

UNIVERSITY OF CAPE COAST

ASSESSING THE EFFECTIVENESS OF CONFLICT RESOLUTION
MECHANISMS USED BY NATIONAL PEACE COUNCIL IN
RESOLVING THE ALAVANYO/NKONYA AND HOHOE CONFLICTS IN
GHANA

BENEDICT ANUMEL

2017

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GHANA

BY

BENEDICT ANUMEL

Thesis submitted to the Institute for Development Studies of the Faculty of
Social Sciences, College of Humanities and Legal Studies, University of Cape
Coast, in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the award of Master of
Philosophy degree in Peace and Development Studies

MARCH 2017

DECLARATION

Candidate's Declaration

I hereby declare that this thesis 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.

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

Name:

Supervisors' Declaration

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

Principal Supervisor's Signature Date.....

Name:

Co-Supervisor's Signature Date.....

Name:

ABSTRACT

In Ghana, a number of conflicts have assumed protracted nature. Most of these conflicts have been handled by state and civil society organizations with various conflict resolution mechanisms. However, these conflicts have been reoccurring over time which leaves one to question the effectiveness of the resolution mechanisms employed to resolve the conflicts. This study therefore sought to assess the effectiveness of conflict resolution mechanisms used by National Peace Council in resolving the Alavanyo/Nkonya and the Hohoe conflicts. The study used 15 respondents who were purposively selected for the study. Using the exploratory design, the study revealed that the National Peace Council mostly used mediation in the conflicts. Mediation was chosen because the conflicting parties had reached a stalemate over the issues. Mediation also enables the conflicting parties to own the decision making process. Lastly, the mediation mechanism has not been effective because the mediators failed to identify the needs of the parties who were not represented in the mediation. The mediation committee failed to consider the structure of the society. The study recommended that the mediation committee (NPC) should consider the structure of the society when using mediation to enable them to know the individuals involved in the conflict so that they can contribute to the selection of the representatives to represent their interest on the committee.

KEYWORDS

Conflict

Conflict resolution

Shuttle mediation

Mediation

Effectiveness

National Peace Council

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

In undertaking this research, a number of people have been of immense contribution and instrumental in the successful completion of this work.

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DEDICATION

To my parents,
James and Gifty

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Conflict resolution is a fast growing academic field which concerns itself with ideas, theories and methods that can improve our understanding of conflict and our collective efforts to reduce and enhance political process for the harmonization of interest. In Ghana, one of the institutions mandated to promote peace in the country to enable people engage in their lawful activities is the National Peace Council (NPC). The promotion of peace is however not realized in the conflict engaged by the NPC such as the Alavanyo/Nkonya and Hohoe conflicts. The conflicts keep reoccurring and therefore assessing the effectiveness of conflict resolution mechanisms used by NPC can help one to appreciate whether the mechanisms are effective or the mechanisms need to be changed to ensure peace-building.

Background to the Study

There is no doubt that conflict pervades many of the countries on the African continent (Wani, 2011). The African continent over the past three decades, particularly in the 1980s and 1990s, has faced greater challenges to stability and progress in all ramifications than ever before. In particular, threats to peace have been much more pronounced and indeed, they have increased in scale and intensity (Wanyande, 1997). Statistics show that of 116 conflicts recorded by Uppsala Conflict Data Program (UCDP) since the end of the Cold War until 2003, only seven were between states. Of these conflicts, 109 were internal and Africa

had more than 32 of these between 1989 and 2003 (UCDP in UNODC, 2005). A study on conflicts around the world conducted by the University of Maryland's Center for International Development and Conflict Management found that 33 countries were at high risk for instability and of these, 20 were in Africa (Dare, 2001). Although the continent continues to clamor for the dire need of peace, it has continued to witness a number of conflicts in recent times, for example, the Kenya conflict in 2007 and the Zimbabwe conflict in 2008. Conflict has destabilized most African countries and has contributed to the poverty level on the continent (Wanyande, 1997).

Scholars may disagree on the nature, sources, appropriate categorization and most effective resolution mechanism for the conflicts in Africa. Nonetheless, such disagreement may in fact lead to an eventual clarification of the critical issues by applying new thinking and a fresh approach to analyzing old problems and resolving new ones (Deng & Zartman, 1991). Since the end of the Cold War in 1989, considerable progress has been made towards the achievement of peace, security and stability in most African countries with the use of conflict resolution mechanisms. Existing literature emphasizes the importance of conflict resolution as the principal mechanism for promoting peace and reducing the incidence of inter-state and intra-state conflicts.

Conflict resolution has become one of the ways to resolve conflict peacefully on the continent. Most scholars (Bercovitch&Kadayifici, 2009; Bercovitch, Kremenyuk& Zartman, 2008; Kriesberg 2009; Wani, 2011) and civil societies maintain that war is the last option in politics which can only be

interpreted as last resort. Hence, conflict resolution as a mechanism of peace-building, peace-making and peace-keeping includes only peaceful methods and techniques for the maintenance of peace and security. This is to protect the succeeding generations from the scourge of war, because war has grave repercussions and ramifications. In recent times, most universities study conflict resolution as subject of discipline (Wani, 2011). The idea is that conflict resolution plays a vital role in creating awareness among people in the world. It helps people to appreciate the fact that people can survive and develop themselves better only in a peaceful world. Therefore, conflict resolution strategies must be adopted as a check over conflicts and peace could be maintained in easy way without following the way of violence.

By definition, conflict resolution refers to all those activities that are concerned with transforming destructive and armed conflict along constructive and nonviolent channels (Haus, 2001). Conflict resolution refers to a situation when parties involved understand each other's position accurately. In conflict resolution, the parties involved in the conflict must be willing to discuss the issue at hand because they want to resolve the conflict, regardless of their disagreements. Conflict resolution can happen only when the parties try to reach mutually satisfying solutions. In the past, one depended upon a well-established hierarchy in authority. The person on top could make rapid decisions and act autocratically when necessary. This was often used to 'resolve' conflict situations but these solutions have not been lasting and effective in the long-term. The definition of conflict resolution assumes a method of problem-solving that is more

democratic in its approach and allows those affected to be involved. Therefore, one cannot achieve resolution when the parties have not consented to the process.

There are various conflict resolution mechanisms that have been used in Africa to resolve conflicts. Some of these resolution mechanisms are mediation, arbitration, negotiation and peace-keeping usually undertaken by different groups or agencies including local communities, the governments of the conflicting states, the Economic Commission for West Africa States (ECOWAS), the African Union (AU) and even the international community (such as the United Nations) in order to bring peace and stability in conflicting states of Africa (Kriesberg, 2009). Since it first met in 2004, the Peace Security Council (PSC) of AU has been active in relation to the crises in Darfur, Somalia, Democratic Republic of Congo, Burundi, Cote d'Ivoire and other countries. The Peace Security Council of the AU has adopted conflict resolution mechanisms by creating the AU peacekeeping operations in Somalia and Darfur and also imposed sanctions against persons undermining peace and security (such sanctions include travel bans and asset freezes against the leaders of the rebellion in Comoros) (Ikejiaku&Dauda, 2011).

In Liberia for instance, the almost 15year conflict was resolved effectively through the adoption of a number of resolution approaches including the mediation efforts initiated by the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) which included the deployment of the ceasefire monitoring group (ECOMOG) and the signing of the peace agreement in Accra in 2003 (Noagah, 2013). Also, according to Ikejiaku&Dauda (2011), the Kenyan conflict in 2007-2009 which claimed about 1500 deaths as a result of wide spread election

malpractices was resolved by the African Union, the United States of America and the European Union through mediation process. Kofi Annan, the key mediator in the conflict, succeeded in brokering a compromise deal signed by Kibaki (President of Kenya) and Odinga (Main Opposition leader) on February 28, 2008. The signed deal led to the creation of an office for the Prime Minister and the sharing of ministries on equal basis which served as the resolution of the Kenya's post-election crisis (Ikejiaku&Dauda, 2011).

Despite the forthright initiatives of the AU in conflict resolution, incidents of violent conflicts have persisted in Africa. In January 2011, a wave of such conflicts emanating from uprising against 'sit-tight' and despotic leaders started covering North Africa and the Middle East, from Algeria, Tunisia and Egypt to Libya. Conflicts in Somalia, Democratic Republic of Congo and Niger Delta are still on- going despite several attempts to resolve them. For Wani (2011), these attempts by the international agencies have not been successful in resolving the conflicts; hence, rendering these mechanisms ineffective. This, therefore, calls for alternative resolution mechanisms that can be used to bring a final resolution to the conflicts on the continents.

Although Ghana is hailed as a haven of peace and a beacon of democracy within Africa, Ghana remains vulnerable to intermittent communal violence and inter-ethnic conflicts that harm its governance and security. The state is not able to control elements normally perceived as falling within its remit and these conflicts arise and in turn, exacerbate the number of occurrence (Ahorsu, 2007). While the whole of Ghana is susceptible to civil strife, some parts of the country

have been more susceptible to conflict such as Bawku, Dagbon, Bimbilla, Peki, Hohoe, Winneba, Alvanyo, Nkonya just to mention a few (Kendie, Osei-Kufuor&Boakye, 2014). Half of the country has been the main hotbed of conflicts which are often pivoted around land ownership, chieftaincy, religious intolerance and ethnocentrism.

Given the destructive nature of these conflicts that have happened in Ghana, there is the need to resolve conflicts so as to avert further destruction in the country. Pragmatic and conscious efforts have to be employed to arrest the destructive nature of conflict. These mechanisms such as negotiation, mediation, arbitration and adjudication must be geared towards conflict prevention, conflict management, conflict resolution and conflict transformation. It is therefore prudent that mechanisms should be considered for the development of national peace infrastructures and to coordinate and strengthen them in order to help minimise internal conflicts. According to the National Peace Council (2013), most of the responses to these conflicts in Ghana have at best been reactive. The country has maintained a peacekeeping presence in some parts of the country affected by violent conflict for many years without being able to resolve the issues at stake. These approaches are not sustainable and effective (NPC, 2013).

It is in recognition of these challenges to sustainable peace and development that the government in collaboration with the United Nation Development Programme (UNDP) developed the national mechanism for conflict prevention in Ghana in 2006 and thereon institutionalising the Council through an Act of Parliament; the National Peace Council Act, 2011, (Act 818). The National

Peace Council (NPC) was established in Ghana so that “the country will have a dynamic environment where people can engage in their lawful activities confident that the institutions, mechanisms and capacities for mediating differences and grievance are effective and responsive” (Kan-Dapaah, 2006).

The NPC has the primary objectives as prescribed by the Act to harmonise and coordinate conflict prevention, management, resolution and build sustainable peace through networking and coordinating; to strengthen capacities for conflict prevention, management, resolution and sustainable peace in the country; increase awareness on the use of non-violent strategies; to prevent, manage and resolve conflict and build sustainable peace in the country and also to facilitate the amicable resolution of conflict through mediation and other process including indigenous mechanisms for conflict resolution and peace building.

Since its establishment, the NPC, as part of efforts to promote peace and strengthen partnerships among peace practitioners, has been involved in several internal conflicts in Ghana. The Council through the collaboration of the National House of Chiefs and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) supported the mediation processes of the Dagbon conflict by the Council of Eminent Chiefs to provide lasting peaceful solutions to the conflict in 2006. However, the mediation process has been stalled due to some challenges. In 2009, the NPC participated in the mediation resolution process for the Bawku chieftaincy conflict through the Bawku Inter-Ethnic Peace Committee (BIEPC) in order that the factions will continue to dialogue on key issues that affect them. Nevertheless, the conflict keeps reoccurring in the area. The council has also been

engaged in the Alavanyo/Nkonya disputes since 2006 by collaborating with stakeholders to resolve the protracted conflict that has bedevilled the area through mediation, yet the conflict has not been resolved (NPC, 2013). The NPC has collaborated with the Swiss-Embassy, the Regional Coordinating Council, the Municipal Assembly and the traditional authorities to engage the factions in the Hohoe conflicts as well. The intervention strategy has achieved considerable progress.

There is no doubt that various strategies and attempts have been employed to deal with the numerous communal conflicts that have broken out in the country. Most of the attempts have contributed to re-orienting the communities towards peaceful co-existence, good neighbourliness and socio-economic development (NPC, 2013). However, some of these internal conflicts remain unresolved and recur most of the time especially the Alavanyo/Nkonya and the Hohoe conflicts which suggests that the methods adopted for the conflicts may not be appropriate, and hence, not effective. The appropriateness is crucial in the attainment of a lasting peace, a resolution that deals with the causes (root and proximate causes) of the conflicts. These conflicts have been recurring over the past years with the same causes that sparked violence.

It is against this background that this study is carried out to assess the effectiveness of conflict resolution mechanisms used by the National Peace Council to resolve the Hohoe and the Alavanyo/Nkonya conflicts in Ghana.

Statement of the Problem

When conflict occurs, a wide range of approaches and mechanisms are used to manage and resolve it through a number of resolution processes that involve the state and civil society organizations. Nonetheless, the protraction and intractable nature of some conflicts in Ghana questions the effectiveness of the resolution strategies and mechanisms in the country.

Most of these conflicts in Ghana have been handled through a combination of NGOs, religious bodies and committees of enquiry. However, these conflicts have not been dealt with completely and have been reoccurring over time. In spite of all the approaches employed by the state and peace actors such as curfew, court systems, negotiations, dialoguing and fire-fighting approach (Kendie, Osei-Kufuor&Boakye, 2014), it is clear that a majority of such conflicts remain unresolved and have assumed a protracted nature. More so, the use of indigenous conflict resolution mechanism alongside other western models has not contributed significantly in dealing with the conflicts. This is as a result of the gradual erosion of the values that existed within the traditional African societies and the replacement of these values by foreign ones introduced systematic problems for Africans because they were unable to adapt to the new system of political power (Bob-Manuel, 2000). It follows then that several of these resolution mechanisms used have not been effective in ensuring lasting peace in these areas.

Due to these challenges, the National Peace Council was established and for the past 10 years has been involved in some of the conflicts in Ghana including

the Alavanyo/Nkonya conflict. According to Tsikata&Seini (2004), the first recorded violent incident took place in the colonial period in 1923 during preparations for Empire Day Celebrations. Since then, periodic violent incidents in the disputed area have been reported in 1980, 1983, 1990 and 1997. The late 1990s saw several escalations of tensions between the two communities involving the police, with one incident resulting in violence in which five people died. This conflict is one of the oldest conflicts in Ghana being managed by the National Peace Council. Again, there have been several attempts employed to resolve the conflicts, hence, one would have expected that many lessons would have been learnt from the mediators who engage it earlier to help resolve it. However, the conflict remains unresolved.

Furthermore, the NPC has participated in the resolution process for the Hohoe conflict. According to Kendie et al (2014), the conflict relates to a persistent break-down in social relations between the youths of the Zongo community and the indigenes of Hohoe Township. The conflict has dragged on for some time now despite the numerous attempts by the leadership of the Zongo community and the Hohoe Traditional Council to intervene and collectively resolve the dispute. Even though the Hohoe conflict has achieved considerable progress (Okoampa-Ahoofe, 2012), there is tension among the feuding parties which makes the eruption of violence imminent. Despite several measures such as the dialogue, mediation and negotiation employed by the Council to resolve the conflicts, these conflicts remain unresolved.

The periodic occurrences of ethnic clashes in the country seem to mean that there is no effective way of managing or resolving these long-standing conflicts. Numerous local and government interventions have made an attempt to address these conflicts, but to no avail, as “anything” can reignite the feud. The inability to find a permanent solution drives many to wonder about the extent of damage the conflicts have caused the nation; why it has been difficult to find everlasting solutions; and what factors account for the entrenched position taken by the communities engaged in these conflicts, making reconciliation a mirage. It is these problems, among others, that will drive this study.

Even though studies have been done in the area of conflict resolution strategies such as Bercovitch & Kadayifci-Orellana, 2009; Kressel & Pruitt, 1985; Shamir, 2003; Kriesberg, 2009, Wani, 2011, none has been done on NPC to assess its resolution mechanisms and its effectiveness. Fleetwood (1987), for example, has investigated conflict management styles and strategies of educational managers. Midodzi & Imoro (2011) also looked at the advantages and disadvantages of alternative dispute resolution and how to resolve conflict. Furthermore, Afful-Broni (2012) focused on the role of school heads in managing conflict. Noagah (2013) examined the challenges and prospects of the peace process in the Bawku Traditional Area. In all of these studies, they failed to look at the effectiveness of the resolution mechanisms employed. These studies focused on conflict in organisations and the society.

In an attempt to respond to the gap identified and to contribute to the effectiveness of the conflict resolution mechanisms, the study seeks to assess the

effectiveness of conflict resolution mechanisms used by National Peace Council in resolving conflicts.

Research Objectives

The general objective of this study was to assess the effectiveness of conflict resolution mechanism used by National Peace Council (NPC) in resolving the Alavanyo/Nkonya and Hohoe conflicts. Specifically, the study sought to:

1. Identify the various resolution mechanisms that have been used by the National Peace Council (NPC) to resolve Alavanyo/Nkonya and Hohoe conflicts.
2. Analyse the rationale for the selection of conflict resolution mechanisms.
3. Examine the strategies involved in the use of conflict resolution mechanisms.
4. Evaluate the effectiveness of each conflict resolution mechanism.

