disputants work together comparatively to arrive at a solution that meets the interests of both. Zaidel (1991) notes that mediation is a step-by-step process which is conducted through a careful exploration of agreements and disagreements, collection and sharing of relevant information, and discussion of options and proposals, and presentation and clarification of interests in order to find a solution to a dispute between two parties. Mediation may not be an appropriate mechanism in conflict situations where one party is a victim or has no adequate bargaining power in the process.

Arbitration is yet another mechanism of ADR which involves a third party who imposes a final decision in the resolution process. It is a nonconsensual method. The arbitrators may be attorneys, business persons or traditional authorities who have the expertise in a particular field. Here, an independent third party who is referred to as arbitrator assesses the evidence and hears arguments based on which he makes a decision toward the resolution of the dispute. Although the arbitrator's final decision is expected to

be binding on disputants, it is possible for them to resort to the formal court system when they are unsatisfied or unhappy with the decision made by the arbitrator. Arbitration is appropriate for dispute situations where the disputants do not have a relationship and where the conflict parties desire a decision outside the court trial to avoid expenses. This has been observed by Sackey (2010) when he states that the aim of arbitration among other things is to avoid litigation process and arrive at an outcome that is less costly.

The final ADR mechanism that has been considered in this study is facilitation. It also involves the intervention of a third neutral party whose main role is to assist the disputants during pre-resolution stage and perhaps during the dispute resolution process. The facilitator enhances communication between the disputants and his involvement does not in any way affect the final decision of the resolution process. The facilitator's focus is usually on revealing motivations, moving towards a consensus by clarifying issues and evaluating the process. His main role is to offer disputants support to enable them to begin the dialogue.

It is important to underscore that most of the ADR mechanisms are applied and used largely in the indigenous conflict resolution process. But with the indigenous conflict resolution, the decisions made by traditional or customary leaders are binding to conflict parties. Other elements that complement the ADR mechanisms in indigenous conflict resolution process are spirituality, nonverbal communication in decision making, healing effects such as purification, pacification, and decision reparation which are meant for the mental and spiritual rehabilitation of victims and perpetrators of conflicts (Kirby, 2005).

Some of the merits of ADR are that complaints are processed more quickly and resolved earlier; litigation and other costs are lower; future complaints are avoided as parties learn to communicate better with each other; parties are more satisfied with the problem solving process and with the results; relations with contractors and other outside parties are improved; more creative solutions are derived from the process; internal morale is improved; turnover is lower; Parties comply better with their settlement agreements; and productivity is improved (Etuk, 2009). Irrespective of its merits, ADR faces a major challenge in respect of its final decisions. It lacks authority, legitimacy and enforceability of decisions. As a result, its decisions are not binding and for this reason some disputants end up going back to the formal court system to seek solutions to their disputes.

### **Conceptual framework**

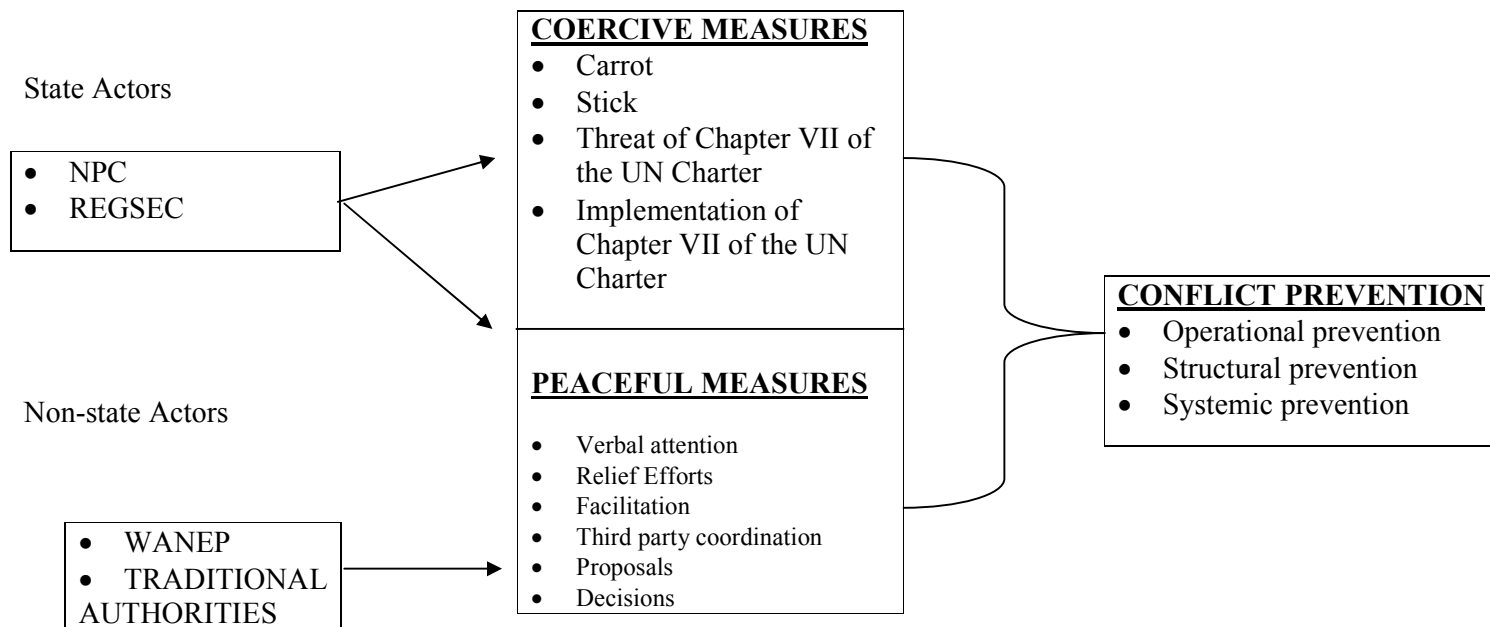
Möller, Öberg, and Wallensteen's (2005) model of conflict prevention is adopted for this study and for developing the conceptual framework. The justification for using this model for the study lies in the fact that it encompasses conflict prevention measures that relate to the strategies that state and non-state actors employ to achieve their conflict prevention objectives in the form of operational prevention (short-term), structural prevention (long term) and systemic prevention (both short-term and long-term, but global in nature). The model categorises conflict prevention measures as peaceful measures and coercive measures.

The peaceful conflict prevention measures include verbal attention, relief efforts, facilitation, third-party coordination, proposals and decisions.

Both state and non-state actors employ verbal attention to make public appeals of concern about conflictual situations which can lead to de-escalation of tensions. Relief efforts are material expressions of goodwill which the state and non-state actors use to reduce the misunderstanding that causes two parties to come into conflict with each other. Facilitation is the efforts that state and non-state actors use to provide communication atmosphere for parties to a conflict to discuss with each other. Third party coordination involves the activities that actors neutral to the conflict use to organise other peaceful conflict prevention measures. Proposals form the suggestions that state and non-state actors offer as a possible solution to a dispute which the conflict parties can accept willingly. Finally, decisions refer to a possible solution to a situation that state and non-state actors decide for parties to a conflict.

The model, on the side of coercive measures for conflict prevention, identifies 'carrot and stick' and imposition of sanctions as two main measures. The 'carrot and stick' measure is the conditional offers the state and non-state actors use as a means to persuade a party to a conflict to change its pattern of behaviour. These conditional offers can either be a positive sanction (reward) or a negative sanction (threat). The model labels reward as 'carrot' and threat as 'stick' and this measure can be equated to "comply or consequences" negotiations. The second coercive measure is the imposition of sanctions or the actual use of force or threat if the situation so demands. With this approach, the state actors use their authority to implement measures that are in compliance with the principles set forth in the Chapter VII of the UN Charter, particularly articles 41 and 42.





**Figure 4: Conflict prevention strategies**

**Source:** Möller, Öberg, and Wallensteen (2005).

Explaining the conceptual framework, it is realised that the state actors employ both coercive and peaceful measures in preventing conflicts. The non-state actors, on the other hand, use only the peaceful measures in their attempt to prevent conflicts from escalating into armed violence. Effective implementation of both coercive and peaceful measures by state and non-state actors help them prevent conflict which is achieved in the form of operational prevention (short term), structural prevention (long term) and systemic prevention (both short term and long term, but global in nature).

### **Chapter Summary**

This chapter reviewed literature related to the issue under investigation. The review is based on scholarly articles, books and other sources such as dissertations and conference proceedings that are relevant to the study. This review, therefore, provided a description, summary, and critical evaluation of the theories of conflict, the concept of conflict prevention, the concept of early warning, conflict theories, especially, Johan Galtung's model of conflict formation and conflict transformation, and Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) Mechanisms.

## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **METHODOLOGY**

#### **Methodology**

This section describes the research approach to the study. It illustrates the logic of enquiry or indicates how conflict prevention strategies by state and non-state actors are explored and validated. By so doing, a number of methodological elements are described. It discusses the study area, research design employed by the study, sources of data used in the study, target population, sampling procedures, methods of data collection, data collection instruments and data processing and analysis. The chapter also touches on some ethical issues and challenges encountered by the researcher in the field. How the challenges encountered by the researcher were resolved is included in the chapter.

#### **Study Area**

The area for the study is Northern Region of Ghana. The Northern Region is the largest region in Ghana which occupies an area of about 70,383 square kilometres, accounting for 29.5 percent of the total land mass of the country. It shares boundaries with the Upper East and the Upper West Regions to the north, the Brong Ahafo and the Volta Regions to the south, and two neighbouring countries, the Republic of Togo to the east, and La Cote d'Ivoire to the west. The 2010 Population and Housing Census put the total population of the region at 2,468,557 with population density of 35 persons

per square kilometer and 10.2 percent as its share of the total population of Ghana [Ghana Statistical Service] (GSS, 2010).

The Northern Region is much drier than southern areas of Ghana, due to its proximity to the Sahel and the Sahara. The vegetation consists predominantly of grassland, especially savanna with clusters of drought-resistant trees such as baobabs or acacias. Between May and October is the wet season, with an average annual rainfall of 750 to 1050 mm (30 to 40 inches). The dry season is between November and April. The highest temperatures are reached at the end of the dry season, the lowest in December and January. However, the hot Harmattan winds from the Sahara blows frequently between December and the beginning of February. The temperatures can vary between 14°C (59°F) at night and 40°C (104°F) during the day.

The region is divided into 24 districts, one municipality and one metropolis with its regional capital at Tamale. A Metropolitan, Municipal or District Assembly is headed by a Chief Executive and all these assemblies are structures within the Regional Co-ordinating Council (RCC).

The region has four Paramount Chiefs namely: the Yaa Na who is based in Yendi; the Yagbon Wura in Damango; the Bimbila Naa in Bimbila; and the Nayiri in Nalerigu. Each of the paramount chiefs represents a major ethnic group. The major ethnic groups of the region are the Mole Dagbon, the Gurma, the Akan and the Guan. Among the Mole-Dagbon, the largest sub-groups are the Dagomba and the Mamprusi, while the Komkombas are the largest of the Gurma, the Chokosi of the Akan and the Gonja of the Guan. The other sub-groups within the major ethnic groups in the region are the Nawuris,

the Basares, the Moshie, and the Vagla. Over 56 percent of the population is followers of Islam, 21 percent belongs to traditional religion, 19 percent is Christian and about 3 percent belongs to other religions (GSS, 2010).

Agriculture, hunting, and forestry are the main economic activities in the region. Together, they account for the employment of 71.2 per cent of the economically active population, aged 15 years and older. Less than a tenth (7.0%) of the economically active people in the region are unemployed. The private informal sector absorbed 83.4 per cent of the economically active population. An additional 11.5 per cent is in the private formal sector leaving the public sector with only 4.3 per cent. Majority (40.5%) of the uneconomically active is homemaker and just under a quarter (24.4%) is students. Those who are not working because of old age constitute 14.8 per cent. A small proportion is not working because of disability (2.2%) or retirement (1.2%), while 16.9 per cent is classified as others (GSS, 2010).

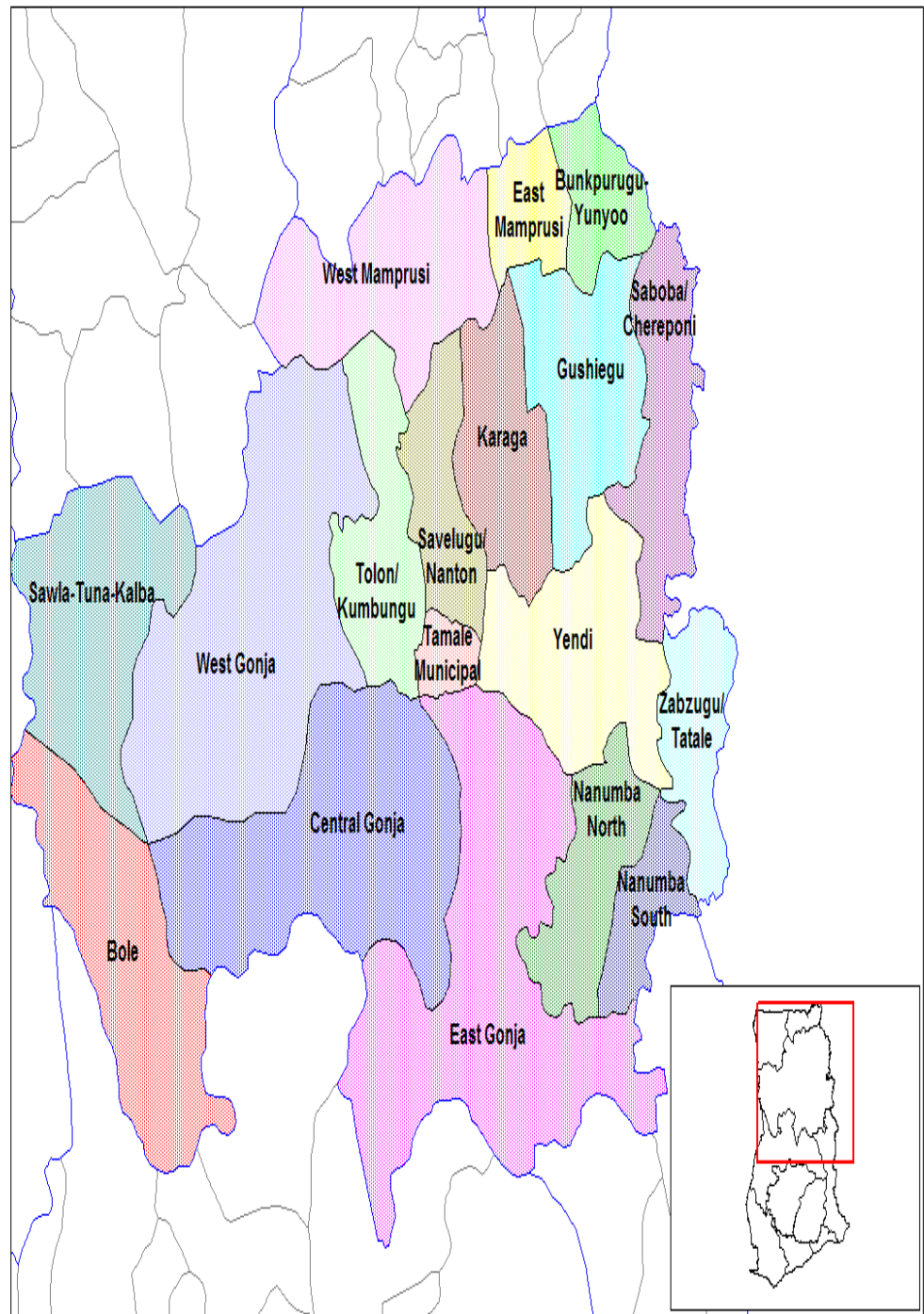
The relationship between or within the various ethnic groups in the Northern Region has not been continuously stable. As a result, the region has experienced a number of inter-ethnic and intra-ethnic violent conflicts which have set the region's clock of development backwards. The conflict phenomena in the region that readily come to mind include Bimobas versus Konkombas in 1984 which re-emerges till date; Konkombas versus Nawuris in 1990; Mos versus Gonjas in 1997; the crisis among the Bimobas in 2000 and 2002; and Buipe chieftaincy crisis in 2005 (Adjapawn ,2010; Brukum, 2007; Tsikata and Seini, 2004; Nnoli, 1998). The other conflict phenomena are illustrated in the table below.