Research Questions

The following research questions will be used in the study to help answer the problem:

1. What are the various resolution mechanisms that have been used by National Peace Council to resolve conflicts?
2. What is the rationale for the selection of the resolution mechanism?
3. What are the strategies involved in the use of conflict resolution mechanism?

4. How effective is each conflict resolution mechanism?

Significance of the Study

Dealing with conflicts in Ghana has taken prominent stage in the last decade with efforts geared towards developing alternative, acceptable and successful mechanisms for dealing with the country's numerous conflicts. One of such mechanisms that have been given importance is the conflict resolution mechanism. The significance of the study is to add its voice to this advocacy on the need to adopt appropriate mechanisms to resolve conflict. One of the basic goals of this study is to contribute to the understanding of conflict intervention in protracted violent conflicts, in particular, the use of conflict resolution mechanisms taken by interveners to settle conflicts successfully.

Delimitations

Conflict resolution has been one of the processes used to resolve conflicts even though there are other processes such as conflict prevention, management and transformation. In this study, the focus will be on conflict resolution mechanisms used in Ghana by the National Peace Council in resolving conflicts. In the confines of this work, conflict resolution is considered as the mechanisms that are geared towards resolving the root and proximate causes of the conflict. The justification for this stance is that most conflict scholars in the field of conflict management tend to merge the concept conflict resolution into conflict

management and therefore are not able to deal with the actual causes of the conflict, instead manage it.

The study also focused on National Peace Council and examined the effectiveness of their mechanisms in the area of conflict resolution. The study examined the indicators that should manifest when using a particular mechanism to ensure effective resolution of conflicts.

Limitations

This is a qualitative research and most of the data collected were drawn from key informants from some selected conflicts in Ghana. The conclusions are therefore attributed to the responses gathered from the study.

Chapter Synopsis

The study consists of six chapters. Chapter one contains the background, statement of the problem, study objectives, research questions significance and organisation of the study. Chapter two deals with the review of related relevant literature and chapter three covers the methodology of the study. The fourth chapter presents the history and efforts aimed at resolving the conflicts. The fifth chapter discusses and presents the results and the sixth chapter contains the summary, conclusions and recommendations of the study.

CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Introduction

This chapter reviews theories, definition of key concepts and research done in relation to this study. The areas examined were: Human Needs Theory, needs and interest, conflict resolution mechanism, factors contributing to the effectiveness of mediation, empirical review and conceptual framework.

Concepts and Ideas

Needs and Interests

Social conflicts tend to be far more complex than that for they embody on-going relationships with complex and emotional components. Simply stated, there are always concerns, interest, procedural needs and psychological needs to be addressed within the conflict, in addition to the substantive needs that are generally presented. The durability of the interests and needs of the parties transcend the immediate present situation. Any efforts to resolve conflicts effectively must take these points into account (Tsikata & Seini, 2004).

One must respect that within its elegant simplicity lies a complex set of issues to address. It is not surprising that satisfactory resolution of most conflicts can prove so challenging and time consuming to address. Conflicts occur when people perceive that as a consequence of a disagreement, there is a threat to their needs, interests or concerns (Lederach, 1998). Interests are values pursued by individuals and groups in conflict which may represent immediate and distant

benefits or gains accruable to such parties. Unlike position, interests are what parties really want and it comes in the form of favours, concessions and material gain (Best, 2006).

Conflict Resolution

Conflict resolution can apply to all stages of conflicts and encompasses relatively constructive ways of conducting and transforming conflicts and then, maintaining secure and equitable relations. Conflict resolution relates to all domains of conflicts, whether within or between families, organizations, communities or countries.

The word *resolution* means “The quality of being resolute, a firm decision, an expression of opinion or intentions agreed on by a legislative body, the action of solving a problem or dispute, The process of reducing or separating something into components” (Hornby, 2000). Thus, we can basically define conflict resolution as a situation where the conflicting parties enter into an agreement that solves their central incompatibilities, accept each other’s continued existence as parties and cease all violent action against each other (Wani, 2011). Conflict resolution refers to a range of processes aimed at alleviating or eliminating sources of conflict. Wani (2011) further argues that conflict resolution is an umbrella term for a whole range of methods and approaches for dealing with conflict: from negotiation to diplomacy, from mediation to arbitration, from facilitation to adjudication, from conciliation to conflict prevention, from conflict management to conflict transformation, from restorative justice to peacekeeping.

Conflict resolution is a fast growing academic field. Bercovitch, Kremenyuk and Zartman (2008) state that although it is a relatively new area of study, having emerged as a specialised field only in the 1950s, when superpower conflict threatened the very existence of human kind, conflict resolution has rapidly grown into a self-contained, vibrant and interdisciplinary field. Most importantly, those who study conflict resolution focus on the phenomenon of conflict and analyse ways to bring it under control, bringing their insights and concepts to bear on actual conflicts either local or international in order to foster better and more effective relations among states and peoples.

Bercovitch et al. (2008) assert that conflict resolution concerns itself with ideas, theories and methods that can improve our understanding of conflict and our collective efforts to reduce violence and enhance political process for the harmonisation of interest. To them, the field of conflict resolution emerged in an attempt to end the hostilities that characterised the Cold War. The end of the Cold War gave impetus to this new approach (conflict resolution). Therefore, one will ask: is it worth destroying each other for the achievement of existing goals? Are there other more dignified means of solving existing problems? Are we doomed to fight each other forever? These questions needed answers and these questions are what conflict resolution sought to address (Bercovitch et al., 2008). It seeks to resolve what already existed and to suggest ways to prevent new unnecessary conflicts in the future.

Conflict resolution, as a specialized field, became prominent during the post-Cold War era. It has also come face to face with the fundamental new

challenges. In its development, it is believed that the concept of conflict resolution began to make waves in the 1950s and 1960s when Cold War was at its peak and when the development of nuclear weapons and the conflict between the super powers seemed to threaten human survival. According to Wani (2011), some pioneers from different disciplines realised the need to study conflict as general phenomena, with similar properties whether it occurs in international relations, communities, families or between individuals. These scholars realised the potential of applying strategies that were evolving in industrial relations and community mediations settings. Wani (2011) continues that a handful of people in North America and Europe began to establish research groups to the new ideas. Nevertheless, the new ideas attracted interest and the field began to grow. This led to the spread of scholarly journals in conflict resolution sometime in the 1980s.

Increasingly, conflict resolution ideas have made a difference in real conflicts due to the impressive results it has gained especially in South Africa during the apartheid regime. According to Osei-Hwedie and Rankopo (2012), conflict resolution deals with settlement of conflicts that may already exist. In South Africa, for example, the Centre for Inter-group Studies was applying the approaches that had been developed in the field to the developing confrontation between apartheid and its challengers and that came with impressive results. In our current contemporary world, conflict resolution has great relevance. This stems from the fact that it is only through conflict resolution mechanism that conflicts, rivalries, disputes and incompatibilities can be checked and minimized so that peace can be established. This is the reason why great leaders, distinguished

academicians, stalwarts, think tanks, media and civil society have laid much thrust upon the concept of conflict resolution. It is noteworthy to mention that conflict resolution is a mechanism of peace-building and peace-making process. Kriesberg (2009) contends that conflict resolution, as a discipline of peace study, must emphasize that all conflicts of human society should have to be resolved by peaceful and non-violent methods such as diplomacy, communication, negotiation, summits conciliation, arbitration, mediation and through cooperative and confidence-building measures.

Effective conflict resolution in human society can be achieved when we give equal attention to the marginalized, minority and unrecognised groups in society. In some other societies, Wani (2011) states that there are different types of conflicts and for these conflicts to be resolved, different types of peaceful and non-violent methods and techniques need to be employed. Even though war is the last resort in political phenomenon as stipulated by the UN Charter, there is the tendency by some states to use war as a way of resolving conflict. The aim of methods and techniques of conflict resolution is not the elimination of conflicts, which is generally known to be impossible and undesirable. Instead, the primary objective of conflict resolution is to transform actual or a potentially violent situation into a peaceful one. In the following sections, the various conflict resolution mechanisms (negotiation and mediation) will be discussed. This is because the National Peace Council is permitted by the law to use mediation and negotiation to resolve conflicts.

Mediation

Mediation is a form of conflict resolution in which a third party assists two or more contending parties to find a solution without resorting to force. According to Bercovitch & Kadayifci-Orellana (2009), in a world of violent conflicts where all regions and major religions have been associated with death and destruction, mediation remains one of the most widely used tools of conflict management in international relations. The practice of settling disputes through intermediaries has had a rich history in all cultures, both Western and non-Western (Gulliver, 1979). Although there are considerable differences in the way mediators from different cultures deal with a conflict, all the approaches have value in terms of managing or settling disputes. The interest in the study of conflict can be related to the desire to manage the conflict in a way that maximizes its potential benefits and minimizes its destructive consequences.

As a form of international conflict resolution mechanism, mediation is likely to occur when (1) a conflict has gone on for some time, (2) the efforts of the individuals or actors involved have reached an impasse, (3) neither actor is prepared to countenance further costs or escalation of the dispute and (4) both parties welcome some form of mediation and are ready to engage in direct or indirect dialogue (Bercovitch, 1984). This means that mediation cannot happen without the consent of the conflicting parties. Mediation in essence can be seen as an extension of the negotiation process whereby an acceptable third party intervenes to change the course or outcome of a particular conflict. The third party, with no authoritative decision making power, is there to assist the

disputants in their search for a mutually acceptable agreement. As a form of conflict resolution approach, mediation is distinct from the more binding forms of third-party intervention, such as arbitration and adjudication in that it is initiated upon request and it leaves the ultimate decisionmaking power with the disputants (Folberg& Taylor, 1984; Moore, 1996).

Mediation is seen as a process that employs a neutral or impartial person or persons to facilitate negotiation between the parties to a dispute in an effort to reach a mutually accepted resolution (Shamir, 2003). Mediation is a process close in its premises to negotiation: mediation is an assisted and facilitated negotiation carried out by a third party (Goldberg, Sander & Rogers, 1992). According to Shamir (2003), the mediators who are hired, appointed or volunteer to help in managing the process should have no direct interest in the conflict and its outcome and no power to render a decision. They have control over the process but not over its outcome. Power is vested in the parties, who have control over the outcome. They are the architects of the solution. Bercovitch & Houston (2000) explain mediation as an approach to conflict resolution approach in which a third party, who is not a direct party to the dispute, helps disputants through their negotiations and does so in a non-binding fashion. The overall aim of mediation, according to Bercovitch & Houston (2000), is to stop violence and establish peaceful relations between conflicting parties. Mitchell (1981, p.63) defines mediation as any “intermediary activity . . . undertaken by a third party with the primary intention of achieving some compromise settlement of issues at stake between parties, or at least ending disruptive conflict behavior.”

Mediation process in conflict resolution is distinct from the parties' own efforts because the disputing parties or their representatives seek the assistance or accept an offer of help from an individual, group, state or organization to change, affect or influence their perceptions or behaviour, without resorting to physical force, or invoking the authority of the law (Bercovitch, 1992). In addition to the above, Moore (1996) argues that mediation is an extension or elaboration of the negotiation process that involves the intervention of an acceptable third party who has limited or no authoritative decision-making power. In spite of the different definitions put forward by scholars, there are a number of characteristics which are common to most mediation efforts. Bercovitch's (1997) study has outlined some of the main characteristics of mediation. They include the following:

Mediation is an extension and continuation of peaceful conflict management. Second, mediation involves the intervention of an outsider – an individual, a group, or an organization into a conflict between two or more states or other actors. Third, Mediation is a non-coercive, non-violent and ultimately, non-binding form of intervention. Fourth, mediators enter a conflict, whether internal or international, in order to affect it, change it, resolve it, modify it or influence it in some way. Fifth, mediators bring with them, consciously or otherwise ideas, knowledge, resources and interests of their own or of the group or organization they represent. Mediators often have their own assumptions and agendas about the conflict in question. Sixth, mediation is a voluntary form of conflict resolution. The actors involved retain control over the outcome (if not always over the process) of their conflict, as well as the freedom to accept or

reject mediation or mediators' proposals. Lastly, mediation is usually an ad hoc procedure only.

Following from the above, Shamir (2003) indicates that the mediator's role is multiple. The mediator helps the parties think in new and innovative ways, to avoid the pitfalls of adopting rigid positions instead of looking after their interests, to smoothen discussions when there is animosity between the parties that renders the discussions futile and, in general, to steer the process away from negative outcomes and possible breakdown towards joint gains. Mediation has become a very important and viable alternative to adjudication and arbitration in the legal system. Unlike the process of facilitation, where the third party merely hosts the parties and encourages them to continue negotiating in a neutral, welcoming environment, the mediator plays a more active role. The mediator not only facilitates but also designs the process and assists and helps the parties to get to the root of their conflict, to understand their interests and reach a resolution agreed by all concerned.

A mediator should study the substance of the dispute and try to identify the issues in conflict, using tools such as re-framing, active listening, open-ended questions and his/her analytical skills. Shamir (2003) outlined some advantages of mediation that is worth examining.

The first advantage of mediation is the flexible nature of the process. Mediation process can be adapted to meet the needs of the parties during the process and in formulating a solution. This may involve the choice over location of the mediation, the duration, the people who are to be involved, the

selection of acceptable objective criteria and many other choices related to the process. Most importantly, mediation is not conducted under a fixed set of rules, as is the case in a court of law.

Informality is another positive aspect of mediation. Mediation is an informal process, designed to suit the needs of the parties. It appeals to parties who feel that they want to be partners in the process of resolving their conflict and take part in the decision on the fate of their dispute. It allows the parties to present their arguments in an informal manner, not bound by the procedures of the legal system. It is a form of guided dialogue, where the parties have the ability to express their feelings, not only facts, so that venting anger can help in reaching an agreed solution.

Further, confidentiality is a positive aspect of mediation. Mediation is confidential, off the record and away from the public eye and the press. The mediator is bound not to divulge any of the information he or she hears from one party to the other or to anyone else without permission, so the parties can feel free to confide in the mediator. The mediator will not share the confidential information not even with a judge. Mediators can meet with each party in separate and private caucus meetings, to assist them in understanding their own underlying interests and those of the other party.

The non-binding nature of mediation is yet another positive effect of mediation. Mediators assist the parties to reach a negotiated settlement, an agreement, which is then usually put in writing. If the parties are not happy with the process or the outcome, they have the right to use another dispute resolution

mechanism in order to resolve their dispute; for example, they can go to court or to an arbitrator.

In addition to the above, mediation helps conserve resources. Mediation is generally faster than the judicial process; it is less costly and saves resources (time, money and energy). It can often be scheduled at the convenience of the parties, avoiding long court delays and associated costs. In mediation, the focus is on the future, but it does not ignore the past, which provides the information about the issues and the causes of the conflict. This minimizes non-productive justifications, assessment of “who is right,” and differing views of “the truth.”

Lastly, mediation helps in the maintenance and often improvement of the relationship between the parties involved. One of the main reasons for using mediation as an alternative to the judicial process is to preserve and potentially improve relationships between the parties. The mediation process works well, especially in the case of a long-term relationship or interest-based disputes. In the process, the parties gain understanding of each other’s motives, needs and interests. This understanding can often improve the relationship between them. When the relationship is maintained and improved through the resolution of the conflict, the parties have an increased capacity both to maintain the agreement and to resolve future conflicts.

Factors Contributing to the Effectiveness of Mediation

For a mediation process to be effective, the mediators must have a choice of strategic behaviours that they reckon will facilitate the type of outcome they

seek to achieve in the conflict resolution process. Different criteria may be offered. However, any criterion adopted will have to relate to how best to measure the effectiveness of mediation. Traditionally, mediation effectiveness was evaluated with reference to its goal of conflict reduction (Kleiboer, 1996). Thus, the achievement of an effective mediation will be dependent on the aim of the mediation. This still remains at the heart of most studies on mediation. As noted by Touval (2003,p.94):

“One may inquire into the effectiveness of mediation in achieving its proclaimed goals, the degree to which conflict reduction or resolution has been achieved, or the stability of the settlement. One may also inquire into the efficiency of the settlement, whether a better outcome for all concerned was possible.”

Some scholars have attempted to assess the factors that may contribute to the effectiveness of mediation (Touval, 1982; Bercovitch, 1992; Bercovitch & Houston, 1993, 1996, 2000). For instance, Touval (1982) in his highly influential work identifies various key attributes of a successful mediator including having influence with disputants, serving as a communicator between them, helping identify areas of common interest and finally, working on enlarging that common interest.

Rubin (1992), on the other hand, identifies three key requirements necessary for any mediation effort such as disputant motivation, mediator opportunity and mediator skill. In addition to the above, other researchers have

identified other factors that can influence the effectiveness of mediation such as mediator roles and behaviours, mediator motivation, resources of the mediator, history of relations between the parties, the relations between the parties and the mediator and the nature of the conflict (Roehl & Cook 1985; Bercovitch 1997; Bercovitch & Kadayifci 2002; Bercovitch & Houston 1993 as cited in Bercovitch & Kadayifci-Orellana, 2009). In the current study, however, the factors that contribute to effective mediation as stipulated by Bercovitch & Kadayifci-Orellana (2009) are highlighted. The factors include mediator identity, motivation for mediation and mediation strategies and approach.

Mediator Identity

Although there is no general agreement on the degree, it is mostly realized that mediator identity is an important element for the effectiveness and success of any mediation effort. What mediators do, can do or are permitted to do in their efforts to resolve a conflict may depend largely on who they are (Bercovitch 2002; Crocker, Hampson & Aall, 2003). For example, the behaviour and identity of a mediator are cited by Young (1967) as predictors of success. Even scholars like Ott (1972), while pushing personal attributes to a secondary position, recognize the impact that mediator identity may have. It is usually believed that mediators approach a conflict to help parties involved achieve a better outcome than they would be able to achieve by themselves. Importantly, “the identity of the mediator affects the mediator’s influence, trust, and legitimacy” (Bercovitch 2007, p.185). Mediators endowed with legitimacy and who enjoy the parties’ trust can influence the effectiveness of the mediation. In an empirical analysis of this argument,

Bercovitch and Houston (2000) observe that mediators who enjoy the trust of the parties and are perceived as legitimate and credible are often the more successful mediators.

Motivation for mediation

One factor that can influence the outcome of mediation is the mediator motivation (Bercovitch & Kadayifci-Orellana, 2009). In their study, they posited that motivation is critical as it determines whether or not a mediator will intervene and whether or not such mediation can contribute to building trust and credibility amongst the parties and the mediator. Bercovitch (2007) asserts that effective mediation requires consent, high motivation and active participation. The study suggests that legitimacy and credibility of a mediator are very intrinsic values that contribute mostly to an effective process. The parties must faithfully see the mediator as someone who is interested in reducing violence and resolving the conflict. Consequently, the parties are able to trust the mediator, notwithstanding the fact that some mediators may have genuine humanitarian interest whilst others may have personal interests during the mediation. What is most important is that both the parties and the mediator have a common idea to reduce, abate or resolve the conflict (Greig, 2005).

Mediation Strategies and Approaches

Another important element responsible for effective mediation is mediation strategies and approaches (Bercovitch & Kadayifci-Orellana, 2009). Mediation strategies are very critical for the success of mediation. Bercovitch (1992) explains mediation strategy as the overall plan used by mediators to resolve

and manage disputes. Their study categorizes mediation strategies into a three-way classification system based on how active the mediator is. Similar categorization has been done by Bercovitch(1997); Kressel & Pruitt, (1989); Bartos, (1989). One of the mediation strategies is Communication - facilitation strategy where a mediator plays the role of 'in-between' such as passing messages from one disputant to the other providing them with unbiased information. Burton (1979) supports this statement by claiming that all disputes are outcomes of misunderstanding and therefore, clear communication among conflicting parties through mediators is the key to dispute resolution.

Another strategy is the procedural strategies which according to Bercovitch and Kadayifci-Orellana (2009) refer to the strategies that are geared towards creating and establishing a conducive environment that can facilitate smooth negotiations for the parties such as arranging place and time for the negotiations. The last approach is directive/manipulation strategy which aims at persuading disputants with incentives and alternative outcomes to agree with the proposal suggested by the mediators with considerable authority.

However, it is noteworthy to mention that parties can reject a mediator's proposal when mediators put too much pressure on the disputants. When mediators use directive strategy excessively, their control over the process as well as the substance of a conflict may be extensive to the detriment of parties and this may stall the mediation.

Negotiations

In the international arena, where conflicts can easily generate into highly destructive and destabilizing wars and where there is an absence of any generally accepted rules of the game, negotiations are as common as conflict itself (Jackson, 2010; Wondwosen, 2006). It has been used to resolve conflict since relations between countries began. Consequently, Suter (1986) observes that direct negotiation between sides in a dispute is the ideal way to resolve conflict on all levels. It is the most efficient method because it requires the least formality, eliminates the expense of third parties and helps avoid adversary proceedings which often aggravate hostility. Suter concedes that negotiations are more binding. Further, Suter (1986) defines negotiation as a process in which parties to a dispute discuss possible outcomes directly with each other. In negotiations, parties exchange proposals and demands, make arguments and continue the discussion until a solution is reached or an impasse declared. It is seen as a continuous set of related activities involving actors, decision and situations. It can be seen as a flexible form of joint, voluntary, non-binding decision-making (Berghoff, 2007; Fisher & Ertel, 1995; Fisher, 2007). Negotiation comprises a wide spectrum of behaviours that span from formal discussions in a multilateral forum to informal conversations. It can be conducted formally or informally in secret or in open place.

Negotiation is a subject in which much has been said and written that seems self-evident until examined more closely. To resolve conflict and avoid the use of force, it is commonly said that one must negotiate. Irargorri (2003) asserts

that negotiation requires willingness to compromise and both sides must make concessions. Neither side can expect to win it all. If both sides negotiate in good faith, they can always find a fair and an amicable solution. If there is conflict about many issues, the less controversial ones should be solved first because agreement will lead to further agreement. A negotiator should never make a threat he/she is not prepared to carry out. Each side has its minimum beyond which it cannot be moved (Iklé, 1964). Ikle defines negotiation as a process in which explicit proposals are put forward ostensibly for the purpose of reaching agreement on an exchange or on the realization of a common interest where conflicting interests are present. From the definition, one can observe that the author identifies two elements that have to be present in order for a negotiation to be feasible: common interest and conflict over that interest.

Goldberg et al. (1992) define negotiation as communication for the purpose of persuasion. Negotiation is a process in which parties to a dispute discuss possible outcomes directly with each other. The main reason why parties negotiate is because they desire a better resolution, one which they are unlikely to obtain without negotiation (Fisher, Ury & Patton, 1991). The goal is to reach an agreement that is acceptable to all parties, to which they remain committed and which they indeed implement (Goldberg et al., 1992).

According to Fisher & Ury (1981), the first step in negotiations is to identify the interests involved in an issue as opposed to dealing with positions of the negotiating parties. This distinction is an important one as it helps one to know the interest of the parties in the conflict. Positions represent the stated

stances and objectives of the negotiating parties whereas interests are the underlying reasons that explain people's positions. Fisher & Ury (1981) maintain that to negotiate effectively, negotiators should go beyond positions and seek to satisfy true underlying interests. By so doing, they intimated that, negotiators can approach issues of mutual concern with greater creativity, understanding and flexibility. Interests may be harder to identify than positions and may be unspoken or even hidden behind a party's stated demand or position. Often, parties may not have carefully defined their own underlying interests in a particular issue for themselves. Shamir (2003) asserts that interests are needs (food, shelter, security, etc.), desires, aspirations, fears, hopes and concerns. On the other hand, positions are what we want and demand. The interests are the reasons behind the position. In negotiating on the basis of interests, parties will need to distinguish between positions and interests, move from positions to interests and list all the interests according to priority.

However, Alfredson andCungu (2008) are of the view that coming to understand another party's interests may not always be so straightforward. A party may have a reason to want to intentionally conceal their underlying interest in a particular subject matter or their interests may be difficult to ascertain simply because they may be multiple. When the parties involved are not individuals but groups of individuals, the complexities increase even more. In these situations, they suggest that parties may have to identify not only the groups' interests but also interests of individual members.

Another rule for the negotiator, according to Alfredson and Cungu (2008) and Shamir (2003), is to separate the people from the problem. This means finding a way for solving a problem without getting distracted by personal elements and coming to an agreement in a manner that will preserve the relationship. The better the relationship, the more cooperation each side will get from the other, the more information can be shared comfortably and the higher the prospects for arriving at a win-win solution. To help build relationships, Fisher & Ury (1981) recommend negotiators must consider the use of tactics that can help them to get to know the other party. This may include finding ways to meet informally, arriving early to chat or staying on after formal negotiations end.

Negotiators should also be aware of important tactics and considerations that help them to feel as though they can emerge from the negotiation with self-respect and the good opinion of others (Bercovitch & Regan, 1999; Kronaveter & Shamir, 2009). This may mean taking steps to make sure that neither party is forced to lose face or appear personally compromised as a consequence of having accommodated the other party's demands. Jackson (2000) opines that saving face can be the key to negotiations that have reached a stalemate or to situations where negotiations have not started. It may involve offering gestures that give an opponent a way to justify a change in their own position, perhaps before an interested constituency.

In addition to the above, Jackson (2000) argues that negotiators must have alternatives that would yield the best outcome from the negotiations. Alternatives are those actions that can take place outside the negotiations alone or possibly

with a third partner but without the party with whom one negotiates. If any of the alternatives without negotiation is better than the deal on the negotiating table, one will obviously opt for the best alternative (Shamir, 2003). It is important to make sure that the alternatives are indeed realistic. In order to set realistic goals, negotiators must start by considering certain fundamental questions such as where will each side be if no agreement is reached? What alternative solutions are available for meeting your goals if you cannot count on the cooperation of the other side (Shamir, 2009)?

In effect, the approach to resolving conflicts is a combination of interest-based negotiation and the process of dialogue and consensus building. The approach would be to identify the parties to the negotiation or mediation and decide who the participants will be; conduct a conflict assessment by identifying the major issues and interests of the parties and identify the reasons and motivation for participating and resolving the conflict. Most importantly, because the process is voluntary, one has to understand the needs of the parties to participate, build confidence in the process among the parties, design the process as one that is open and honest and provide equal access to data and information to all parties in order to build confidence in the process and the participants, facilitate their dialogue, assist in generating many creative options and come to a consensus on the best option(s) and a solution acceptable to the parties through effective communication.

Rationale for the Selection of Conflict Resolution Mechanisms

The conditions under which conflict resolution mechanisms (negotiation or mediation) are chosen in conflict have been little studied. Previous research has tended to focus on the motivations and rational calculations of the parties involved. Scant attention has been given to examining the effect of the context on which a choice was made (Moore, 2012). A significant amount of research on conflict has placed emphasis on the processes of negotiation and mediation and the general effectiveness of those processes. The question one keep asking is before a mechanism becomes effective, how does negotiation or mediation begins and why do parties choose one method or the other? These questions have been relatively ignored. While institutionalised mechanisms exist for dealing with some types of conflict, giving directions about the process and how to initiate it (e.g., arbitration for labor-management disputes), conflicts in the international arena generally lack such procedural guidelines (Kriesberg, 1998). Moore (2012) maintains that very often, states apply conflict resolution procedures on an ad hoc basis only, choosing (implicitly or explicitly) from a broad range of techniques, including among others negotiation, mediation, arbitration, inquiry, conciliation, or referral to international organizations.

It is also important to state that before one uses conflict resolution mechanisms, certain preconditions must exist for conflict resolution even to be contemplated and these preconditions often form part of the context of the selection. According to Bercovitch and Jackson (2001), mediation is likely to be used when a dispute is long, drawn out or complex. It presupposes that for a

mediation to be used as a resolution mechanism, the conflict must have assumed a complex nature. Second, mediation often comes into play when the parties' own conflict resolution efforts have reached an impasse (Bercovitch, 1992; Kleiboer & T'Hart, 1995) or antagonism prevents conflict management from even getting under way. Touval and Zartman (1989), for example, argue that once the parties have reached a hurting stalemate, they are apt to call for mediation.

Third, a mediator must be available and willing to intervene (Bercovitch & Jackson, 2001) and there must exist some opportunity for the mediator to intervene (Rubin, 1992). If the parties wish to avoid any outside intervention, then mediation will not take place. Fourth, mediation is likely to be used when the parties calculate that it will help them reach a better settlement than they can achieve on their own; that the mediator will provide them with a face-saving way out of the conflict or a means of influencing their opponent or when rejecting mediation will result in greater harm than accepting it (Bercovitch, 1992; Kleiboer, 1996; Zartman & Touval, 1996). Lastly, intangible issues involving ideology, security or ethnic identities, on the other hand, is less likely to be effectively dealt with by bilateral negotiations. When such intangible issues are at the heart of a dispute, mediation is the preferred method of conflict resolution (Bercovitch & Jackson, 2001).

On the contrary, disputing parties choose negotiation or any other method because of their levels of concern for their own and their opponent's outcomes (Bercovitch & Jackson, 2001). This is what is called the Dual Concern Model. At the level of international politics, this is expressed in terms of competitive versus

cooperative orientations (Fisher, 2007). Second, Moore (2012) posit that disputing parties will choose a mechanism (negotiation) if it is feasible and will in all likelihood allow them to realize their conflict goals (the Perceived Feasibility Model). Negotiating actors thus, undertake a cost-benefit analysis of the viability of negotiations and unilateral actions. Third, the data in the study of Bercovitch and Jackson, (2001) revealed that when parties are contesting relatively straightforward tangible issues (e.g., terms of independence for former colonies, access to or control over resources), negotiation is the primary procedural choice.

After identifying the preconditions that necessitate the use of a particular mechanism, Bercovitch and Jackson (2001) argue that it is also significant to understand the nature of the dispute so that it can inform you when selecting a resolution mechanism to resolve a conflict. In their empirical study, the study examined conflict intensity using the number of fatalities in a conflict and the relationship between conflict management and the number of fatalities. The study posited that one of the most important factors determining the choice of a conflict resolution mechanism is the level of conflict intensity. The data supported the notion that in conflicts that are not too intense, parties prefer to resolve their differences through negotiation. When disputants can sort out their differences bilaterally without interference from outside parties, they normally do that.

However, when the level of hostility between the parties is so high that they cannot negotiate face-to-face, mediation becomes necessary. A lot of studies have revealed that when a conflict is not too intense, disputants will prefer to resolve their conflict without third-party assistance (Bercovitch & Houston, 1996;

Bercovitch & Jackson, 2001; Moore, 2012). In other words, when a conflict is of low intensity or is narrow in scope, the parties feel they can manage the conflict nicely by themselves and do not seek assistance from a mediator (Wall & Lynn, 1993). Realistically, in such circumstances many parties perceive third-party intervention as an unwanted intrusion (Pruitt & Kim, 2004). High levels of fatalities are indicative of high levels of hostility. In such cases, a mediator may have to shuttle between the parties as a go-between or communicator to achieve any amelioration in the conflict.

There is some suggestion in the literature that the choice of a strategy is affected by the nature or identity of parties. It is generally agreed that when parties to a conflict are different in terms of their identity and power capabilities, direct negotiations may not be possible (Bercovitch & Houston, 1996; Kleiboer, 1996; Pruitt & Carnevale, 1993). More specifically, when parties to a conflict do not share either the same political system or the same set of cultural norms and values, negotiation becomes very difficult. This is because “shared norms and socio-political similarity minimize misperception and facilitate a successful conclusion to the conflict” (Bercovitch & Houston, 1996, p.21).

Strategies Involved in the use of Conflict Resolution Mechanism

Pre-mediation in shuttle mediation

Little is said in the literature about either pre-caucusing/pre-mediation or the timing of pre-mediation in general. Moore(1996) suggest that mediators should take care not to schedule pre-mediation prematurely when parties are still

capable of working productively in joint session, nor too late, after unproductive hostile exchanges or actions have hardened positions. Shuttle mediation refers to the process of mediators assisting the parties involved in a conflict to reach agreement without them (parties) being present in the same room at a mediation meeting. Touval and Zartman (1985) explain shuttle mediation as the transfer of information between parties with the underlying hypothesis that the mediator serves as a channel of communication as contact breaks down between the parties in the dispute.

One of the benefits of pre-mediation in shuttle mediation is that it offers one the opportunity by exploring delicate relational issues and laying further groundwork for recognition which is sometimes easier in caucus especially in the early stages of the process (Bush&Folger, 1994). For Winslade and Monk (2000), one of the first steps they prefer to take in the mediation is to meet with each of the parties separately. In their experience as mediators, they observed that it is in these separate meetings that a lot of the major work of the mediator is done. The separate meetings are a venue for significant developments in the mediation as a whole and not an optional adjunct to the process to be used only when things are getting sticky.

Pre-mediation also gives the opportunity to stakeholders to vent their worries and anger without fear or intimidation. Covey (1989) states that when parties feel understood, an enormous emotional burden is lifted, thus, making them more receptive to listen to others. This helps the mediators to explore the positions and needs of the parties. Pre-mediation may be used when parties have

extremely strong emotions which might be a major stumbling block to further negotiations. A central aim of pre-mediation is for the mediator to assess the potential benefits and harm of bringing stakeholders together before any damage is done. Billikopf (2000) realised that when parties have experienced the benefit of pre-mediation, the mediator can often take a less visible role. The parties will be able to possess an enhanced clarity about the issues and self-confidence. One of the outcomes of pre-mediation was given by Billikopf in his study: “In one situation, after I listened to stakeholders during a pre-mediation, they were able to go on and solve the problem on their own. Bad feelings had developed between them concerning how each introduced the other to visitors and the media. Not only did they solve this problem on their own, they also dealt with related underlying issues and even went on to discuss opportunities for future career growth and cooperation” (p. 45). The ground work laid out during the pre-mediation allowed the parties to address each other with little mediator interference. When pre-mediation is used with a transformative approach to mediation, the benefits of pre-mediation are multiplied and the potential negatives are further reduced.