**Table 1: Major conflicts in the Northern Region of Ghana**

<b>Conflict</b>	<b>Year</b>	<b>Type of conflict</b>	<b>Contending issue</b>	<b>Contending parties</b>
Dagbon Chieftaincy	2002	Intra-ethnic	Eligibility, legitimacy and Proper enskinment procedures	Andanis and Abudus
Konkomba Quest for Paramountcy	1994	Inter-ethnic	Chieftaincy and land	Konkombas, Dagombas, and Nanumbas
Gonja-Nchumburu/Nawuris	1991	Inter-ethnic	Chieftaincy and land	Gonjas Nchumburus, and Nawuris
Konkomba-Nanumba	1981	Inter-ethnic	Inequitable distribution of power and natural resources	Konkombas and Nanumbas
Gonja-Vagla	1980	Inter-ethnic	Land ownership	Gonjas and Vaglas

Source: Awedoba (2009)

The conflict phenomena illustrated above have necessitated both state and non-state actors to concentrate their conflict prevention initiatives in the region through various strategies. It is for this reason that the region has been chosen for the study.



**Figure 5: Map of Northern Region**

Source: Department of Geography and Regional Planning, UCC (2015)

## Research Design

Parahoo (1997) observes that a research design is a plan that describes how, when and where data are to be collected and analyzed. Burns and Grove (2003) also see a research design as a blueprint for conducting a study with maximum control over factors that may interfere with the credibility of the findings. According to Bryman (2008), a research design is a plan that provides a framework for the collection and analysis of data. It can be deduced from these definitions that a research design is the master plan that specifies the methods and procedures for collecting and analyzing the needed data or information. The study employed qualitative strategy of inquiry which is described by Denzin and Lincoln (1994) as an effort to interpret phenomena in their natural settings in order to make sense in terms of the meanings people bring to these settings. The qualitative research is also explained by Patton (2002) to mean an attempt to understand the unique interactions in a particular situation.

The qualitative strategy of inquiry makes knowledge claims based on constructivist and participatory perspectives through various research designs. Merriam (1999) identifies such research designs as phenomenological studies, ethnographic studies, grounded theory studies, historical studies, case studies and action research. Yin (2003) uses different terms to describe a variety of case studies in particular, and categorizes them as explanatory, exploratory, or descriptive. He explains that exploratory case study is an attempt to explore an intervention or a phenomenon that has not offered a clear understanding or a set of outcomes (Yin, 2003). It is this exploratory case study that this work adopted as its research design. This is because the conflict prevention



strategies of state and non-state actors that this study seeks to explore represent an intervention or a phenomenon which has not been adequately understood. In an attempt to explore these strategies, the study would unveil an in-depth understanding of them.

### **Study Population**

A study population, according to Parahoo (1997:218), is “the total number of units from which data can be collected.” Such data may be individuals, artifacts, events or organizations. Burns and Grove (2003) also describe a study population as all the elements that meet the criteria for inclusion in a study. In line with the above explanations, the study involved members and staff of the four institutions selected for the study (NPC, REGSEC, WANEP-Ghana and traditional authorities). This population was categorized into two groups as state activists and non-state activists in conflict prevention. The state activists in conflict prevention included the members and staff of NPC and Northern REGSEC, while the non-state activists included the staff and members of WANEP-Ghana and the traditional authorities. The traditional authorities were mainly chiefs and community elders.

### **Sampling Procedures**

Polit et al. (2001) state that in sampling, a portion of the population is selected for the study. Sampling refers to the selection of a group of people, events or organizations with which to conduct a study (Burns & Grove, 2003). The sampling in this study was purposive, non-probability sampling technique. The four institutions (NPC, the REGSEC, WANEP-Ghana and the

traditional authorities) were purposively selected based on their outstanding involvement in the prevention of conflicts in the Northern Region of Ghana as well as the typicality of their conflict prevention activities. According to Draman, Mohammed, and Woodrow (2009), both the state and non-state actors have been making remarkable efforts to prevent conflicts in the Northern Region of Ghana, especially the NPC, Northern REGSEC, WANEP-Ghana and traditional authorities.

Therefore, the four institutions were purposively selected due to their phenomenal involvement in conflict prevention in the Northern Region of Ghana and their knowledge about the issue under investigation. Again purposive sampling was used because of the typicality of these institutions, and this is in line with Patton's (1990) observation that purposive sampling is used to achieve typicality of the settings, individuals, or activities that the researcher wish to involve in the study.

Similarly, five members of staff each from the NPC, Northern REGSEC and WANEP-Ghana, and 10 chiefs and five elders from the traditional authorities were purposively selected to form a sample size of 30 respondents. The researcher used his own judgment to select these participants based on their knowledge in the phenomenon under study as well as their ability to provide rich data. In purposive sampling, according to Parahoo (1997), the researcher uses his/her judgment and deliberately chooses who to include in the study based on their knowledge in the phenomenon under study and their ability to provide the necessary data. Also, the study intended to achieve a richness of data about the phenomenon under investigation, and to achieve that required purposive sampling. For a study to be able to seek a

richness of data about a particular phenomenon, the sample must be derived purposefully rather than randomly (Ezzy, 2002; Reed et al, 1996; Mays & Pope, 1995).

The researcher's choice of a small sample size did not follow any established norm or any specified rule. Instead, it was based on the qualitative nature of the study coupled with the researcher's aim at achieving in-depth and detailed information about the phenomenon under investigation. Patton (1990) and Baum (2002) observe that there are no closely defined rules for sample size in qualitative research. However, sampling in qualitative research usually relies on small numbers with the aim of carrying out an in-depth and a detailed study (Miles & Huberman 1994; Patton 1990).

### **Sources of Data**

The data that were used in the study were collected from both primary and secondary sources. The primary data were collected from the field through unstructured in-depth interviews with the respondents from all the four selected actors in conflict prevention in the Northern Region of Ghana-NPC, Northern REGSEC, WANEP-Ghana and traditional authorities. These field data included socio-demographic characteristics of respondents, the role of state and non-state actors in conflict prevention, the conflict prevention strategies of state and non-state actors, the design and implementation of conflict prevention strategies by state and non-state actors, and strengths and weaknesses of the conflict prevention strategies employed by state and non-state actors.

Also, books, documentations, archival records, reports, articles, journals, newspapers, internet, conference and working papers were scrutinised and analysed to obtain relevant secondary information or data. According to Yin (2003), the analysis of documentations and reports yields potential data and the incorporation of this data into data from other sources enhances the credibility of the results of a study.

### **Methods of Data Collection**

The study employed two main methods to collect data. These were in-depth interviewing and documents and reports analysis. Semi-structured in-depth interviewing was used to collect data from individual respondents in a face-to-face conversation, where the researcher posed open-ended questions related to the issue under investigation and the respondents offered answers based on their experiences and perspectives. Patton (2002) states that in-depth interviews typically are much more like conversations than formal events with predetermined response categories. For Hancock, Windridge, and Ockleford (2007: 16), “qualitative researchers usually employ semi-structured interviews which involve a number of open-ended questions based on the topic areas that the researcher wants to cover.”

This method was employed because of the researcher’s aim at unfolding participants’ perspective on the phenomenon under investigation as they view it (the emic perspective) rather than his own views (the etic perspective). In the views of Wengraf (2001) and Patton (2002), the use of interviews as a data collection method lies in the assumption that the participants’ perspectives are meaningful, knowable and can be made explicit.

The open-ended nature of the questions posed by the researcher did not only define the issue under investigation, but provided opportunities for the interviewees to discuss some relevant issues in more detail. This method was used to collect data from the chiefs and elders in the communities.

Finally, the researcher obtained some secondary data through the analysis of the documents and reports of the institutions involved in the study as regard their conflict prevention activities. Such important records as policy documents and progress and annual reports of especially NPC, Northern REGSEC and WANEP-Ghana were duly analysed. This method yielded some vital secondary data regarding activity implementation, success and challenges. The incorporation of data from documentations and reports into data from other sources enhance the credibility of the results of a study (Yin, 2003). This method was, however, not applicable to the traditional authorities due to the absence of documentations. With the in-depth interviewing, the researcher recorded data both manually and electronically through note writing and tape recording. But data obtained from the analysis of documents and reports was recorded through mainly note writing.

### **Data Collection Instruments**

Data collection instruments are tools that are used to collect data or that are designed to measure knowledge, attitude or skills (Parahoo, 1997). The study used unstructured interview to collect data. Unstructured interview guide is a brief list of memory prompts of areas and issues to be covered or addressed. It does not restrict itself to specific questions but allows any issues that may emerge in the interviewing process to be addressed. The questions

asked from an interview guide are usually open-ended which give respondents the opportunity to express their views and opinions about the phenomenon under investigation. Therefore, unstructured interview guide was used by the researcher to elicit in-depth information from respondents about conflict prevention strategies based on their experiences and views. The respondents expressed ideas and clarified points raised or answers given. Because the questions posed by the researcher were open-ended, respondents expressed their views so freely that more detailed and relevant information and issues emerged and were addressed. The instrument also built good rapport, created healthy atmosphere for co-operation and clear misapprehension about any aspect of a study as noted by Kumekpor (2002).

### **Data Processing and Analysis**

The field data was carefully checked to ensure that all the information and answers provided by respondents were retrieved. The recorded information from the field was also transcribed, categorized, and put into specific themes and used for the analysis. This made it possible for the researcher to quote responses where it was necessary. The constant comparative analysis was used to analyze the data. With this technique of data analysis, one piece of data such as a response, a statement or theme was taken and compared with others that were similar or different. This helped the researcher develop conceptualizations of possible relationships among the various pieces of data. Flow charts and diagrams were also used to present the results pictorially where it was necessary.

### **Chapter summary**

This chapter described the methodology that guided the study. It discussed the research method employed in the study and gave justification for using it. The sampling technique and how the data was gathered and used for analysis were detailed in the chapter. Data management and analyses were discussed.

## **CHAPTER FOUR**

### **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

This chapter dealt with the presentation and discussion of the results that were collected from the respondents in order to find answers to the research questions. The results are discussed in relation to the research questions as well as the literature review.

#### **Conflict prevention Strategies in the Northern Region of Ghana**

Conflicts do occur within and among groups. This happens in a gradual but destructive way leading to negative consequences. Conflict prevention strategies are therefore necessary in order to avoid conflict escalating. In the Northern Region of Ghana, the state and non-state actors employ several strategies to enable them achieve their conflict preventive objectives. Combinations of interrelated and multi-faceted strategies were found to be employed for conflict prevention in the Northern Region.

Effective targeting of various stakeholders was found to be the most important strategy which conflict prevention actors combine with other strategies for effective delivery of interventions. It was observed that all stakeholders-NORPAC, Zaachis, Women in Peace Building (WIPB) and Rural Media Network (RUMNET) start any intervention by identifying key actors and stakeholders whom the intervention is targeted. Depending on the issue and the situation at stake, various actors and stakeholders are targeted for the redress of one incident or another. On the issue of the proliferation of locally



manufactured arms, the leadership of the blacksmiths are quickly identified and targeted by NORPAC. For the issue of youth violence, shed boys and girls and recognized youth camps and groups are quickly identified and targeted by NORPAC, WIPB and the Zaachis. For intra-ethnic (Abudus and Andanis) and inter-ethnic disturbances related to the electioneering, where the two major parties, NDC and NPP, strongly associate themselves with the opposite divides, the ethnic leaders from the various groups especially the two divides in Tamale and Yendi are identified and targeted.

A further instance is the targeting of the warring factions in the Nanum chieftaincy disputes in Bimbilla when political party membership began to shape up along these lines. In Yendi, the WIPB observed that children were used for rioting during political party rallies. In-school and out-of-school children were, therefore, targeted at the school (Peace clubs) and household levels respectively

The Northern Region Peace Advisory Council (NORPAC) has been identified as one of the most visible and active actor in conflict prevention in the Northern Region. The study was interested in examining the conflict prevention strategies the state and non-state actors use in preventing conflicts in the Northern Region. One of the NORPAC members was interviewed and he gave the following response:

After the 2008/2009 Presidential and Parliamentary elections and the subsequent swearing in of the President of the Republic of Ghana, certain parts of the Northern Region, particularly the Tamale Metropolis experienced some violence leading to the loss of lives and property. The Northern Region Peace Advisory Council (NORPAC) tried to initiate peace process in the Metropolis by visiting the affected communities, opening up a process of dialogue and encounters between the two main political parties, NPP and NDC. Two workshops were organized to further deepen understanding of the issues

raised at the various community meetings. Some of the communities visited included the following: Sakasaka (Diboriyom CPP group); Warizihi (NDC group) and Warizihi (Sokoguyili NPP group); Choggu Hill top NDC Gbewaa Youth Association; Choggu Hilltop NPP group; Choggu Mma Naayili NPP group; Choggu Mma Naayili Ataya Base NDC group; Zogbeli NPP group; and Aboabu (Kandaha and Parliament) group.

The member of NORPAC retorted further that, there were certain strategies NORPAC uses in preventing the conflicts from escalating. In his narration, he said that the main strategy employed by NORPAC is capacity building workshops during which parties come to understand their differences and agree for mediation.

On the part of the traditional authorities, they employ various strategies in preventing conflicts in the Northern Region which help them de-escalate conflicts. The data gathered from the field revealed that the chiefs have been working hard and still working hard to maintain peace in the Northern Region by adopting different conflict prevention strategies. One of the chiefs gave the following narration:

We have not been sleeping over these conflicts in our communities. All efforts to bring lasting peace have been our concern. Due to this we have been intervening in various ways in preventing conflicts from escalating and also helping to maintain peace in areas where conflicts have occurred. We employ mediation to resolve conflicts that have already escalated into violence. The Nayiri, the overlord of Mamprusi applied this mechanism to resolve series of conflicts in Bunkpurugu-Yonyoo District.

It is clear from the above narratives that, chiefs as traditional leaders in the communities were engaged in conflict prevention using different conflict prevention strategies such as mediation and negotiation.

Complex issues of conflicts are sometimes not to be handled by one party. In this regard, both the state and non-state actors join hands together in

conflict prevention in the Northern Region. In so doing, they come together to organize series of workshops and visitations in communities where violence conflicts have occurred. A respondent was granted an interview to show the strategies used in preventing conflict. The respondent said:

All the bodies both state and non-state actors interested in preventing conflicts have always come together to organize and facilitate various meetings, workshops, seminars, visitations at the individual and community levels to bring peace in the Northern Region. We undertake common programmes such as communal work, football and other games to socialize the youth and let them visit each other's houses and homes in times of bereavement, outdooing, wedding etc which before was not the case.

From the discussion, it is realized that the broad-base grassroots approach is what has been used most often. The WIPB working in collaboration with NORPAC through its chair and the media mainly through FM stations use a grassroots approach by training a core few that in turn form groups at the districts, sub-districts and community levels. It was easy to realize that the critical mass of participating stakeholders increased in scope and depth from Tamale, the regional capital, to the districts such as Bimbilla, Yendi, Gushegu, Karaga, Kumbungu, and Tolon. Again, to communities such as Saanerigu, Lamashegu, Bamvim, Bonlanfung in the Tamale metropolis, Pusiga electoral area and six communities in the Nanumba North District, Bullugu and surrounding areas in Gushegu, and Voukuhibu, Guuo, and Kanshegu in the Kumbungu district.

It was also realized that information on the need for peaceful elections is spread by representatives to smaller groups to the minutest group or individuals. The use of Radio Savannah and Justice FM has a far reaching effect across the numerous towns and villages across the region. It was

observed that a lot seemed to have happened by the interventions of NORPAC, WIPB, the Zaachis and the media (Radio) at the grassroots level which are unnoticed at the national level.

Again, the strategy of using evidence-based approach to peaceful elections appeared to have had a positive effect on most actors and stakeholders. Most stakeholders who benefited from training on the effects of violent conflict recounted how they were emotionally moved and from then detested violent conflict after watching movies on conflicts elsewhere such as in Darfur, the Rwanda genocide, the Liberian and Sierra Leonean wars. Others further re-counted issues in Bawku and ‘will not want to sleep that early’ as happened in Bawku during the elections.

This strategy is mainly used in shaping up opinion and gathering information from early warning systems instituted at the grassroots. With this strategy, information comes from the grassroots to the districts and to regional actors. This information is helpful in the appropriate designing of strategies to address various situations.