Joint Consultation

Another strategy that can be used in mediation is the joint consultation. Two disputes with different interests and needs are precisely not the same and the best tools for settling them will probably not be the same, either. Fortunately, mediation is a flexible process, which can be tailored to meet the unique aspects of each matter; and the individual and specific needs and interests of the parties and litigators involved. To get the most out of the mediation process, therefore,

every dispute warrants careful analysis and evaluation to determine which mediation strategy would be best for the conflict. As many litigators are either unfamiliar with joint consultation or reluctant to incorporate joint consultation into their practice, this study will provide some review issues on joint consultative.

It appears there is a dearth of literature which has examined the effect of joint consultation in improving parties' commitment in conflict situations. This seems to be an important area because there is the need for conflict resolvers to understand the importance of giving parties a voice through the use of joint consultation. This importance has been reiterated by Marchington (1992) when he reports that joint consultation helps to reduce violence as it provides an opportunity for parties to express their views. Other studies have shown the effectiveness of joint consultation in improving work related behaviours (Ferne & Metcalf, 1995; Dix & Oxenbridge, 2003; Holland et al., 2009 as cited in Okpu and Jaja, 2014). There is little evidence on the effect of joint consultation as a form of voice for parties' commitment in conflict.

Joint consultation can be explained as a formal system of communication between the parties and the mediators. According to Armstrong (2003), joint consultation enables mediators and actors in the conflict to meet on a regular basis in order to exchange views and utilize member's knowledge and expertise in dealing with matters of common interests that are not the subject of collective bargaining. Armstrong (2003) reports that for joint consultation to work well, it is necessary to first define, discuss and agree on its objectives. These objectives

should be related to tangible and significant aspects of the conflict, or the formulation of policies that affect the interests of parties. That consultation should take place before decisions are made. Mediators must believe and involve parties in decision making.

It is believed by Parasuraman and Jones(2006) that mediators introduce joint consultation for the following reasons: to enhance efficiency by increasing the stock of ideas, which are available among the participant in the conflict because of the wider exposure of an issue or problem; it reduces violence as it provides an opportunity for parties to express their views and it leads to increased parties satisfaction due to the greater level of commitment that joint consultative committee brings.

Researchers (Parasuraman&Jones, 2006; Marchington& Armstrong, 2001) considered joint consultation in organisations and highlighted the usefulness of joint consultation in organisations. The studies report that joint consultation was highly favoured by companies at different stages in their progress towards a partnership arrangement with employee representatives in the area of policy making and strategic matters. In their study of a Malaysian firm, Parasuraman and Jones (2006) reported that joint consultative committee is focused towards joint decision making on selected operational and strategic issues. It provides employees with bargaining power. Workers and unions actively engage in decision making, but only to a limited extent. Marchington and Armstrong (2001) are of the view that joint consultative committee maybe successful in most organisations because employers have shown their commitment to the unions and

employee relations. These benefits according to the scholars can be employed in conflict resolution to resolve conflict.

Armstrong (2003) believes that joint consultation can have a positive effect on parties' attitudes, reassuring them that their interests are not being ignored when key decisions are taken. Also, joint consultation can enhance parties trust in mediators and in the credibility of mediation process. It can also show respect and reinforce a belief in mediator's intention to behave fairly.

Effectiveness of Conflict Resolution Mechanism

In an attempt to examine the effectiveness of conflict resolution mechanism, Deutsch (2001) posited that there are many ways to assess the effectiveness of conflict resolution training (CRT) programs. Some methods require extensive resources whilst others may be conducted by the practitioners themselves.

To be able to assess conflict resolution of the NPC, the conflict resolution framework requires a look at the objectives of NPC. According to Deutsch (2001), to determine the effectiveness of the conflict resolution programme, practitioners need to answer the following questions:

1. What are the objectives of the National Peace Council? (That is, to be able to maintain a peaceful, orderly society where actors of the various parties will be tolerating each other, improvement in the relationship that exists among the parties, finding solution to the cause of conflict.)

2. What determines the achievement of these objectives (that is, decrease in violence, decrease in victimizations, decrease in discriminations and decrease in disorder as well as an increase in the willingness of society members to face problems openly, resolve conflicts cooperatively and better working and social relations).

The study contends that a successful conflict resolution can happen when there is real improvement in the actor's relationship with each other. However, the study stipulates also that if the resolution is not effective, then they may be due to inadequacies in the conflict resolution mechanism.

Empirical Review

Conflict resolution has become very essential in solving the conflicts on the continent (Behfar, Peterson, Mannix&Trochim, 2008). Conflict resolution plays a vital role in the creation of awareness among people of the world since it is only in a peaceful world that people can survive and develop themselves. The world has experienced the consequences of the first and second world wars and, obviously, would not want to experience another war which would be more dangerous in terms of disaster and annihilations. Therefore, conflict resolution mechanism and confidence building measures can be adopted as a check or preventive measures of conflicts and peace could be maintained without resorting to violence.

According to Behfar et al. (2008), conflict resolution is the best instrument that can be used to minimize and mitigate conflictual situations into peace -

building processes. It can be said that conflict resolution is the best mechanism towards social justice, peace, harmony, cooperation and world brotherhood. It is the best slogan for peacekeeping, peacemaking and peace-building among conflicted parties and war zones. Conflict resolution, as a discipline, hinges on the assumption that conflicts ought to be resolved only through peaceful means and not through violent means of destruction. The following paragraphs will review some empirical works that have been done in the area of conflict resolution.

Fleetwood (1987) in examining the conflict management styles and strategies of educational managers posited that five categories of conflict management style were used by educational managers to resolve a conflict. The study described and analyzed the conflict management behaviors of secondary school administrators. Specifically, the study sought to examine conflict management styles and strategies used by educational administrators. Five secondary school administrators were interviewed and observed by the researcher over a period of more than a year. Their responses to the interview questions served as a guideline to determine personal perceptions of conflict management styles and strategies used. The study confirmed the assertions by Pace (1983) that individuals develop a single conflict management style and use this style without regard to the specific situation. The study also agreed with the Hocker and Wilmot's (1985) view that individuals vary their conflict management styles dependent upon the specific conflict interaction. The research also found that the use of conflict management styles and strategies depended upon a variety of variables such as sex, race and student's prior record.

Regan (1996) asserted in his work that the characteristics of conflict do not largely determine the success of a third party intervention. Rather, the characteristics of an intervention strategy largely determine the success of an intervention. In the paper, Regan (1996) assessed the historical patterns of intervention strategies and their relative success rates. Relying on intra-state conflict between 1944 to 1994, 138 intra-state conflicts were identified of which 85 had at least one third party intervention. The study found that nearly 40 percent (76 cases) of all interventions within that period were carried out by major power, whilst 5 percent (10 cases) of the interventions were under the auspices of the United Nations. The study also revealed that economic intervention strategy is rarely undertaken but a strict strategy is the most common form of intervention (military 70%, economic 7%). However, the success rates of each type of intervention, regardless of the target, are a mixed strategy being the most successful (35% of the time).

In sum, the study suggests that a mixed strategy would be more likely to succeed than either a military or economic intervention alone. In designing a strategy to intervene in civil conflict, the study postulates that policymakers would be well advised to weigh in on behalf of the government rather than the opposition. From the study, it can be said that the suitable intervention strategy and the factors associated with the strategy will contribute to the success of the intervention.

Noagah (2013) examined the peace process in the Bawku conflict in Ghana, the challenges and prospects. The study employed mixed methods

(quantitative and qualitative), a descriptive case study and a purposive sampling technique for 220 respondents. The study revealed that various approaches have been used to resolve the conflict including peacekeeping (which involves deploying security agencies), the imposition of curfews to mitigate the effects of the conflict, the use of mediation (which involves civil society organization), opinion leaders and traditional leaders and the use of arbitration. The study also suggested that going forward the Bawku conflict needs to be approached with a more participatory approach in an effort to resolve the conflict in the area. In spite of these approaches aimed at resolving the conflict, the Bawku conflict remains unresolved. The study attempts to account for the reason why the conflict still persists noting that the mechanisms that have employed in dealing with the conflict have not considered the root cause of the conflict, which is the Bawku Skin. It could be deduced from the analysis that the mechanism have attempted to reduce the spate of the escalation and violence and not to resolve the conflict entirely.

Also, according to Midodzi & Imoro (2011), conflict resolution in Ghana has taken centre-stage in the last decade with efforts geared towards developing alternative and acceptable mechanisms for dealing with the country's numerous conflicts. Therefore, one of the mechanisms that have been given prominence is the alternative dispute resolution mechanism. The study shows that Alternative Dispute Resolution programs can play a positive role in resolving the conflicts in Africa, particularly Ghana since it provides alternatives to traditional processes such as grievances and complaints. The study therefore set out to add its voice to

this advocacy by investigating the effectiveness of alternative dispute resolution in Ghana using the Alavanyo-Nkonya peace mediation as a case study. Specifically, the aim of the research was to ascertain reasons for the use of alternative disputes resolution in the Alavanyo-Nkonya protracted conflict and to also examine the strengths and weaknesses of the method.

Employing interviews to elicit responses among members of the various committees as well as members and leaders from the two communities, the study found that the method of alternative disputes resolution was preferred by the people of the two communities compared to traditional method of litigation owing to the delays and judgmental posture of these traditional methods. The study also found that the use of alternative dispute resolution operated under a three pronged structure; the mediation committee, the consultative committee and the community pacesetters. All these structures worked under different remits to culminate into the desired result of peace for the two communities. The research further revealed a large involvement of the people from the two communities in the peace process; however, the conflict still persisted. It was therefore necessary that some other mechanisms be integrated into the approach so that the mechanism can meet the desires of the conflicting parties. Also, it is necessary to assess the effectiveness of the mechanisms used in the conflict so that the mechanism can be improved upon to ameliorate the conflict. As a result, the study recommended that there should be more vigorous education on the relevance of alternative disputes resolution in Ghana as well as a creation of alternative dispute resolution units in all district and regional capitals.

Ramani and Zhimin (2010) also conducted a study similar to AffulBroni's by doing a survey on conflict resolution mechanisms in public secondary schools in Nairobi Province, Kenya. The objective of the study was to determine various mechanisms applied in resolving conflicts within public secondary schools in Nairobi Province. This study used descriptive and exploratory research design. A sample comprising principals, representatives of Boards of Governors (BoG's), class teachers, students and education officers was used to investigate the understanding, perceptions and impacts of conflict resolution mechanisms in their respective schools. The research instruments included a questionnaire and an interview schedule, which were administered to the respondents. The data collected were subjected to qualitative and quantitative analysis. The findings of the study showed that when the students faced a conflict of personal nature, the majority of them dealt with the conflict through constructive approaches such as instilling firmness in pursuing own side of the issue; attempting to investigate the issue in conflict so as to find a solution acceptable to all; trying to bring all the concerns out in the open, so that the issues can be resolved in the best possible way; exchanging accurate information with the parties in conflict with the aim of solving the problem together; embracing negotiations so that, a compromise can be reached; avoiding an open discussion of differences between conflicting parties; and sticking to own solution to a problem.

Finally, AffulBroni (2012) investigated conflict management strategies in Ghanaian Schools specifically Winneba Senior High School. The study examined the role of school heads in managing conflict. The study was a descriptive case

study in which the researcher administered questionnaires, conducted interviews and made observations to elicit respondents' views on the causes, effects and management of conflict. The findings of the research were that in managing conflict, the school heads built consensus, avoided arguing and blaming staff and students when problems arose; they met with relevant parties when they noticed the emergence of conflict and sought the assistance of the Ghana Education Service as well as counselors.

In all the empirical works that have been reviewed above, it is noted that some measures and strategies have been used and helped in resolving and managing the conflicts under study. Even though most of the studies were conducted within in the educational sector, there is no gainsaying the point that these strategies can as well be applied in the Ghanaian context to achieve effective conflict resolution. The above empirical studies provide evidence that conflict is inevitable in human endeavor. However, the studies also agree that we need to resolve conflict to avert the negative repercussions it comes with. Conflict resolution, as the studies have revealed, have been used in so many ways in different conflicts with different results. Some of the mechanisms have not been able to resolve the conflict basically because certain necessary precautions were not adhered to or certain pre-conditions did not warrant the use of the mechanisms employed in the conflict. It is against this backdrop that this study seeks to assess the effectiveness of the resolution mechanisms that have been used by the NPC to resolve some of the conflict in Ghana.

Theoretical Framework

Conflict and peace studies are concerned with the resolution of conflict and the building of amicable and positive peace. However, successful and effective conflict resolution requires thorough and systematic understanding of the root or remote and the proximate cause of the conflict, which would consequently provide the fundamental ground on which strategies for resolution, prevention and intervention can be strategised by conflict resolution and negotiation experts, peace researchers, activists, agents and or concerned institutions. In order to understand conflict resolution mechanisms, it is important to look at the theories underpinning the subject. The theories must be such that they help in the understanding of the causes of conflicts. This study looks at theoretical explanations (Burton's human needs) for conflict resolution.

The human needs theory provides a framework of analysis that centers on the unmet human needs. The theory stipulates that unmet human needs are the remote source of conflict. One of the vital contributions of basic human needs theory (Burton, 1997) is that the individual is the most appropriate unit of analysis. Humans have ontological needs that they strive to fulfill under all circumstances. Some of the basic needs of humans include identity, security, recognition, development, as well as basic physiological and physical needs. Basic needs are relevant to conflict resolvers because the source of much conflict comes from the frustration and prevention of basic needs satisfaction (Burton, 1997). If humans are prevented from satisfying their needs due to the perception

of conflicting or incompatible goals, then they will fight to eliminate the frustration in order to satisfy their needs.

As Edward Azar stated, “It is the denial of human needs, of which ethnic identity is merely one, that finally emerges as the source of conflict, be it domestic, communal, international, or inter-state” (Azar, as cited in Burton & Dukes, 1990, p.146). One of the most important elements influencing the conflict in Ghana has to do with the issue of human needs. Human needs are not generic; rather they are context specific. In Ghana, some of the causes of conflicts are rivalries and polarisations, economic underdevelopment and inequalities, poor governance, succession disputes and competition over and access to resources (Kendie et al., 2014).

In order to live and attain well-being, humans need certain essentials. These are called human needs or basic human needs. Human needs theorists argue that conflicts and violent conflicts are caused by unmet human needs. Violence occurs when certain individuals or groups do not see any other way to meet their need or when they need understanding, respect and consideration for their needs. Rosenberg (2003) states that violence is a tragic expression of unmet human needs, implying that all actions undertaken by human beings are attempts to satisfy their needs. If we are able to connect with our needs and those of others, we will be able to look at other ways of meeting such needs, avoiding violence and destruction. Denial by or inability of society to provide material basic needs, recognition and identity would lead, at all social levels, to alternative behaviors designed to satisfy such needs, be it ethnic conflict, street gangs, or domestic

violence. The great promise of human needs theory, in Burton's view, is that it would provide a relatively objective basis, transcending local, political and cultural differences for understanding the sources of conflict or designing conflict resolution processes and for founding conflict analysis and resolution as an autonomous discipline (Burton, 1990).

Most conflicts have to do with other unmet human needs such as protection, identity, recognition, participation and understanding. Only by giving more importance to these latter needs, truly recognising them as human needs essential to the wellbeing of all human being, will we be able to address current and intractable conflicts.

The current study can be situated in this theory because the Alavanyo/Nkonya conflict is based on an unmet need which is crucial to the two communities. According to Asamoah (2014), this need is in relation to an 80-year old land which shares borders with the two communities. The land is believed to be rich in timber, species, bamboo and cola nuts and has been used for cocoa, oil palm and food crops. This study is associated with the human needs theory because the theory stipulates that in order to be able to resolve a conflict, one must consider the needs of the actors. The theory is particularly useful in the sense that it emphasizes the need to understand the causes of the conflict so that it can enable conflict resolvers to apply the appropriate mechanism to ameliorate the conflict successfully. The theory emphasizes that aggression and frustration are the survival of the population; it drives emotions to engage in conflicts. The failure of any intervener to acknowledge the driving forces (Human Needs) of the

conflicts may not be able to resolve the conflict effectively. If this is the case, as this study will reveal, then interveners must critically factor the needs of the actors in the resolution mechanism to be adopted in the conflicts. In other words, conflict resolution mechanisms must strive to meet the needs of the actors in the conflicts.

There are various individuals who have applied human needs theory. Here, the proposals of Abraham Maslow, John Burton and Marshall Rosenberg will briefly be explored. In his Pyramid of Human Needs, Maslow (1943) puts emphasis on the hierarchy of needs, stating that some are more urgent than others. He places food, water and shelter at the base of the pyramid. At the second level, he puts the need for safety and security, followed by belonging or love while the need for self-esteem is found on a fourth level and finally on a fifth and final level, personal fulfillment. Maslow argues that each human being is trying to meet needs on a certain level at a time. An individual looking to meet his/her needs for food and water will not be looking to meet needs of belonging, love or self-esteem. Only when the needs on the lower end of the Pyramid are met, will humans look to meet their need for personal fulfillment.

Burton (1997) has been applying human needs theory more actively to current social and political conflicts. In his work on protracted social conflicts, the study looks at how universal human needs often are neglected, leading groups to use violence to claim their rights and satisfying their needs. In what is really a compatibility of human needs, Burton argues that education and culture make parties manipulate the issues and de-humanise the other parties.