According to the WIPB in Gushegu, the violent pre-election conflict involving supporters of political parties and ethnic leaders in the Gushegu township was envisaged and reported to the district assembly through a proposal which was turned down. The leadership of the WIPB in Tamale and the NORPAC chair received many inputs from their organized sources at the grassroots which informed the planning of various types of interventions for targeting various actors.

In order to find out the strategies used by REGSEC in preventing conflict, one of the respondents was interviewed.

There has been series of ethnic clashes and other kinds of conflict in the Northern Region. I can say the whole of Northern Region is a hot spot. We have several cases: Bimbilla chieftaincy case; Longtime standing land dispute between the Konkombas and Nanumbas; Gbintiri case in the East Mamprusi involving Konkombas and Bimobas; Kpandai case between Nawuris and Gonjas. REGSEC have used different strategies in preventing some of these conflicts. These strategies include; Security alert teams, Several CSOs are in place to prevent any rioting at the ground level, Religious organisations working very hard to bringing peace. Other measures we put in place for peace to exist include Alternative Dispute Resolution, involving Chiefs (Regional House of Chiefs) in resolving some of the disputes.

These strategies are among other government interventions such as deploring of military platoons, imposition of curfews, disarmament of the combatants, forming of committees and mediation bodies, by REGSEC in preventing conflicts from escalating.

The West Africa Network for Peacebuilding in Ghana (WANEP-Ghana) also has some conflict prevention strategies. One and most influential of them is the early warning system. The early warning system of WANEP-Ghana has been used in conflict prevention in the Northern Region. One of the members of WANEP-Ghana who was interviewed narrated that:

WANEP's early warning system is one of the strongest strategies used for conflict prevention in the Northern Region. After it was inaugurated and gained recognition, it started operating at the grassroots level in various communities. We use our early warning systems to prevent conflicts in various communities through community monitoring teams. We use the early warning system to collect data from the communities, analyse the data and use it to prevent conflicts. It is through this that we are able to identify conflict potential issues and quickly come in to intervene in such issues.

This result reflects the view of Van Walraven (1998) which acknowledges that the ultimate purpose for performing early warning activities is to facilitate decision making processes as regards emerging

security threats and violent conflicts. Adelman (1998) supported this and explained early warning as “the communication of information on a crisis area, analysis of that information, and the development of potential, timely, and strategic response options to the crises” (Adelman, 1998 in Hough 2004: 25). Just like van Walraven (1998), Adelman does not only highlight the worth of both communication and analysis of information as stages in the early warning process, but he adds the policy-relevant aspect of early warning information.

It can be concluded from Adelman’s (1998) conception that early warning is a useful means of prevention, mitigation or management of conflicts at different stages of escalation. It is not restricted to any specific stage in a conflict cycle as it is applied without altering its purpose of warning of imminent events at any moment in time within the dynamics of evolving violence. In this case, early warning does not only serve as a tool for conflict prevention, it is also used to manage already violent confrontations by foreseeing actions that can further escalate the conflict.

It is clear from the ongoing discussions that, there have been different conflict prevention strategies used by both the state and non-state actors in preventing conflicts in the Northern Region. Most of these strategies have helped in preventing conflicts from escalating to violent conflicts. There is the need to identify these strategies and encourage the actors to continue to implement them.

## **Role of state and non-state actors in conflict prevention in the Northern Region of Ghana**

Various kinds of conflicts have plagued the Northern Region of Ghana for some time now. These conflicts have taken different forms and required prudent preventive measures to arrest their escalation. In doing so, both state and non-state actors play a very crucial role. Some of these state agencies that are involved in the prevention of conflicts in the Northern Region of Ghana include: the National Peace Council (NPC), the Ghana Police Service (GPS), the Bureau of National Investigation (BNI), the formal court system, the Regional House of Chiefs, and the Regional and District Security Councils (REGSEC/DISEC). The non-state actors include West Africa Network for Peacebuilding in Ghana (WANEP-Ghana), Ghana Centre for Democratic Development (CDD), traditional authorities, and religious leaders. A member of REGSEC, one of the state's actors in conflict prevention was interviewed concerning their role in preventing conflict. He said that:

REGSEC has intervened in most of the conflicts in the Northern Region, especially chieftaincy disputes such as Buipe, Bimbila, Nakpanduri etc. The council employs mediation, appeals, legal action/court system and deployment of forces. The council uses Regional High Command to deal with conflict signals and gather intelligence. The council meets every month to assess security situation in the region and makes situational analysis. In communities where the analysis show conflict signals, REGSEC through DISEC put measures in place to arrest these signals from degenerating into actual conflict.

In trying to find out the role the state and non-state actors in the Northern Region play in preventing conflict, one of the National Peace Council (NPC) members in the Northern Region was interviewed. The NPC representative in Northern Region presented the following in an interview.

The NPC was established in 2011 by a Legislative Instrument (LI) of an act of parliament, Act, 2011 (818). It has not yet had major interventions in Northern Region conflicts since its establishment, but what played a major role in preventing Northern Region conflicts is Northern Region Peace Advisory Council (NORPAC).

The narrative above revealed that, the NPC is a state actor for conflict prevention in various regions including the Northern Region, but has not yet played a major role in preventing the conflicts in the Northern Region. It is rather the Northern Region Peace Advisory Council (NORPAC) which has played some major roles in preventing the conflicts in the Northern Region. In order to confirm this, the study interviewed a member of the NORPAC. He had this to say:

Before 2004, Dagbon was polarized and when 2004 election was drawing near NORPAC met the prominent chiefs, political parties and identifiable groups in the area to talk about peace. The attempt by the electoral commission not to provide bill boards for election results generated misunderstanding among political parties, especially between the two major ones, National Democratic Congress (NDC) and National Patriotic Party (NPP). But NORPAC petitioned the electoral commission to provide the bill boards and the electoral commission heeded to the petitioned. That move reduced tensions in that year.

In a related interview with another member of NORPAC, the interviewee felt NORPAC has done much more than what has been said. He gave more detailed report about the major role NORPAC played as an institution responsible for conflict prevention in the Northern Region. He said that:

NORPAC helped address the Chereponi electoral dispute concerning a parliamentary candidate, Madam Tani NORPAC's peace effort was recognized and attracted the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) to render support to the council.



In analyzing the data gathered from the interviewees, it was revealed that NORPAC has played a very significant role in settling most the disputes in the Northern Region. For example, it was realized that in 2005, NORPAC initiated the youth chiefs ('nachena') and organized workshops for them and this made it possible to bring together Andani and Abudu youth. Again, NORPAC has resolved disputes among butchers and engaged blacksmiths to discourage them from manufacturing local weapons in Tamale Metropolis. With UNDP support, NORPAC brought together Dagbon prominent chiefs at Damongo to train them towards the peace talk by the eminent chiefs led by Asantehene, Otumfo Nana Osei Tutu II. Also the data from the narratives revealed that in 2007, NORPAC brought together the 'nachenas' at Damongo to a meeting. By the end of the meeting, the 'nachenas' from both gates agreed to travel in the same car for such meetings. In that meeting, a participant confessed how he hated another participant and was planning to shoot him any time they met.

Furthermore, from the narratives it was revealed that NORPAC, in 2009, also resolved a conflict between Jisonayeli and Kanvili communities over water which led to the shooting of one person. NORPAC's mediation efforts made it possible for the case to be withdrawn from court for settlement to be done out of court. NORPAC again, helped to resolve a religious conflict between the Tijanias and Sunis at Kpabusso in the Central Gonja.

In the same vein, NORPAC reached out to all the district assemblies in the region and enlightened them on peace issues. NORPAC led a delegation from REGSEC to Yagbonwura to initiate peace talk which eventually led to the end of Bupei chieftaincy conflict. NORPAC intervened and resolved two

disputes in Chamba in the Nanumba North District. One of the disputes was between the Konkomba butchers and the Nanumba butchers about the use of an abattoir and the other was between buyers and sellers about measuring of grains in the market. The intervention by NORPAC led to an agreement between the Konkombas and the Nanumbas to use the same abattoir instead of separate ones. It also led to the understanding that grain sellers should measure for the buyers.