In Rosenberg's (2003) approach, human needs are universal and meeting them is essential to human survival and well-being. Rosenberg categorises the needs into sub-groups subject to the existence of other need. The study states that our education and culture often alienate us from connecting with our real needs and through non-violent communication, the study proposes a model for connecting with our own and others' needs, an approach he applies in all levels of society and which he has used in mediation in several countries.

Usefulness of Human Needs Theory

Much can be said to the usefulness of Human Needs Theory (HNT) in working with violent conflict. Firstly, it has wide applicability. While some see it merely as a tool to be applied in prevention or post-conflict peace-building, practitioners like Marshall Rosenberg also use HNT in mediation in violent conflicts. It has also been useful in reconciliation efforts and Non-Violent Communication (NVC) is being used currently in restorative justice structures in countries like Brazil and the United States of America (Danielsen, 2005). Equally, it can be applied in all levels of society, for intra and interpersonal conflict, inter-group conflict and in an international setting. Secondly, the theory focuses on the source of conflict, looking at how best the parties can have their needs met and those of others. Finding strategies to meet underlying needs, we may be able to reduce the use of expensive peacekeeping, peace enforcement and creating of buffer zones. Eventually, we may be able to resolve all the protracted conflict in

Ghana and world at large. This is because most of the actors in the conflict have needs which drives their emotions and actions towards a violent conflict.

To sum up, HNT is widely applicable, may provide sustainable solutions as it focuses on the source of the conflict, it promotes understanding from a base of our common humanity and it highlights the distinction between negotiable and non-negotiable issues in a conflict.

Criticisms of Human Needs Theory

Its advantages notwithstanding, HNT is by no means a perfect theory and so has some challenges. Firstly, how do we actually define human needs? There are several discrepancies between the various theorists, even between Burton and Rosenberg who agree that all needs are universal, non-hierarchical and complementary. If a human need is simply what we perceive it to be, it will be hard to truly address human needs in a conflict situation. Secondly, should we prioritise certain needs over others? Is Maslow right in asserting that needs for food and shelter should be met before considering needs for self-esteem and self-fulfillment? Or is protection, rest and play equally important to secure human well-being?

Surely, more study needs to be carried out on the validity, applicability and usefulness of HNT in today's violent conflicts. Nevertheless, by attempting to apply HNT to real cases and knowing that mediators often and successfully apply the concepts of "positions and interest" similarly to "strategies and needs" in HNT, there is some value to its application.

Conceptual Framework

This conceptual framework was designed to assess the effectiveness of the various conflict resolution mechanisms employed by the NPC. It includes the needs and interests of the actors in the conflicts. These are critical for determining which conflict resolution mechanism to use. Hence, the framework incorporates the needs, interests and pre-conditional factors that inform the choice of a mechanism.

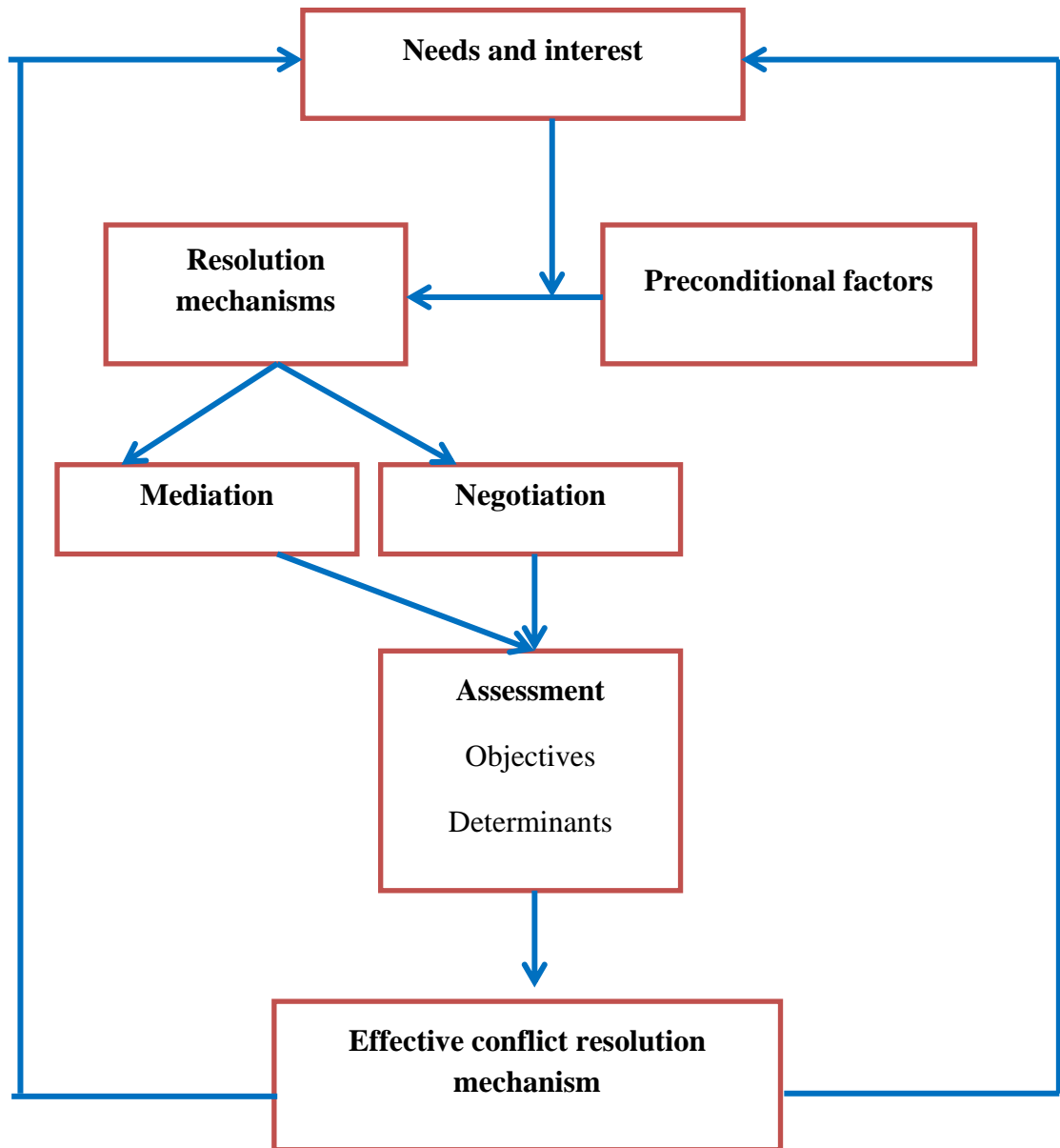


Figure 1: Conceptual Framework

Source: Author's construct

The interests and needs are mostly the fear of the conflicting parties. At the centre of the wheel of conflict model are the human needs that drive people's actions, including engagement in conflict (Mayer, 2000). Interests are viewed as more transitory and superficial whilst needs are more basic and enduring. Interests are the needs that motivate the bulk of people's actions. To Kendie et al. (2014), conflict can be resolved when actors focus on interest instead of position. The Human Needs Theory argues that conflicts are caused by basic "universal human needs that are unsatisfactory". Kendie et al. (2014) maintain that the needs should be analysed and communicated for the conflict to be resolved. When the interests have been established, it is prudent to identify the resolution mechanism that best fits the conflict situation.

However, for one to be able to select a conflict resolution mechanism for a conflict, there must be in existence certain pre-conditions that will necessitate the use of a conflict resolution mechanism. These pre-conditional factors influence the choice of a resolution mechanism. In simple terms, it is the pre-conditional factors coupled with the needs and interests of the parties in the conflicts that will significantly inform the practitioners when selecting a conflict resolution mechanism to resolve the conflict. For instance, according to Bercovitch & Jackson (2001), one of the pre-conditions that will necessitate mediation is when the parties' own conflict resolution efforts have hits a rock and also when the conflict is complex in nature.

In this study, mediation and negotiation will be the main resolution mechanisms to be used for the analysis. Selecting mediation as a strategy requires

the presence of certain indicators in order for effective conflict resolution to be achieved. Even though certain indicators and factors must be evident for effective resolution of a conflict, the ability to identify the needs of the actors is a key parameter on which an amicable conflict resolution is dependent. In the same vein, the negotiation indicators are also dependent on these parameters.

Using an adapted version of Deutsch's (2001) Conflict Resolution Training (CRT) program, the training programme suggests that assessment should be done using objectives of the CR program and indicators for measuring their achievement to examine the effectiveness of the resolution mechanism. In the assessment, Deutsch (2001) proposes that the criteria should include the intervention objectives set by the practitioners (NPC) to be achieved at the end of the resolution. For this particular framework, these objectives include: maintaining a peaceful, stable society which allows parties of the conflicts to tolerate each other, improving the relationship that exist among parties and finding solution to the structural cause of the conflict. These objectives are then assessed using determinants to evaluate the achievement. In other words, the determinants will be used to evaluate or monitor if the objective set by the practitioners (NPC) have been fulfilled in dealing with the causes of the conflict. In this framework, the determinants include: decrease in violence, victimization and discriminations as well as increase in willingness of the parties to engage each other on the matter.

According to Deutsch (2001), these determinants can help a practitioner realize if the resolution mechanism has been effective or has not been effective. If

at the end of the process, the conflict is not resolved, then one has to revert back to the model to start it again. Ultimately by following the model described above, one can obtain an effective conflict resolution mechanism.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

Introduction

This chapter presents the research procedure that was used in the collection and analysis of the data. It includes the research organisation, research design, sample and sampling procedure, sources of data, data collection methods and instruments, data analysis and ethical issues.

Research Design

The research design employed in the study was a qualitative research design. Qualitative research design is concerned with developing explanations of social phenomena (Dey, 1993). That is to say, it aims at helping us to understand the world in which we live and why things are the way they are. Specifically, the study adopted the exploratory study design. An exploratory design is conducted about a research problem when there are few or no earlier studies to refer to. Thus, the focus is on gaining insights and familiarity for later investigation or undertaken when problems are in a preliminary stage of investigation (Cresswell, 1994). The exploration of new phenomena in this way may help the researcher's need for better understanding, may test the feasibility of a more extensive study or determine the best methods to be used in a subsequent study. For these reasons, exploratory research is broad in focus and rarely provides definite answers to specific research issues.

The study chose explorative because the researcher is interested in finding out the conflict mechanisms used in resolving conflict and also to assess the

effectiveness of the strategy. The exploratory also provided the researcher with better understanding of the situation. This will also afford the researcher to get detail information and knowledge about the issue in question as well as stimulating explanations.

Research Organisation

The National Peace Council (NPC) is an independent statutory national institution established by Act, (Act 818) in 2011. Thus, any activity undertaken by the Council must be derived from the Act. It has a governing Board as per Section 4 of the Act, Act 818 of 13 members nominated by various identifiable institutions defined by the Act. Per Sections 9 and 12 of the Act, it mandates the NPC to setup Regional and District Peace Councils in all the regions and districts. However, the Council is establishing Regional Peace Councils in all the ten (10) administrative regions of Ghana and in selected Districts (NPC, 2013).

The overarching vision of the Council is to promote peace in the country to enable people engage in their lawful activities confident that the institutions, mechanisms and capacities for mediating differences and grievance are effective and responsive. The Council also has the objective to facilitate and develop mechanisms for conflict prevention, management, resolution and to build sustainable peace in the country. The national vision is anchored on core specific objectives to harmonise peace building activities in Ghana through networking and coordination, to strengthen the capacity of peace building institutions and practitioners, to develop a conflict prevention framework in Ghana that will monitor, report and offer indigenous perspectives, understanding and solutions to

conflicts in Ghana and to build the capacity of chiefs, women and youth groups, civil society and community organisations to participate meaningfully in promoting and maintaining peace in their communities.

Notable achievements of the National Peace Council have been to collaborate with stakeholders in the Hohoe conflict. The NPC collaborated with the Swiss-Embassy, the Regional Coordinating Council, the Municipal Assembly and the traditional authorities to engage the factions in the conflict. The progress of this mediation process was hinged on a report submitted by a governmental committee on the conflict in 2013. The Swiss Embassy's support in the context of the Hohoe conflict was timely, relevant and responsive to needs of the NPC at the time (NPC, 2013).

Also, the National Peace Council collaborated with the UNDP and the University of Cape Coast to conduct a conflict assessment studies in the Savannah Region of Ghana (Northern Sector). The aim of the exercise was to enable the NPC identify various conflict sites, the causes, levels of CSO or Government interventions, stakeholders and opportunities for mediation. The NPC has a completed conflict assessment report on Northern Ghana and findings of the study will influence peace building and conflict management strategies in the various programmes of the regional and district peace councils (NPC, 2013).

The National Peace Council was selected because they are an independent state body whose membership has broader and wider spectrum. Also, the body has a low level of biasness in its operations so far as conflict resolution is concerned generally.

Sampling Procedure

The sampling technique employed for this study was purposive sampling in selecting the respondents. Purposive sampling is selecting a sample “on the basis of your own knowledge of the target group, its elements and the nature of your research aims” (Babbie, 2010; Jones, 1999). That is to say, the targeted group is “non-randomly selected based on a particular characteristic” (Frey et al., 2000). The individual characteristics are selected to answer questions about a “certain matter or product” (MacNealy, 1999). The respondents, both the staff of the Council and the actors, were purposively selected because of the availability of information they have which seeks to advance the aims of the study. Also, the choice of this technique was guided by the fact that there is afore knowledge about the organisation in the first instance and further, the involvement of the NPC in conflict resolution best positions them to be able to provide the needed information necessary for achieving the stated objectives of the study.

In all, 15 respondents from the NPC and the parties in the conflict were selected. These included three officials from the National Peace Council, three respondents from the Alavanyo traditional council, 3 respondents from the Nkonya traditional council, three respondents from the Gbi Traditional Council in Hohoe and 3 respondents from the Muslim community. This was done with the interest of having in-depth discussions about their views on the mechanisms used to resolve the conflicts. The main parameter used to select the NPC staff and the actors as a source of information for this study was their experience and involvement in conflict resolution in the region over the past years. In purposive

sampling, the number of participants in a study does not matter for the study to be considered acceptable, provided the study has met its objective of describing the phenomenon being studied (Tellis, 1997).

This study, therefore, targeted two categories of respondents. The first category included the actors in the two conflicts. The second category included the Director of Conflict at the National Peace Council (NPC), the Executive Secretary of the Regional Peace Council and the Chairman of the Regional Peace Council in Ho. The Regional Peace Council (RPC) was used to represent the National Peace Council because the RPC apply the same conflict resolution mechanisms that the NPC uses. Again, the NPC asked the researcher to use the RPC to represent them since the RPC are closer to the conflict and can provide useful information. Table 1 provides a presentation of the categories of respondents and sampling techniques adopted.

Table 1-Categories of Respondents and Sampling Technique

Category of respondents	Sampling method	Method of data collection	Sample size
Chairman, RPC	purposive	Interview	1
Executive Secretary, RPC	purposive	Interview	1
Director of Conflict, NPC	purposive	Interview	1
Alavanyo Traditional Council	purposive	Interview	3
Nkonya Traditional Council	purposive	Interview	3
Gbi Traditional Council	purposive	Interview	3
Muslim Community	purposive	Interview	3
Total Sample Size		15	

Source: field work, Anumel(2015)

Sources of Data

The study used both primary and secondary sources of data. In addition to the primary data collected from the 15 respondents for the study, secondary data was collected to complement the primary data. Documents from the National Peace Council were used to identify the mechanisms employed in resolving the conflict under study.

Data Collection Methods and Instruments

For the purpose of this research, the researcher used the semi structured interview guide to illicit in-depth responses from the respondents between the

month of June and July, 2015. This involved a one-on-one discussion on the topic. Interviewing provides a method for collecting rich and detailed information about how individuals experience, understand and explain events in their lives. Interviews provide greater detail and depth than the standard survey, allowing insight into how individuals understand and narrate aspects of their lives (Walliman, 2006). Additionally, interviews can be tailored specifically to the knowledge and experience of the interviewee. When using semi-structured interviews, the researcher may encourage an informal conversation covering certain themes and questions. These questions may vary from one interview to the next and the order in which questions are asked may vary also. Additionally, semi-structured interviews are used in exploratory studies to provide further information about the research area (Dey, 1993).

In the process of conducting the interview, note taking was done in order to capture information that was provided by the respondents. However, since all the information cannot be captured through the note taking, tape recording was used as well and this was done with the consent of the respondents. According to Walliman (2006), audio recording during interviews are necessary so as to retain a full, uninterrupted record of what has been said and also to check against researcher's bias. The questions covered the main causes of the conflict, the actors in the conflicts, how long the peace process has taken place, what mechanisms have been used in resolving the conflicts and whether it has been effective or not. The interview guides was in two forms for the various respondents namely the

National Peace Council and the parties involved. On the average, the interviews lasted for 45mins and above.

Data Processing and Analysis

Responses from the field were edited to ensure that all are fully completed. Information generated from the interviews was recorded transcribed, analysed and grouped into the various objectives the researcher had to bring out the key themes and trends for easy interpretation. The data collected on tape recorder were transcribed and collated. The transcription was supported by the field notes that were taken during the interview. The transcribed data were edited severally to ensure consistency in responses and note taken to help improve the quality of the data. As Kumar (1999: 200) maintains that “editing consists of scrutinising the completed research instrument to identify and minimise as far as possible errors, misclassifications and gaps in the information obtained from the respondent”

Ethical Issues

This study is for academic purposes and therefore, demands quality in the processes as in commissioned or contract research. As such, the researcher carried letters along that introduced him and the importance of the research being conducted. Informed consent and voluntary participation were sought and all respondents were assured of confidentiality. Participants were made aware that

they were free to refuse to answer any question(s) that may seem to be misleading to them.

Field Challenge

One set-back for the study was that the researcher had a great difficulty in interviewing the officers of the National Peace Council due to their busy schedules although they had agreed to participate in the study. Several trips were made to the national office in Accra but these trips yielded no positive results even though the researcher had booked appointments with them. This situation delayed the work for more than two months, which affected the schedule of the work.

CHAPTER FOUR

HISTORICAL ISSUES IN THE CONFLICTS

Introduction

This chapter presents the history of the Alavanyo/Nkonya conflict as well as the Hohoe conflict. It also seeks to give detailed historical antecedents of the conflicts and to identify the efforts at resolving the conflicts.

History of Alavanyo and Nkonya Conflict

Formally part of the Jasikan District until 2008, Nkonya (ethnic Guans) is currently part of the Biakoye District with a population of 25000 (Ghana Statistical Service Report, 2014). Alavanyo (ethnic Ewes) on the other hand, with its total population of 9,714, is part of the Hohoe Municipality (Agyei, 2014). These two communities share common boundary in spite of the fact that they belong to different administrative zones. However, they have not been the best of neighbours for over 80 years now as the two communities have been locked up in a protracted conflict over a piece of land.

The Alavanyo/Nkonya conflict is one of three major conflicts in the Volta Region. The Alavanyo/Nkonya conflict has arisen from an 80-year old boundary dispute between the Nkonya, a Guan group and the Alavanyo, an Ewe group. It is not clear what the precise relationship between the two groups are apart from being neighbours sharing land boundaries. Some accounts of the conflict state that the people of Alavanyo settled on Nkonya land with the consent of the Nkonya people (Agyeman, 2008). According to Ohene (2013), history establishes that the

Alavanyo community migrated from Saviefe to Sovie, and settled on land that was given to them by the Nkonya community in 1840. Following their settlement, the Alavanyo formed a number of communities on agricultural land owned initially by the Nkonya community.

According to Asamoah (2014), one major economic activity in both Nkonya and Alavanyo is agriculture, which employs many community members of Nkonya and Alavanyo. Most community members are engaged in farming either for subsistence or for the market. Some crops grown in these communities include palm nuts, maize and cassava. Some other community members engage in livestock rearing, including poultry and sheep. Another economic activity engaged in by inhabitants of Alavanyo and Nkonya is commerce or petty trading, which involves the trading of goods such as crops and livestock. Most people frequent the Nkonya-Alavanyo areas to buy foodstuffs and livestock from the local inhabitants. The conflict has also made some members of the two communities engage in the blacksmith profession to ensure the continued manufacture and supply of locally-made weapons (small pistols or arms) (Asamoah, 2014).

The land in dispute is prime forest land rich in timber species, bamboo and cola nuts and has also been used for cocoa, oil-palm and food crops. The first recorded violent incident took place in the colonial period in 1923 during preparations for Empire Day Celebrations. Since then, periodic violent incidents in the disputed area have been reported in the years 1980, 1983, 1990, 2003, 2004, 2012 and 2013. There have been several escalations of tensions between the

two communities involving the police, with one incident resulting in violence in which five people died. Usually, the clashes are sparked by just one incident of shooting before escalating and leading to counter-accusations made by both communities that the other is the cause of the violence. The sudden recurrences of this ensuing dispute are attributable to the economic values, population increase and cultural heritage or historical bonds that the people of Nkonya hold towards the land (Asamoah, 2014). In October 1997, some Nkonya chiefs reported to the Divisional Commander of Police at Hohoe that some Alavanyo residents had trespassed on Nkonya land and were felling trees and blocking the paths leading to Nkonya farms (Agyeman, 2008).

Consequently, the police held meetings to mediate the complaints. A counter report was made that some armed people were cutting timber near Alavanyo farms. Therefore, an appeal was made by the Alavanyo to the police to investigate which resulted in a situation which made the police to move to the disputed area and to confront some people suspected to be Nkonya people who were sawing wood, which resulted in a gun battle between the police and the woodcutters.

In 2003, each of the parties accused the other of farming and felling timber in the disputed area, leading to attacks and retaliatory attacks on their citizens. For example, the newspapers have several references to the shooting of an Nkonya man and his daughter on their farm in February 2003, resulting in the death of the man (Ohene, 2013).

Efforts at Resolving the Conflicts

While different institutions have been involved in trying to resolve the conflicts, concerted attempts at resolution have only followed violent incidents. To the Nkonyas, the earliest attempt at solving the conflict was in 1913 when Dr Hans Grunner was contacted to survey the lands and demarcate the borders between them. Although the map which was titled 'Karte des Sechsherrenstockes' appears to have been widely accepted by almost all the six communities of Nkonya, Alavanyo, Gbi, Santrokofi, Akpafu and Bowiri, the Alavanyos, however, have remained discontented over the years over its authenticity (Tsikata&Seini, 2004).

The Provisional National Defence Council government in November 1992 appointed the Acquah Committee to investigate the dispute and advise the government as to the solutions. No hearings took place when hostilities began again. In 1995, the District Chief Executives of Hohoe and Jasikan jointly appointed the Mireku Committee to inquire into and resolve the dispute. Although the Mireku Committee wrote a report, it has not been implemented. Interestingly, both sides reject the Mireku Committee recommendation that the government take over the disputed land. The Nkonya side rejects on grounds that the courts have adjudicated in their favour. They demand that those committing acts of violence be brought to justice and the decisions of the courts enforced (Agyemang-Duah, 2008; Yakohene, 2012). The Alavanyo Youth Association in 1997, called for a high powered committee to look into the dispute and resolve it once and for all, instead of waiting for hostilities to begin and arresting culprits (Dzathor, 1999).

Another area that has featured prominently in resolving the conflict is in the area of jurisprudence. The courts have been involved in adjudicating the land dispute of the conflict. The court as an institution has been at the forefront of adjudication. Indeed the matter has over the years moved from lower courts to the highest court of the land; the Appeals Court which is equivalent to the present day Supreme Court of Ghana. Interestingly, the Nkonyas have won almost all the court cases between 1953 and 1980 where they have consistently tendered the Grunner map in evidence. According to Agyei (2014), this map has always been challenged by the Alavanyos who continuously argue that per its small scale, the Grunner map cannot be a perfect map for the boundary demarcation. The Alavanyos have also cited three colonial court rulings in their favour as a counter claim to the recent or post independent rulings (Tsikata&Seini, 2004). Though the cases have subsequently been appealed, the Alavanyos have continuously lost.

Parliament, on its part, has also been very critical of the hostile developments in the region. The Volta Regional Parliamentary Caucus has displayed their commitment to the peace process and other related activities in the area. Mr. Prince Hayibor (MP for Hohoe North) and Mr. Kwasi Babdua (MP for Biakoye) for instance in 2006 gave their accents for the enactment of a spiritual re-unification right between the two communities aimed at bringing lasting peace (Yakohene, 2012).

The Volta Regional House of Chief (VRHC) which is made up of the various paramount chiefs in the region has also contributed immensely to dealing with the conflict. Most of their efforts have been open condemnation of the

hostilities. In 2003, the body issued a statement urging the respective paramount chiefs and their people to exercise restraint and accordingly, appointed a three-member committee led by the paramount chief of Buem to institute a reconciliatory process between Nkonya and Alavanyo (Agbewode, 2013).

The dispute has clearly been complicated by law and order issues such as the growing of marijuana and the illegal logging of trees from forest reserves. These other dispute-related law and order issues are causes of the violent clashes, murders and fire-arms offences. The police tend to focus on these questions of law and order. A joint police and military squad was also deployed in September 2002 by the Volta Regional Security Committee which ultimately resulted in the arrest of 11 suspects reported to be in possession of locally manufactured guns and Indian hemp on June 26, 2003. In a similar task, the joint taskforce seized a large amount of weapons being chaperoned from Alavanyo-Deme towards AlavanyoKpeme (Tsikata&Seini, 2004).

TogbegaAtakora, one of the chiefs of Alavanyo argues, for his part, that a government take-over would not address the issue of establishing the proper boundaries of the lands of the two communities. Instead, he argues that a boundary-cutting exercise be undertaken to expose the “Anyaa” trees that were used to demarcate the boundaries decades ago (Agbewode, 2013). This is not one of the more bloody communal disputes in Ghana. However, its persistence and intermittent flaring up makes it expensive. Apart from police and army, time and other resources involved, it disrupts farming and related economic activities in the

area, and presents a threat to the livelihoods and human security of the inhabitants of an area.

History of Hohoe Conflict

Hohoe is the capital town of the Hohoe Municipal Assembly in the Volta region of Ghana. It is the thirty-fifth most populous settlement in Ghana with a population of 56,202 people (Ghana Statistical Services, 2014). The town was carved out of the former Kpando District. The Hohoe town has a total land area of 1,172km which is 5.6 percent of the land area of the region. It shares borders with Kpando Municipality on the southwest and Jasikan district on the north. Majority of the inhabitants are engaged in petty trade, crop farming and livestock. It is one of the main cocoa growing areas in the Volta region (GSS, 2014). The Zongo community is made up of Dagomba, Kotokoli, Chamba, Chokosi, Mossi and Hausa ethnic groups with each having its leadership.

The conflicts in Hohoe relate to a persistent break-down in social relations between the youths of the Zongo community and the indigenes of Hohoe Township. The conflict has dragged on for some time now despite the numerous attempts by the leadership of the Zongo community and the Hohoe Traditional Council to intervene and collectively resolve the dispute (Kendie et al, 2014: 221). The violence on 11th June, 2012 was linked to the electrocution of a 21-year old man of the Zongo community who had gone to the hospital to offload rice from a truck. Unfortunately, he died and that started the whole tension in the area.

The youth alleged that the hospital staff were negligent in their duties and that resulted in the death of the Zongo youth.

Consequently, they became furious and vandalised hospital properties. The paramount chief of Gbi Traditional Area in the Hohoe Municipality, Togbega Gabusu VI, ordered the Zongo community to produce the suspects who were behind the vandalism or face punishment. However, the Zongo community could not produce the suspect(s). This made the chief to legislate that no Zongo resident will be allowed to be buried at the Hohoe public cemetery. Subsequently, letters were dispatched to that effect to the Zongo community on 6th July, 2012 (Kendie et al, 2014). Coincidentally, the Chief Imam of the Zongo community in the area died within the same period in which the ban was implemented. According to Kendie et al (2014), the letter did not reach the intended destination until the Zongo community went to the chief's palace to inform him about the death of the Imam. Fears and tensions heightened as the chief maintained that the ban was still in force despite the death of the Imam in the Zongo community.

The chief of Bla, a divisional chief of Hohoe and Zongo leaders tried to resolve the issue but the Zongo leadership buried the Imam at the public cemetery in Hohoe. The indigenes in an attempt to enforce the ban that was passed by the Gbi Traditional Council, therefore, exhumed the remains of the chief Imam. Even more unpardonably repugnant and outright barbaric was the fact that the exhumed remains of the Chief Imam of Hohoe were reported to have been dumped by the side of the highway between Hohoe and Jasikan. This action was a declaration of

war on the dignity and humanity of the immigrant Muslim community in the district.

The youth from Zongo responded violently by allegedly mobilising to vandalise the Palace of Togbega Gabusu VI, Paramount Chief of Gbi Traditional Area. As part of the vandalism, the Zongo youth also took traditional regalia of the Palace and the chief's car was set ablaze as well. The indigenes reacted by going round the town to destroy and burn all the shops belonging to the members of the Zongo community. It was estimated that about 164 shops were burnt during the disturbances (Kendie et al, 2014). The late Volta Regional Minister, Henry Kamel Ford, was reported to have disclosed that over 6,000 people had been displaced as a result of the communal violence that had erupted in Hohoe (6000 displaced due to communal violence, 2013). According to the Zongo leadership, the conflict was about where they bury the dead and once they cannot bury their dead in Hohoe, then the conflict is not over. Hence, the proximate cause of the conflict is the perception held by the indigenes of Hohoe that the Zongo youth are violent. The structural cause is the indigenes attempt to enforce the ban instituted by the Traditional Council that no Muslim should be buried in the public cemetery.

Efforts at Resolving the Conflict

Some conflict management approaches have been applied to the conflict; however, the conflict persists in the Hohoe Township. A committee of enquiry has been used to find out the causes of the conflict and made recommendations to

that effect as well as institutions like the National Security Council, the National Peace Council and the Court system. For instance, the 10-member committee of enquiry was tasked to investigate the June 11, 2012 communal violence in Hohoe. The committee has presented the report to the Volta Regional Coordinating Council (VRCC) which has not been implemented. Mr Justice Patrick Baayeh, a Ho High Court Judge who chaired the committee, said the committee sat for 33 days and took evidence from 132 people (Committee sit for 33days, 2013). Also, the National Chief Imam, Sheikh Osumanu Nuhu Shaributu, visited the area to calm tensions among the Muslim community and to dialogue with the chiefs and people of Hohoe on the way forward (Addo-Tetteh, 2012).

Despite these attempts to resolve the conflict, the Traditional Council is blaming the government for not fulfilling the promise it made during the conflict. The government promised to help them re-build the house of the paramount chief and support the affected families. The indigenes say, seeing the burnt structures evokes some bitterness. Therefore, until the government redeems its promise the conflict will still persist (Kendie et al, 2014). This means that the conflict can be protracted if the grievances of the feuding parties are not addressed. According to Kendie et al (2014), currently, the peace is fragile which suggests that the conflict can erupt.

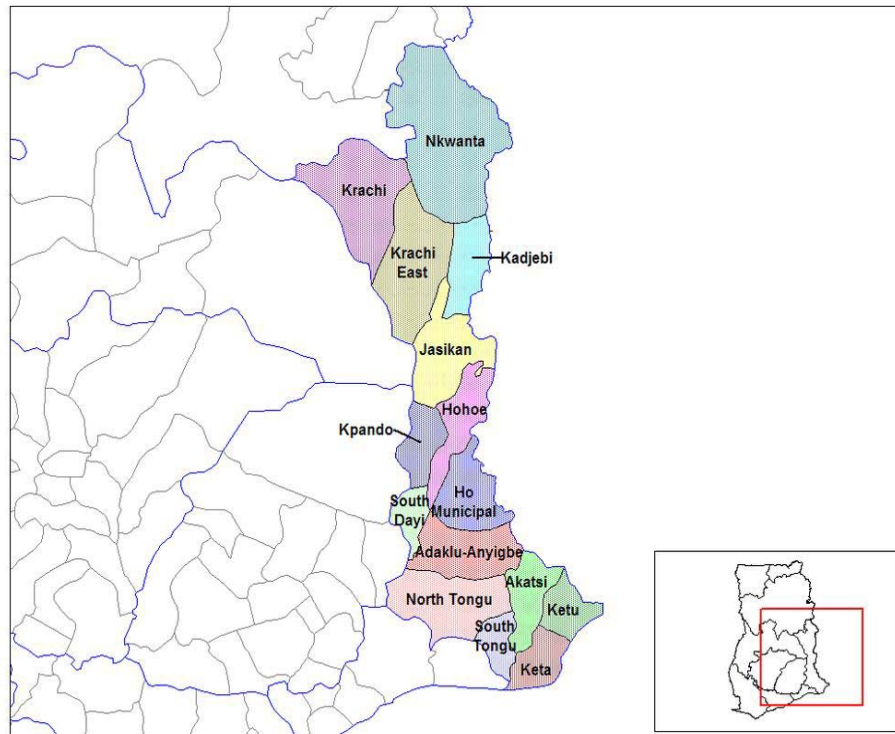


Figure 2: Map Showing Districts in the Volta Region of Ghana.

Source: Asamoah(2014)

CHAPTER FIVE

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Introduction

This chapter focuses on the presentation and discussion of the results as found in this study. There are four sections in this chapter. First, the various resolution mechanisms that have been used by the National Peace Council to resolve conflicts are discussed. Second, the rationale behind the selection of the specific resolution mechanisms by the National Peace Council is discussed. Third, the chapter discusses the strategies involved in the use of the conflict resolution mechanisms used by the National Peace Council. Finally, the study examines the effectiveness of the conflict resolution mechanisms and the challenges associated with the effectiveness of the mechanisms used by the National Peace Council.

Resolution Mechanisms used by the National Peace Council (NPC)

There are various conflict resolution mechanisms that can be used to resolve conflicts when they arise. As Wani (2011) posits, conflict resolution is seen as a situation where the conflicting parties enter into an agreement that solves their central incompatibilities, accept each other's continued existence as parties and cease all violent action against each other. Wani further argues that conflict resolution is an umbrella term for a whole range of methods and approaches for dealing with conflict: from negotiation to diplomacy, from mediation to arbitration, from facilitation to adjudication, from conciliation to conflict prevention, from conflict management to conflict transformation, from restorative justice to peacekeeping.