These findings are in line with the view of Murray (2001) that conflict prevention is based on the premise that averting a conflict at an early stage is easier and that acting in a full-blown conflict is the costliest and most dangerous way of intervening and also the one that offers the least possibility of success. This is also supported by Hamburg (2002) who concludes that the onset of mass violence transforms the nature of a conflict, but revenge motives severely complicate the situation. Resolution and even limitations of conflict are then less likely to be effective. So, early preventive action is exceedingly attractive.

The results confirmed the findings of Louise (2003) and Murray (2001) that intervention in a conflict at an early stage in order to avert it from escalating into violence is cost-effective and has a high possibility of success. This means that, the early and rapid response of the state and non-state actors in handling the conflict issues helped to prevent the conflicts from escalating.

West Africa Network for Peacebuilding in Ghana (WANEP-Ghana) has also been playing an important role in conflict prevention in the Northern Region. One of the members of WANEP-Ghana who was interviewed narrated that:

WANEP's early warning system started in 2004/2005 for conflict prevention but was not effective because there was no conscious effort in implementing the system. It was somewhere September 2009 that it was inaugurated and gained recognition. We are operating in various communities through community monitoring teams of 5 members each. A member of WANEP oversees the activities of the community monitoring teams. It is like a research system where we collect data from the communities, analyse the data and present it as early warning reports.

Karuru (2004) is of the view that, it is possible to read a conflict before it erupts and proper measures can be taken for its early engagement. Therefore, conflict prevention must be built around a series of support elements such as early warning that makes prevention possible. Early warning can serve as essential information that can be a pre-requisite for conflict prevention. This view supports the findings about the WANEP-Ghana early warning system for conflict prevention. The findings about early warning system of WANEP-Ghana is also supported by Schmeidl and Adelman (2002) who stated that early warning needs to be seen as a precondition to developing political will and thus initiate or better inform reasonable response strategies to conflict prevention. This makes early warning the sine qua non of effective conflict prevention for humanitarian action that cannot be undertaken without it.

Traditional authorities have not been left out when it comes to conflict prevention in the Northern Region of Ghana. As one of the strong and oldest non-state actor in conflict prevention, the traditional authorities have played and continue to play a major role in preventing conflicts. Though, some of the conflicts are connected to them, they still play a role in preventing conflicts from occurring or escalating. One of the chiefs in the Northern Region was interviewed concerning the role of chiefs in conflict prevention. The following was what the respondent gave:

We, the traditional authorities (chiefs) are assisted by our elders in dealing with conflicts. We educate the youth on the consequences of conflicts. We also arbitrate and use our influence and authority to make final and binding decisions to resolve disputes. We recognize the youth chiefs/leaders and involve them in decision making. Some chiefs now organize prize-awarding competitions among the youth in order to integrate them. For instance, Dakpema Naa now organizes competitions among the youth such as reading competition, debate competition, soccer competition and other games during which deserving competitors are given prizes. This effort makes the youth to interact and see themselves as one people. Some of us have now embraced visitation to the various youth groups-Adani, Abudu, NDC, NPP, entertainment ('Diananaa') etc. We use these visitations as opportunity to offer peace talk to the youth.

The view of Uwazie (2011) supports this finding when he concluded that, due to the inability of the litigation system to prevent most disputes from degenerating into violence, the attention of most disputants have shifted to Alternative Dispute Resolution which they believe can offer them solutions to their disputes. Shedrack (2006) view that ADR is an alternative to the formal court system and stated that ADR is especially meant to serve as an alternative to the official conventional means of settling disputes. This confirms the findings whereby the chiefs set up alternative means of settling disputes outside the court.

### **Design and implementation of conflict prevention strategies in the Northern Region of Ghana**

State and non-state actors in the Northern Region design certain tools in order to enable them implement their conflict prevention strategies. In doing this, various tools were employed by the actors. The NORPAC, the

Association of Youth Chiefs, traditional authorities, WANEP, and Women in Peace Building (WIPB) were all design mechanisms that were used in implementing conflict prevention strategies.

One-on-one individual and group interactions and meetings were observed to be one of the cardinal tools used by NORPAC, the WIPB, the traditional authorities and the Association of Youth Chiefs in implementing conflict prevention strategies. The NORPAC chairman and most of his council members re-countered the importance of this tool in their election related activities. The NORPAC chairman, for instance, re-countered how on numerous occasions he used the one-on-one tool in providing information, counsel and intervening in election related disputes.

I have to use this tool on a number of occasions to hold private one-on one meetings with the regional minister, regional police commander, BNI regional officer and military commander to discuss and provide alternative means of non-violent resolution of various election related conflicts- points in question include the election and ethnic violence in Gushegu and inter youth disturbances in Tamale.

Additionally, the chairman had to counsel youth leaders individually during the politically motivated disturbances among butchers in the Tamale central market meat shop. Sometimes the youth were called one after the other to be talked to. This mechanism helped in calming down tension and anxiety among the youths. Another NORPAC council member also narrated the effectiveness of this tool in soliciting information and providing clues to community and security leaders.

We have to do this by using various council members representing various political parties-NPP, NDC and DPP. They were individually targeted by their council representatives in refraining from violent and negative

retaliatory tendencies during the run up to the election and especially before the run off of 28<sup>th</sup> December 2008.

The WIPB also used this tool a lot in their households and communities interventions. This mainly took the form of one-on-one sensitization of family members especially children and spouses. House to house one-on-one targeting was also used by trained WIPB members. In Yendi, children were targeted in this way to stop indiscriminate stone throwing as they were the culprits of this violent behaviour. Peer influencing of other women in the market place in Gushegu and Kumbungu were reported as further examples of the use of this tool. The leadership of the women in peace building worked directly with queen mothers in Gushegu after the violent conflict to determine their role in reuniting the warring factions and to serve as early warning informants. One of them said that:

During this period people resorted to violent acts in open markets and in secrets. Children and women were those mostly engaged in such behaviours which could lead to violent conflict. We had to intervene by contacting one after the other to explain to them that such acts and behaviours would not bring peace and should stop.

Furthermore, the Association of Youth Chiefs-Zaachis under the leadership of their chairman quietly resolved many individual and personal election related conflicts through one-on-one interaction. Realizing the effectiveness of this tool, and competency of their chairman, most individual youth and groups now relied on the youth chairman to resolve some of their disputes without the formal law enforcement agencies. A case in point was the peaceful resolution of election related disputes between “Alluta Boys” and “Azoka Boys”. A youth leader narrated that:

The Youth Association plays a vigilante role and use this mechanism to identify potential trouble makers. The

individuals are identified through one-on-one targeting. As we speak now, many of the youths who are causing most of these troubles and confusion have been identified and have been advised against that. You can see that the mechanism is working because it has helped in reducing the rate of violent acts.

According to the various stakeholders and the traditional authorities, the people of Dagbon can be said to be notoriously religious. While approximately 70% of the population can be said to be Muslim, the rest will strongly belong to one Christian sect or another. Resultantly, the tool of religious preaching is used by the traditional authorities, NORPAC, the WIPB, and the Zaachis. Religious preaching is used as a tool to help bring peace through peace messages. Peaceful campaigning and the virtues of peaceful co-existence and standing for one's right and the truth are developed and propagated through Muslim and Christian religious preaching. According to one NORPAC member:

Special days are identified for the preaching of peace messages. It is, therefore, uncommon find all Mosques on Fridays and churches on Sundays preaching peace, especially prior to elections. Some of these themes often include peaceful and tolerant campaigning, voting as a civic right and responsibility and protecting the electoral process. Religious leaders ensure that all the mosques and churches under their jurisdiction actively participate in these exercises.

In this case, it can be said that the religious preaching was one of the good tools used by state and non-state actors to implement conflict prevention strategies. A participating partner, a traditional authority and at the same time a stakeholder in delivering of peace message had the following to say:

We never missed an opportunity to deliver a peace message on the need for peaceful and violent-free electioneering. This is a deliberate tool where messages, songs and slogans are pre-prepared and partners trained on their delivery. Any opportunity which presents itself is used to share these messages which according to members have a great telling

positive effect on the populace as some of these messages and slogans become household slogans. One such message which was mentioned in most places was “Ballots Not Bullets”.