Alavanyo/Nkonya conflict

The conflict resolution mechanisms include mediation, arbitration, negotiation, conciliation, adjudication and peace-keeping. However, the study revealed that one of the various conflict resolution mechanisms has been used extensively by the Council. The most used mechanism by the Council is mediation. When the Chairman of the Regional Peace Council was asked of the mechanisms that have been used for the Alavanyo/Nkonya conflict, he responded as follows:

*Mediation has been used by both the mediation team
and the National Peace Council. (June, 2015)*

It is very evident from the interviews that the main mechanism used by the National Peace Council in resolving the Alavanyo/Nkonya conflicts is mediation. This was not only confirmed by the Chairman of the Regional Peace Council but also by the Executive Secretary of the Regional Peace Council. He explained further that the Council has been mandated to only use mediation in their conflict resolution effort because mediation has limited or no authoritative decision-making power. Shamir (2003) states that mediation is seen as a process that employs a neutral or impartial person or persons to facilitate negotiation between the parties to a dispute in an effort to reach a mutually accepted resolution. For the Executive Secretary of the Regional Peace Council, the National Peace Council has the role in creating and facilitating the platform for the parties to resolve their conflict. Thus, this makes it very suitable for the National Peace Council to use mediation as a mechanism for conflict resolution. Unlike the process of

facilitation, where the third party merely hosts the parties and encourages them to continue negotiating in a neutral, welcoming environment, the mediator plays a more active role. The mediator not only facilitates but also designs the process, and assists and helps the parties to get to the root of their conflict, to understand their interests, and reach a resolution agreed by all concerned. This is what the Executive Secretary for the Regional Peace Council said:

The discussion bothers on land dispute. All that one can do, as you are already aware, is to mediate in order to arrive at an amicable solution. The conflict has been there for ages due to ineffective negotiations. That is, if only they could sit together and resolve their differences, they would have resolved the conflict amicably. Surprisingly, that is not working and that is why we need to create a platform to resolve their issues. In the previous process, there was or there were mediator(s) whom the natives selected. The fact is that we are trying to get them back to continue from where they left off and this is just to enable us to facilitate the resolution of issues. (June, 2015)

It can be deduced that the National Peace Council does not go into the conflicting situation to give verdict or offer judgment which is often seen by conflicting parties as being biased and influenced by monetary

considerations. This assertion could be seen through the words of the Queen mother of Alavanyo that:

We are aggrieved because we felt that there was bias in the judgment. People were bribed and so it affected us. (June, 2015)

The findings from this study seek to reinforce the points made by scholars (Maill, 1992; Hume, 1994; Kleiboer, 1996) who agree that mediators' impartiality is a crucial quality for successful mediation which has a chain of effects following from impartiality. According to them, mediators' neutrality is a crucial quality for disputants' confidence in the mediator, which, in turn is essential for mediation success to come about. Even though scholars (Jabri, 1990; Lederach, 1998) do not entirely agree that impartiality is the main contributing factor for effective mediation, they emphasise the significance of it as a way of winning the heart of the disputants.

The National Peace Council uses mediation as they have been mandated by the Act of Parliament 818 to do. In the Act 818, one of the primary functions is to facilitate the amicable resolution of conflict through mediation. According to the Executive Secretary, the immediate objective of the Mediation Committee (MC) was to restore peace and goodneighborliness to the Nkonya-Alavanyo area for the promotion of peaceful co-existence and socio-economic development. Ultimately, the committee was to assist the two neighbors to find common grounds for resolving the fundamental contentious issue of the land boundary dispute and hence facilitate the restoration of enduring and sustainable

peace and tranquility to the area. The strategies to be employed by the mediation committee were: Firstly, re-orientation of the two communities from a mind-set of suspicion, violence and warfare to that of peaceful co-existence and good neighbourliness. Secondly, creation of an enabling environment within which the two communities could now exploit the prevailing peaceful aura and their demonstrated resolve and commitment to peace, to finally settle the land dispute and all attendant differences. Thirdly, guide, facilitate and support the communities to develop a road-map for the final resolution of the conflict and the restoration of sustainable peace. Lastly, facilitate, support and provide required technical guidance, inputs, and other resources required for the implementation of the designed road map and secure commitment of the parties to agreements and peace ever-after.

Hohoe conflict

Similarly, in the Hohoe conflict, the Executive Secretary of the Regional Peace Council said that mediation had also been used. An interview with the representative of the Hohoe Traditional Council also revealed that the National Peace Council used mediation in resolving the Hohoe conflict. This is explained in the following:

The National Peace Council came to meet the chief but the main issue that was discussed had to do with the setting up of a committee to look into the conflict and for the committee to make recommendations. The committee included a representative from the Zongo

community, a representative from the Judiciary (High Court Judge) who was the Chairman of the committee, representatives from the Traditional Council, and a representative from the churches involved. There was also a cross section invitation to people from other areas like the Kumasi or Ashanti Zongo community to share their experiences in resolving such an issue since they had resolved a similar incident. The committee sat for about 33 days within a period of three (3) months while hearing from all sides and subsequently made their recommendations. (June, 2015)

The members of the mediation team were people of high integrity and had no interest in the conflict. These characteristics of the mediation team are very critical for the resolution of the conflict. The findings resonate with what Shamir (2003) had found to contribute to conflict resolution. Shamir's study asserts that the mediators, who are hired, appointed, or volunteer to help in managing the process, should have no direct interest in the conflict and its outcome, and no power to render a decision. They have control over the process, but not over its outcome. Power is vested in the parties, who have control over the outcome and so they are the architects of the solution.

In addition to the above, it was also confirmed by another representative of the Hohoe Traditional Council that indeed the National Peace Council used

mediation as a conflict resolution mechanism in the Hohoe conflict. This can be seen in the words of the representative of the Traditional Council as follows:

The mediation process involved was the setting up of the committee to look into all aspects of the conflict and to make recommendations.(June, 2015)

This statement by the sub Chief of the Traditional Council shows clearly that the people understood that the setting up of the committee to look into the conflict formed part of the mediation process. Mediation is a form of conflict resolution in which a third party assists two or more contending parties to find a solution without resorting to force. According to Bercovitch & Kadayifci-Orellana (2009), in a world of violent conflicts where all regions and major religions have been associated with death and destruction, mediation remains one of the most widely used tools of conflict management in international relations.

Rationale for the Selection of Conflict Resolution Mechanisms

Alavanyo/Nkonya conflict

In conflict resolution, there may be varied reasons for selecting a resolution mechanism to amicably settle conflicts. These reasons for the selection may have been influenced by certain factors prevalent at the time of the resolution. The study sought to investigate the rationale for selecting a particular conflict resolution mechanism by the National Peace Council in the conflicts. The Chairman of the Regional Peace Council revealed that the Council had been using

mediation as a mechanism for conflict resolution. He explained the rationale behind the selection of mediation as follows:

There is the need to involve the people who are actually concerned or attached to the conflict in the mediation process. It is important to prepare the parties for negotiation because they must be aware of the type of mediation the National Peace Council uses. This is not an adjudicating or giving verdict (instances like this are mostly avoided by the National Peace Council). Although it is difficult for parties to agree which may sometimes necessitate a verdict or judgment to be given, the parties in the conflict must be made to understand that the National Peace Council does not give verdicts on conflicts. (June, 2015)

From the viewpoint of the Chairman of RPC, it can be seen that the rationale behind the use of mediation as a conflict resolution mechanism in the Alavanyo/Nkonya conflict is to ensure that the people who are involved in the conflict and affected by it take active part in the resolution process. This helps them to own the decision-making process and to accept the outcome of the process, thereby ensuring lasting peace. This finding supports the argument put forward by Folberg and Taylor (1984) and Moore (1986) that mediation is distinct from the more binding forms of third-party intervention, such as arbitration and

adjudication in that mediation is initiated upon request and it leaves the ultimate decision making power with the disputants. Mediation also avoids the situation whereby the conflicting parties will not be treated fairly when a verdict is given as in the case of court adjudication.

In an attempt to understand the reason why there is no verdict in resolution of conflicts, the researcher probed further to ask the Chairman of Regional Peace Council the reasons why the National Peace Council avoids giving verdict when they employ mediation to resolve conflicts:

This is necessary to avoid people claiming bias and unfairness in the mediation process. During mediation, when relationships between the parties are built, there is mutual agreement between the parties involved. That is why it is important to let the parties involved decide since when they decide for themselves, such decisions are usually binding unlike when decisions are made for them. Mediation must focus on relationship over property, because relationship is what which counts in mediation.(June, 2015)

It is evident from the Chairman of the Regional Peace Council's explanation that mediation is more peaceful and the outcome is owned by both parties. A greater part of the decision in resolving the conflict is made by the parties involved. This makes them feel responsible and accept the outcome more

willingly as compared to adjudication where a verdict is given and the decision is made for them. The Chairman added that the Council is mandated by law to use mediation since it does not include verdict.

In order to further understand the rationale behind the choice of resolution mechanism by the National Peace Council in resolving conflicts, the Chairman of the Regional Peace Council was asked why the Council chose mediation. His response was:

The parties in the conflict resorted to mediation when the courts failed to help resolve the case. The parties accused the court of being biased. It is good to use mediation because when the parties accept it “they move together”. It is also important to educate the community such that they can share with the mediators the truth about the issues in the conflict. Apart from the court, the conflict parties resorted to the battle field (fights) which also failed them. The parties have not benefitted from the fight because of its debilitating effects brought to them (such as hunger, under-development, strained relationship and many others). They had reached a stalemate in the negotiation process. (June, 2015)

Given this background, it does appear that the conflicting parties had used some other methods to resolve the conflict but were not successful. Some of the

methods include the court and outright violence. Given that the issues of disagreement had come to a head, the parties opted for mediation as a way to resolve the conflict. This finding corroborates the works of Bercovitch (1992) and Bercovitch and Jackson (2001), where they suggest that mediation is likely to be used when a dispute is long, drawn out or complex. Therefore, for mediation to be used as a resolution mechanism, the conflict must have assumed a complex nature. Second, Kleiboer and T'Hart (1995) argued that mediation often comes into play when the parties' own conflict resolution efforts have reached an impasse or antagonism prevents conflict management from even getting under way. Also, Touval and Zartman (1989) argued that once the parties have reached a hurting stalemate, they are apt to call for mediation.

To better understand mediation as a conflict resolution mechanism, the Chairman of Regional Peace Council was asked for the factors considered in choosing a specific resolution mechanism. In response, he said:

Mediation was chosen because their (conflicting parties) methods did not work including adjudication, and violence. So finally, the actors settled on mediation which was thought to be better than the aforementioned approaches. Adjudication gave judgment to one side and so the other side was aggrieved. But the followers of the aggrieved side felt that there was a bias against them. The Alavanyo's felt that the judgment was adjudicated against them

and that bribery had influenced the outcome of the judgment in court. The Supreme Court's judgment should have worked. (June, 2015)

Mediation was chosen as a result of the failure of the other mechanisms used by the conflicting parties. These other methods included violence and adjudication, none of which worked. The Alavanyos felt that although they had a good case, the verdict went against them as a result of the perception that they were very troublesome since they once fought the Ghana Army during the reign of Kwame Nkrumah in 1956 during the plebiscite (the first president of the Republic of Ghana). According to Amenyo (2008), the Alavanyos fought the government because the questions asked were ill-formed and the plebiscite was wrong and so it influenced the result of the plebiscite.

Owing to the failure of the previous mechanism, both parties in the conflict resorted to mediation as stated by the Chairman of Regional Peace Council.

The conflicting parties sought mediation when the courts failed to resolve their issues.(June, 2015)

The nature of the conflict and the inability of the adjudicating process to bring about peace in the area prompted the need for mediation. This is because the party that lost the court case felt cheated and thought that the outcome of the adjudication was biased and influenced by money. This position of the Alavanyos led to further clashes and violence because the Alavanyo's did not accept the court's verdict. The frequent clashes and violence negatively affected the

development of the area, causing both parties to resort to mediation. This could be seen in the following statement by the Chairman of Regional Peace Council:

The conflict parties felt that both the court and the violence had failed them and have not been beneficial. (June, 2015)

To the conflicting parties, both the court and the clashes had not been beneficial since they only produced rippling negative outcomes such as hunger, underdevelopment of the area and strained relationship. This clearly shows that their choice of mediation was influenced by the fact that the mechanism does not only produce an outcome that will be accepted by all, but also the cordial relationship that existed between the conflicting parties would be restored at the end of the day. To them, the peaceful atmosphere and cordial relationship they enjoyed prior to the conflict was more important than the item (land) in question. Another factor that was considered in arriving at the choice of mediation was the fact that people will not feel disrespected at the end of the process.

Hohoe conflict

The Executive Secretary of the Regional Peace Council explained that the National Peace Council employed shuttle mediation in an attempt to resolve the Hohoe conflict. The Executive Secretary further explained what shuttle mediation was. According to him, shuttle mediation refers to the process of mediators assisting the parties involved in a conflict to reach agreement without them (parties) being present in the same room at a mediation meeting. It noteworthy to

state that shuttle mediation is a variant of mediation. When asked why the Council used the shuttle mediation, the Executive Secretary explained:

For one to understand the underpinning factors to the dispute from the perspective of the parties, the best thing to do is to meet the parties involved separately. (June, 2015)

This shows that the shuttle mediation was employed because it gave the parties involved in the conflict, individual opportunities to tell their part of the story without fear or favour. Shuttle mediation, which is also known as facilitation-communication mediation as postulated by Touval and Zartman (1985), happens when mediators work to facilitate the transfer of information between parties with the underlying hypothesis that the mediator serves as a channel of communication as contact breaks down between the parties in the dispute.

The Executive Secretary of the Regional Peace Council explained further the rationale behind the use of shuttle mediation in the Hohoe conflict:

One way to tackle this kind of dispute is to meet both parties involved separately. It is a first-hand approach by delivering a letter to each party. The content of the letter is the same as the one sent to the other party together with the list of the other recipients of the letter. You do not do anything to suggest that you are telling party A differently and telling party B differently. This is done to ensure

transparency, honesty and fairness in terms of the content of the letter. Parties involved must be informed when both would meet and the measures being put in place to ensure fairness.(June, 2015)

It is evident that the main reason why the Council used the shuttle mediation in the Hohoe conflict is to ensure that the Council gets a fair idea of the issue from the point of view of the conflicting parties. Shuttle mediation is actually used by the Council as a first-hand approach in understanding the issues at hand subsequent to which other conflict resolution mechanisms are employed.

Since the parties in the conflict would be met separately by the mediators, the Executive Secretary was asked how the Council ensures that the conflicting parties trust the approach.

After handing over the same letters to both parties, every step made about settling the dispute should be made known to both parties as this helps clear any form of suspicions. It is also important to let both parties know when you will be meeting them separately.(June, 2015)

Hence, by ensuring transparency and fairness in dealing with the conflicting parties, shuttle mediation helps to get to the root of the issue and to resolve it amicably. Bercovitch (2007) supports this argument that transparency in mediation enables the mediators to influence and gain trust of the conflicting parties thereby helping to resolve the conflicts.

The results from the interview with one of the leaders of the Moslem community in the Hohoe conflict who was part of the mediation team revealed that the National Peace Council again used shuttle mediation as a mechanism in resolving the conflict. The rationale for the use of shuttle mediation as given by one of the leaders of the Moslem community is as follows:

Shuttle mediation is the simplest way to get everyone together, and there is no cost involved. It is usually a “give and take” affair; you do not have to know who is at fault. “Let us compromise with our stance, you have done this, I did this, let us forget and come back”. I know that in conflict resolution, mediation helps to solve a lot of situations because I had used it to resolve some other issues in the Alavanyo/Nkonya case which has been pending for about 18 to 15 years ago. Through the shuttle mediation, I brought the people together and the judges were so happy over here. So we felt that shuttle mediation was much preferred. (June, 2015)

It is evident that shuttle mediation was used because it conceals the idea of guilt, defeat and fault-finding while making each party in the mediation process a winner at the end of the process. Shuttle mediation also avoids the blame game where each party tries to accuse the other party for being responsible for the conflict. From the interview, it can also be realized that shuttle mediation is

easier because it can often be scheduled at the convenience of the parties, avoiding long court delays and associated costs (Shamir, 2003).

The results from the interviews into the Hohoe conflict also showed that shuttle mediation was adopted when other methods had failed. For example, the military intervention did not resolve the conflict completely although it calmed the tensions and reduced the immediate impact of the conflict. This is what the representative of the Hohoe Traditional Council had to say concerning the factors that led to the choice of mediation as a conflict resolution mechanism:

Well for the military, they just came to pour water on the burning issues. They came, separated the people and imposed a curfew. Before the curfew was imposed in the town, people went around to burn some areas in the Zongo (to set fire to some parts of the Zongo). However, shops were no more burnt after the curfew was imposed because the military were patrolling the town. It was not possible to aggravate the issue as the police and military presence ensured peace in the area. (June, 2015)

This shows that military intervention served as an immediate mechanism to calm the conflict in the short term. Military intervention seeks to keep a cease-fire and prevent hostilities from reoccurring. These operations are used to monitor and facilitate the execution of a peace agreement. It is under these terms that military force is employed, with the primary goal of facilitating diplomatic action, conflict mediation, and ensuring basic security conditions to reach a political

solution (Oliveira, 2010). However, the conflict does not die out after military intervention. Thus, mediation is the mechanism adopted by the National Peace Council in their attempt to ensure lasting resolution of conflicts.