The WANEP tailored its early warning system to the grassroots level by involving community members in helping to monitor and report any possible issue that could lead to conflict. One of the WANEP members narrated that:

We go to the various communities and employ community members to help monitor and report any possible conflict issue in the community to our representative in each of the communities. Our representative then communicates it to the headquarters for further analysis and action. Through this mechanism we have been able to implement our early warning system effectively.

In conflict prevention, it is observed that contemporary early warning embraces collaboration and information sharing procedures acceptable to a wide variety of actors, including representatives of CSOs. This is supported by Schmeidl’s (2002) findings which observed that no single state or organization can hold monopoly of early warning to make it successful. Therefore, there should be collaboration and information sharing. Such thinking gave rise to the emergence of various early warning systems around the world, some of whom have been integrated with a capacity for early response and others with a mission to provide analysis and recommendations for other actors.

Another effective tool which was used by the state and non-state actors to enable them implement their strategies for conflict prevention was mobile phone communication. The power of the mobile phone was used effectively as a tool in delivering and achieving set strategies and results. Within NORPAC, WIPB Regional, District and community circles and among the Association of Zaachis, this tool was used. A conscious effort was made to set up mobile



contact within and across various groups. This facilitated quick and rapid contact and the dissemination of information. Regular and emergency NORPAC meetings for instance were convened through text messaging. This easy, but highly efficient communication channel was used to share election related information and to quickly address and respond to issues over a large geographical space.

Most stakeholders contacted mentioned how information was often communicated to the NORPAC chairman who, in turn, quickly respond and channel it to the appropriate quarters for redress. A stakeholder narrated that:

When there was a problem at Kumbungu, we made a request for military reinforcement through the NORPAC Chairman by the use of mobile phone. Some polling stations in Kumbungu had a problem and rioting youth defied police intervention and took the law into their own hands.

Another instance was the assurance by the NORPAC Chairman through phone to an FM station which restrained the youth in sections of Jisonayilli, a suburb of Tamale, from causing any violent. One woman leader said that:

Through the collaborative work of the WIPB and other organizations such as FOSDA and GHANEP, selected WIPB members were provided with mobile phone units/credit to enable them quickly transmits election related matters to the relevant actors for prompt redress. This helped us a lot. We used these mobile phones to communicate issues that could possibly breed violence for the appropriate authorities to take the necessary actions.

More so, the use of mass media as tool in implementing the strategies of conflict prevention has been very significant. All UNDP supported partners, particularly RUMNET and NORPAC, used the mass media such as radio to greatly advance the course of contributing to peaceful electioneering before, during and after the 2008 elections. Radio presenters, serial callers and

political panelists were targeted for capacity building and mentoring. Some of the workshops had themes such as “Election 2008, the role of the media towards a peaceful, free and fair election” and “The use of radio to promote peace and political tolerance before, during and after the December 2008 run-off”. The air waves were therefore used as a powerful medium for creating a critical mass on election issues and for prompt reaching out to the masses. The Association of Youth Chiefs switched from the issuance of rally notices and the use of mega phones to the use of radio for invitation and announcements which in their view is both effective and efficient.

Entertainment in the form of peace concerts were employed by a consortium of actors including NORPAC, WIPB, Association of Zaachis and the media. These concerts according to stakeholders are an effective way of galvanizing and mobilizing particularly the youth from different political and ethnic persuasions. Tamale sports stadium and the PICONA gardens were centres where some of the notable concerts are organized. These concerts were used as platforms for presenting peaceful electioneering messages and promoting peaceful co-existence and mingling.

Games are deliberately used to foster unity and political tolerance. Therefore, state and non-state actors in conflict prevention rely on it to foster unity and political tolerance as and when they deem it fit. For instance, prior to the 2008 election, keep-fit clubs, dubbed “election 2008 keep fit clubs” were formed in Tamale, Yendi and Gushegu, though their activities appear to have diminished. Membership of these clubs were across all political persuasions, ethnic divides and more importantly involved the security agencies which

made all and sundry feel protected and comfortable in participating in the clubs' activities.

Football gala matches were also used as a medium for promoting peaceful electioneering. Some stakeholders who confirmed participating in these galas include the various political parties, media houses, musicians, security agencies, women's groups and various religious and ethnic groups. These galas happened in not only Tamale but also in Bimbilla, Yendi, Gushegu, Karaga and Kumbungu.

Relating the strategies used by state and non-state actors in conflict prevention to that of Möller, Öberg, and Wallensteen (2005) in the literature, it is realized that the findings are in line with Möller, Öberg, and Wallensteen's (2005) conceptual framework for conflict prevention strategies. They divided peaceful measures for conflict prevention into verbal attention, relief efforts, facilitation, third-party coordination, proposals and decisions. In the findings all these strategies were found to be used effectively by the actors in various ways in preventing conflicts from escalating.

The verbal attention implies the use of public appeals of concern about a situation. Verbal attention is not necessarily negative statements, and something such as praise to a given behaviour of a conflict party can lead to de-escalation of tensions. Relief efforts are material expressions of goodwill that can reduce the misunderstanding that is causing two parties to come into conflict with each other. Facilitation refers to efforts that provide communication atmosphere for parties to a conflict to discuss with each other. Included in facilitation are mediation and fact-finding missions. Third party

coordination involves the activities that actors neutral to the conflict use to organize other peaceful conflict prevention measures.

### **Strengths and weaknesses of conflict prevention strategies in the Northern Region of Ghana**

The conflict prevention strategies used by both the state and non-state actors have tremendous strengths which cannot be overlooked. The impact of the meetings and workshops at the individual and community levels are immeasurable. This study could not have concluded that the conflict prevention strategies have some strength without verification. A respondent was asked about the strengths of the conflict prevention strategies used by state and non-state actors. This was what the respondent said.

I can assure you that the level of trust among these communities that have been engaged in the meetings, visitations and workshops has gone up. We see a situation now in which the youth in these communities are able to perform and undertake common programmes such as communal work, football and other games to socialize, visit each other's houses and homes in times of bereavement and other occasions such as outdoorings, weddings etc which before was not the case.

From the interview it was realized that the level of violence in the community has gone down drastically since the seizure of toilets and other public places has minimized. Another respondent in a bit to confirm or better still add more to what has been said about the strengths of the conflict prevention strategies said that at the individual level, there was a certain measure of transformation that has taken place. This reflected in an interview which revealed that at a point in time one past student of Business Secondary School whose results slip and other documents were burnt had intended to

burn houses of perceived enemies in retaliation for what happened to him. This intention came up during the meeting in Gumbihini community. He was subsequently invited to one of the workshops where he repeated the same intention of retaliation. He was subsequently invited by the chairman of NORPAC for further discussions and way forward. His case was reported to his former school which assured of retrieving those documents for him. His documents have been retrieved and he has become very friendly and living peacefully with his colleagues. This revealed one of the success stories that can be told as a result of the interventions undertaken by NORPAC. One cannot tell how many like him have been touched and transformed due to these meetings and workshops.

Furthermore, the strategies have gained recognition and are making impacts on the lives of people in the Region. These strategies became effective tools for handling most of the conflict issues. The strategies helped in turning the conflict issues into drama leading to peace. This was confirmed in the following narration by a respondent:

We are in a dilemma of a “bad dance”  
You dance forward your father will die  
You dance backwards your mother will die  
You dance rightward your sister will die  
You dance leftward your brother will die  
You remain at one spot you will die  
Whatever you do, people will find fault with you

This was what an elderly man found his way to one of the workshops and gave an insight about the meaning of a gun to the youth in one of the sessions. He told the youth that the meaning of a gun is “mirfa” in Dagbani, which means “Be careful” in the English language. According to him, it looks

as if at the moment the whole of Ghana is in the hands of Dagbon. If there is peace or war, it will spread over the whole country.

This drama shared by the elderly man was enough caution to the youth about the effects of violence which could exert its impact on all caliber of people irrespective of ethnic or political affiliation. This experience goes to re-emphasize the call by the youth to engage elders, family heads in the peace processes. The meetings at the community level give opportunities to the various groups to express the issues that confront them and to further discuss how peace could be achieved. The workshops provide the platform to the youth of the two main political parties to engage each other and suggest ways and means by which they can address their challenges together in order to bring peace to their communities. In this way, trust and relationship building are fostered and become deepened through frequent interactions.

Despite the fact that there have been some strengths in the strategies used by both the state and non-state actors in conflict prevention, there are some challenges. Some of the challenges encountered in conflict prevention efforts were found to be common to all the four actors involved in the study: people's perception and mistrust, entrenched positions and extremism by parties to conflicts, high rate of illiteracy, logistical and financial constraints since there was no budget for preventive interventions, non-documentation of traditions and polarization of conflicts. One of the interviewee enumerated the following challenges:

The major challenges that we are confronted with are the mistrust and entrenched positions of parties to conflict, inadequate capacity on the part of some members who are involved in conflict prevention, inadequate logistics and financial constraints.

Visiting the youth in their various communities was very challenging since some are not sure initially of the intention of the conflict prevention actors. However, when such visits were successful and it came to light that some youth groups were resorting to violence to settle the differences, meetings and workshops were organised to provide the group the opportunity of appreciating how to handle their differences without the use of force or violence.

### **Chapter summary**

This chapter discussed the results of the study. It looked at how the data gathered were analysed, discussed and presented in relation to the research questions. Careful interpretation and conclusions were drawn from the discussions. This brought out the findings of the results.

## **CHAPTER FIVE**

### **SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

#### **Introduction**

This chapter presents the summary of the study, which includes the key findings that emerged from the research. The chapter also contains the conclusions and recommendations that were made based on the findings of the study. It also contains suggestions for further studies.

#### **Summary**

The study set out to explore the conflict prevention strategies of state and non-state actors in the Northern Region of Ghana.

The study employed qualitative strategy of inquiry. The target population for the study included all the members and staff of the four institutions selected for the study (NPC, REGSEC, WANEP-Ghana and traditional authorities). The sample was drawn using purposive sampling technique. The study employed two main methods to collect data. These were in-depth interviewing and documents and reports analysis. The constant comparative analysis was used to analyze the data. The collection of the field data took two months, July and August, 2013.

Based on the analysed data and discussion of the results, the following represent the summary of the findings.

1. The study revealed that both the state and non-state actors played a pivotal role in conflict prevention in the Northern Region of Ghana.



They employed among other strategies Alternative Dispute Resolution mechanisms. Also, they used mediation, appeals, legal action/court system and deployment of military and police forces.

2. The strategies used in conflict prevention included effective targeting of various stakeholders, the broad-based grassroots approach, evidence-based approach, peace-talk meetings, capacity building workshops, seminars, visitations at both individual and community levels. These strategies collectively or individually were found to be used in preventing conflicts in the Northern Region of Ghana by state and non-state actors.
3. The one-on-one individual and group interactions and meetings, mobile phone communication, religious preaching, peace messages, mass media, entertainment and games were observed to be some of the cardinal tools used in conflict prevention.
4. The impact of the tools used in conflict prevention such as meetings and capacity building workshops at the individual and community level were found to be immeasurable. The strength of the strategies was satisfactory.
5. The study further revealed that some challenges were encountered in the conflict prevention efforts and these were common to all the four actors involved in the study. These challenges included people's perception and mistrust, entrenched position and extremism by parties to conflicts, high rate of illiteracy, logistical and financial constraints, and non-documentation of traditions and polarization of conflicts.

## Conclusions

The study concluded that:

1. Both the state and non-state actors played a pivotal role in conflict prevention in the Northern Region of Ghana. It was observed that state and non-state actors employed several interrelated strategies in preventing conflicts in the Northern Region of Ghana. Effective targeting of various stakeholders was found to be the most important strategy both actors used combined with other strategies. The strategies used by state and non-state actors in conflict prevention in the Northern Region include effective targeting of various stakeholders, the broad-based grassroots approach, evidence-based approach, peace-talk meetings, capacity building workshops, seminars, visitations at both individual and community levels.
2. State and non-state actors have contributed to bringing peace into the Northern Region. They did this through regular visits to the conflict areas to talk to the parties involved in conflict. They also mediated, appealed, helped in using the legal action/court system and deployment of forces to settle disputes among various conflicting groups.
3. The tools used by state and non-state actors in conflict prevention included one-on-one individual and group interactions and meetings, mobile phone communication, religious preaching, peace messages, mass media, entertainment and games. The use of an early warning system especially, by WANEP-Ghana as a conflict prevention design was good. Various tools were employed by the actors. The NORPAC,

the Association of Youth Chiefs, traditional authorities, WANEP, and Women in Peace Building (WIPB) were all design mechanisms that were used in implementing conflict prevention strategies.

4. The strengths of the strategies and tools used in conflict prevention were satisfactory; though, there were some challenges. One of strengths was that the level of violence in the community has gone down drastically since the seizure of toilets and other public places has minimized. More so, the strategies helped in personal transformation and reconciliation among members in the conflict communities. The strategies helped in turning conflict issues into drama leading to peace.

### **Recommendations**

From the analysis and the conclusions of the study, the following recommendations were made:

1. Government and Non-Governmental Organisations interested in peace and conflict prevention should provide appropriate support to the state and non-state actors to enable them play their role in conflict prevention in the Northern Region of Ghana more effectively.
2. The strategies used by state and non-state actors in conflict prevention in the Northern Region of Ghana should be expanded and strengthened by both government and the various non-state actors involved in conflict prevention. This will make them work more effectively.
3. Government institutions responsible for conflict prevention in the Northern Region of Ghana should be developed and strengthened by government. This could be done through early warning systems to help

identify conflicts issues and handle them effectively before they escalate into violence.

4. The state and non-state actors should be assisted by government and any other agencies to help overcome the challenges they encountered in their efforts to implement strategies that can arrest conflict situations at their early stages.

#### **Suggestions for further studies**

Further research should be conducted to evaluate the effectiveness of the conflict prevention strategies of state and non-state actors in the Northern Region of Ghana. Again, the relationship between state actors and non-state actors in conflict prevention should be investigated.

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**Appendix**  
**UNIVERSITY OF CAPE COAST**  
**INSTITUTE FOR DEVELOPMENT STUDIES**  
**INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR RESPONDENTS**

You have been selected to participate in this exercise to provide information for a study being conducted to explore the conflict prevention strategies of state and non-state actors in the Northern Region of Ghana. This is a study conducted to be submitted to the Institute for Development Studies of the Faculty of Social Sciences, University of Cape Coast, in partial fulfilment of the requirements for award of Master of Philosophy in Peace and Development Studies. Please answer the questions as frankly as you can. Whatever you say will be treated as confidential. Thank you in advance for your cooperation.

**Socio-Demographic characteristics of Respondents**

1. Occupation.....
2. Gender:                    Male [  ]                    Female [  ]
3. Age: 20 – 25 [  ]    26 – 30 [  ]    31 – 35 [  ]    36-40 [  ]    41 – 45 [  ]  
          46 – 50 [  ]    Above 50 [  ]
4. Do you take part in conflict prevention in this area?
5. What role do you play in conflict prevention?
6. What motivated you to take part in the conflict prevention?
7. Which means do you use in carrying out your roles in conflict prevention?
8. Are there any other parties involved in conflict prevention in this area?  
    If yes, who are they?

9. Do these parties perform different roles from what you have being doing?
10. What are their roles?
11. Have there been any interventions to resolving the conflicts? If yes, what are they?
12. Have you been part of resolving conflicts?
13. Do traditional authorities take part in the conflict prevention in this area?
14. Have you been able to prevent some of the conflicts from escalating into violence?
15. Do you have strategies in place for conflict prevention? If yes, what are they?
16. Do you have units in charge of conflict prevention?
17. What tools do you use in conflict prevention?
18. What efforts have you made toward bringing peace into this area?
19. How efficient has been the efforts?
20. Are the conflicts parties satisfied with your conflict prevention strategies employed?
21. Are there any other organisations involved in conflict prevention? If yes, who are they?
22. What conflict prevention strategies have been implemented so far?
23. How efficient have been the strategies used?
24. Why do these conflicts persist in spite of all the interventions?
25. Which factors promoted the conflict prevention strategies that have been used?

26. What challenges do you face in implementing the conflict prevention strategies?
27. Is there any tradition or customary practices that could be used to resolve conflicts in this area? If yes, mention them.
28. Is there any effective way of preventing conflicts?
29. How can the conflicts be resolved?
30. What other measures do you think can help in bringing peace in this area?