Dynamics in Alavanyo/Nkonya and Hohoe conflicts

Comparatively, it could be realized that the dynamics in the two conflicts are different, with different circumstances necessitating the use of the mechanisms. One of the reasons for the use of shuttle mediation in the Hohoe conflict was the fact that shuttle mediation gives the mediators the opportunity to understand the underpinning factors in the conflict. Since the conflict was new and fresh and therefore, had little information regarding the cause (root and proximate) of the conflict, there was the need to use shuttle mediation to unravel the issues in the conflict. Kydd (2006) states that shuttle mediation is usually used as a first step to mediate. Shuttle mediation gives the parties involved the chance to express their worries to the mediator without any fear or panic (Kydd, 2006). However in the Alavanyo/Nkonya conflict, the issues in the conflict had been extensively documented and therefore, there was sufficient and enough information on the causes of the conflict. The conflict started in 1923 and has since been prolonged till date. Since there was more information on the conflict, the mediators employed mediation to resolve the conflict. In other words the mediators used mediation not to find out the cause of the conflict since it was already established.

Again, several conflict resolution mechanisms have been employed to resolve the Alavanyo/Nkonya conflicts. Some of these conflict resolution

mechanisms have been negotiation, adjudication and military deployment. All of these mechanisms have not been able to resolve the conflict completely. Given this situation, the National Peace Council used mediation to resolve the conflict because to them since the other mechanism did not work, it was prudent to use mediation in the conflict coupled with the fact that the Council is only mandated to use mediation and dialogue to resolve conflicts. The adoption of mediation as a mechanism was because of the failure of other mechanisms.

However, in the Hohoe conflict, which started in 2012, not much of the resolution mechanisms have been used. With the exception of the military intervention, it appears there has been no mechanism used for the conflict. This therefore according to Executive Secretary of RPC, influenced the Council to use shuttle mediation since it is a first-hand approach to gather more information from the conflicts.

Lastly, Bercovitch and Jackson (2001) realized in the study that mediation is likely to be used when the dispute has been long or protracted and drawn out or complex. This assertion is clearly depicted in the Alavanyo/ Nkonya conflict. To the Council, since the issues in the conflict had assume a complex nature, there was the need to adopt mediation since it is a non-violent, non-coercive and allows the parties to retain the control over the outcome of the conflict. However, in the Hohoe conflict, the dynamics were different. The issues in the conflict had not assumed a complex nature. The conflict had not been protracted, therefore, the Council chose shuttle mediation which seeks to address the causes of the conflict. Unlike direct mediation, shuttle mediation offers the mediators the opportunity to

know in detail the issues in the conflict because the parties meet the mediators separately and expresses their worries and problems without any intimidation.

From the comparison, one could realize that the dynamics in the Hohoe and the Alavanyo/Nkonya conflicts were different and that necessitated the use of direct mediation and shuttle mediation to resolve it. Even though the outcomes of the two conflicts has not been convincing, it is noteworthy to state that the Hohoe conflict has seen significant progress in the resolution through the seizure of the physical attacks whilst the Alavanyo/Nkonya conflict continues to experience some pockets of conflicts.

Strategies Involved in the use of Conflict Resolution Mechanisms

Alavanyo/Nkonya conflict

According to Bercovitch and Kadayifci-Orellana (2009), another important element responsible for effective mediation is mediation strategies. Mediation strategies are very critical for the success of mediation. Bercovitch (1992) explains mediation strategy as the plan used by mediators to resolve and manage disputes. This study sought to find out the strategies involved in the use of conflict resolution mechanisms. With respect to the strategies used by the National Peace Council in resolving the Alavanyo/Nkonya conflicts, the Chairman of the Regional Peace Council had this to say:

There was a mediation team made up of prominent people but there were other sub-groups such as the Joint Consultative Committee whose role was to help

the main mediation committee in its duties. The Joint Consultative Committee worked till there was harmony between the various groups. People were chosen from each side of the conflicting parties to form the consultative group. They were to feed the main mediation committee with information. When an issue or a rumour emerges on either side of the conflicting parties, the consultative committee, on their part, conducts an investigation to ascertain the verity of the situation and duly updates. This is done technically or professionally. Their contribution helped to build confidence and trust in the mediation process and helped to resolve the conflict. This explains why the consultative committee was very good in diffusing rumours. This is one of the strategies used. (June, 2015)

From the information obtained, the NPC does not just step into the conflict situation and start mediating but it ensures that the joint consultative committee performs a background study to get both parties to accept to resolve the conflict. Members of the joint consultative committee are chosen from each conflicting party and are tasked with the responsibility of ensuring peace among the parties. According to Ojo and Abolade (2014), Joint Consultative Committee is a powerful tool for resolving conflicts. It is usually seen as a process where

relationships between the parties are seen not as terms of bargaining strength but in terms of their worth and ability to contribute to issue at stake. The sub-committee was to work behind the scenes to avert possible violence from the two actors.

According to Midodzi and Imoro (2011), the Joint Consultative Committee in the Alavanyo/Nkonya conflict was trusted by the people and hence, was allowed to work for peace. In their work, it was reported that the Joint Consultative Committee was one of the strategies used in the resolution of the Alavanyo/Nkonya conflicts. The strength of the Joint Consultative Committee relied on the people because the committee had a broad spectrum of people in the two parties. It was further posited that the members of the sub-committee were the foot soldiers and actually implemented policies from the mediation committee. The importance of the Joint Consultative Committee in conflict resolution has been emphasised by some scholars including Ojo & Abolade and Armstrong. Armstrong (2003) reports that for joint consultation to work well, it is necessary to first define, discuss and agree on its objectives. These objectives, the study says, should be related to tangible and significant aspects of or the formulation of policies that affect the interests of the parties involved. Ultimately, if the actions of the committee are trusted by the parties, it leads to increased parties satisfaction due to the greater level of commitment that it brings. It is only after the work of the consultative committee is done that the actual mediation begins.

Hohoe conflict

When asked of the strategy the National Peace Council followed in applying a mechanism (in relation to the Hohoe conflict), the Executive Secretary of the Regional Peace Council gave the following as a response:

We do not have any in-house procedure on how to apply a mechanism but we use general conflict intervention strategy in conflict resolution.(June, 2015)

This shows that the Council does not have any customized procedure they adopt in applying a suitable conflict resolution mechanism. The Council follows the general conflict resolution mechanisms that is applied in resolving all conflicts (such as understanding the issues in the conflict, avoiding coercion and intimidation, avoiding personalisation of the issue and keeping the communication transparent and open). Unlike the Alavanyo/Nkonya conflict where the Council used the Joint Consultative Committee to tackle the conflict, the Council used different strategy in shuttle mediation in resolving the Hohoe conflict. The strategy used in the Hohoe conflict was the pre-mediation. The Executive Secretary of the Regional Peace Council explained the specific strategy employed by the Council in the use of shuttle mediation as a mechanism in resolving the Hohoe conflict.

Well most importantly, we know our roles. Our roles are to support the parties to resolve the conflict. When we set out to resolve the conflict, we have it in mind that these are our roles and regarding how you get the

parties to agree on the issues, that is something that we have to plan. There is the need to provide guidance on how the interaction progresses and to encourage the parties to look for the good in each other. There is the need for pre-mediation, that is, briefing from both parties separately. One has to listen to perspectives from both sides. By this approach, you may understand what the issues are as well as the incompatible goals are and reasons informing people's stance. Most importantly, you have to come back and study what you have and that should guide you on whether to meet them together or continue to meet separately. This will help you to gain a comprehensive understanding of the nature of the conflict. When we reach the actual mediation process, we normally follow what is done in mediation. (June, 2015)

From the information obtained, the Council uses pre-mediation in shuttle mediation as a strategy to understand the issues on the ground. This helps the Council to fully comprehend the details of the conflict from the peculiar perspective of each conflicting party; a situation that is likely to reveal details or additional information hidden from outsiders. This finding is supported by Bush and Folger (1994). They state that one of the benefits of pre-mediation in shuttle mediation is that it offers mediators the opportunity to explore delicate relational

issues and to lay further groundwork for recognition which is sometimes easier in caucus especially in the early stages of the process. Unlike Kydd (2006) who claims that pre-mediation in shuttle mediation becomes only a viable option or appropriate when the parties to the dispute do not feel confident about safety in a meeting, the findings of this study revealed otherwise because the pre-mediation was used by the Council to have an in-depth understanding of the details of the conflict from the parties own lenses.

In pre-mediation, the Executive Secretary emphasised that it is important for the mediator to clarify and summarise exactly what is being said by one party and report accurately to the other party. Winslade and Monk (2000) observed that it is in these separate meetings that a lot of the major work of the mediator is done. It is also very significant for the mediators to establish what exactly the party wishes to be passed on and what they wish to remain confidential. This, the Executive Secretary asserted, would help the mediators to gain the trust of the parties thereby cooperating with you to ameliorate the conflict. Billikopf (2000) realised that when parties have experienced the benefit of pre-mediation, the mediator can often take a less visible role. The parties will be able to possess an enhance clarity about the issues and self-confidence. The subsequent response was given during the interview to support what mediators must do in shuttle mediation by the Executive Secretary.

The content of the letter is the same content we send to the other party. The content is the same with the addition of the list of the other recipients in the letter. One should

be technical and professional as well as honest. This ensures transparency and promotes a good mediation process between the parties involved. There is the need to inform both parties where you have gotten to in each stage of the mediation process.(June, 2015)

The data revealed the difficulty in using pre-mediation in shuttle mediation because information is passed on by a third party (the mediator) and there is a greater risk of miscommunication and misinterpretation which can badly affect the progress of the resolution process. Also, Touval and Zartman (1985) realised in their study that pre-mediation in shuttle mediation usually needs more time and is resource intensive for participants and mediators. One could conclude that this could be a contributing factor or reason why the National Peace Council has not been able to resolve the Hohoe conflict. This is as a result of inadequate resources and logistics to carry out their action. After pre-mediation in shuttle mediation, the Council then decides whether or not to meet the parties together or continue to meet them separately for further deliberations. It is after the shuttle mediation that the Council introduces the conflicting parties to mediation where the principles governing the use of the mediation mechanism are applied accordingly.

Implications for the mediation strategies

In all of these, there are implications one could draw from the strategies used in mediation in the Alavanyo/Nkonya conflict. The use of the sub-committee, joint consultative committee, had implications on the conflict. The use

of the sub-committee helped the grass root to be involved in the mediation process.

Members of the sub-committee were chosen from each side of the conflicting parties. It was observed from interviews that the composition of the mediation committee did not include the immediate individuals concerned with the issue on the land. Hence, the joint consultative committee made it possible for the relevant stakeholders to share their views about the conflict. The sub-committee was able to assist the mediation committee with the needed information. The efforts of the sub-committee brought confidence and trust in the mediation process.

However, one negative aspect of the joint consultative committee as a sub-committee is that it could risk complicating the entire mediation process. The sub-committee was made of different and varying people; hence, the mediation committee had to deal with so many interests from the parties. This made the process cumbersome and time wasting. It delayed the mediation process and this explains why the committee was not able to resolve the conflict amicably.

In the Hohoe conflict, one positive implication on the conflict was that the briefing from parties separately enabled the mediators to listen to perspective in the conflict from both sides. The perspectives from both sides made them to know the root and the proximate causes, the interest and needs in the conflict. The approach allowed the mediators to understand what the issues were as well as the incompatible goals and the reasons influencing people's stance. This helped the mediators to respond appropriately to the conflict. The gains made in the

resolution of the conflict are attributed to the strategies used in the shuttle mediation. This brings to understanding why there is no physical engagement (violence) among the Hohoe parties and there is stability to the area since 2012. This is in tandem with Burton (1997) assertion that the needs of the parties are relevant to conflict resolvers because the source of much conflict comes from the frustration and prevention of basic needs satisfaction. Therefore, the ability to know and understand the needs and interest of the parties can help resolve the conflicts.

Nevertheless, the shuttle mediation process had some negative implications on the conflict. The process in shuttle mediation needs more time and is resource intensive as stated by Touval and Zartman (1985). The process in shuttle mediation is costly because the mediators have to shuttle from one party to the other party. This will have a negative effect on the conflict if the mediators are not well resourced financially to be able to carry out their duties. Therefore, since the NPC has inadequate resources and logistic to run the Council as stated by the Executive Secretary of RPC, it is obvious the conflict cannot be resolve effectively, just as in reality the Council has not been able to settle the conflict effectively.

From this analysis, it can be said that the strategies used by mediation committee in the Alavanyo/Nkonya conflicts and Hohoe conflicts had positive and negative implications on the conflicts. If the negatives are worked upon to complement the positive implications, the conflicts can be resolved.

Effectiveness of Conflict Resolution Mechanism

The aim of this section was to find out whether the mechanisms employed by the National Peace Council had been effective. In other words, this section sought to establish whether the mechanism achieved its targets. Secondly, the study sought to establish the reasons for the effectiveness or ineffectiveness of the mechanism. In responding to the effectiveness of the mechanism, the study relied on Deutsch's (2001) model on ways of assessing the effectiveness of conflict resolution mechanisms. According to the model, to determine the effectiveness of conflict resolution mechanism, practitioners or mediators need to respond to some questions which serve as a benchmark to assess the mechanism. The following are the questions:

First, what are the objectives of the mediation committee in their bid to resolve the conflict?

Second, what determines the achievement of these objectives set by the mediation committee?

Alavanyo/Nkonya conflict

An interview with the mediators (NPC) revealed that the Council had objectives that guided their activities in resolving the Alavanyo/Nkonya conflict. The Council was to resolve the conflict by achieving the objectives they had set for themselves. The Executive Secretary of the Regional Peace Council was asked about the objectives of the Council in resolving the Alavanyo/Nkonya conflicts.

Theoretically and practically, with respect to Alavanyo/Nkonya, I think we are all trying to prevail

on them not to use violence. The work we have to do essentially is to bring the parties to the negotiating table but that has not been done yet. So it will be very difficult for you to achieve that much. We also had another objective of ensuring that the two communities would not retaliate through violent means when one community does evil to them, however, that has not been achieved. Another objective was to find lasting solutions to the conflict and that has not been achieved. Since 2008, the National Peace Council has not been able to bring them to the negotiating table. (June, 2015)

One could deduce that the Council had objectives as targets for resolving the conflicts. These objectives were: To prevail on the parties to avoid the use of violence as retaliation. To bring the parties to the table for negotiations. To find lasting solutions to the conflict.

According to the Executive Secretary of Regional Peace Council, the Council did not achieve the objectives because the Council has not been able to bring the actors in the conflict to the negotiating table so it has been very difficult for the Council to achieve the objectives. Again, the Council has not found lasting solutions to the conflicts. The Council has been unable to prevail on the two communities not to use violence as a form of retaliation. The two communities have been clashing most often with casualties being recorded. All these objectives

have not been achieved and this makes the conflict resolution mechanism ineffective because for Deutsch (2001), effective conflict resolution can happen when one has achieved the objectives that were set. Therefore, by the model, the conflict resolution mechanism has not been effective. This is evident in the words of the Chairman of the Regional Peace Council:

*We have not resolved the root causes of the conflict.
The conflict still persists and people are being killed
in the two communities. We have not achieved much
and the issues we targeted as objectives still
prevail.*(June, 2015)

The response of the Chairman of the Regional Peace Council can be understood that there is more tension existing among the two communities. It is not surprising that the road linking Alavanyo and Nkonya towns has been blocked to commuters. The inability to achieve their objectives also explains the sporadic shootings that happen from time to time. Conclusively, it can be said that the mechanisms have not been effective because the Council has not achieved the objectives that were set at the beginning of the mediation.

The mediation mechanism for the resolution of the Alavanyo/Nkonya had its own challenges. According to the Chairman of the Regional Peace Council, the mediation process had been very helpful at the beginning. However, he explains one of the factors why the mediation mechanism was not effective in the resolution of the conflict:

My personal impression is that the training given to mediators need to emphasise negotiation/mediation techniques, especially for the mediator to know how to facilitate mediation because some were novices and also the parties in the whole mechanism of mediation, otherwise the mediators will fail in their attempt. Enough training for mediators is important because to drive a vehicle to a destination, the experience and know-how of the one steering the wheel are very important. This is important in order to know how to manage obstacles and disaster. (June, 2015)

It is evident from the comments of the Chairman of the Regional Peace Council that mediation failed because of the inadequate know-how and experience on the part of the mediators. Some of the mediators did not have sufficient knowledge about conflict resolution. It was learnt in the interview that some of the mediators did not know how to use mediation in conflict situations and were actually learning on the job. To probe further into the mechanism, the Chairman was asked, during the interview session, why the mediation process was not well prepared and his explanation is as follows:

The people who matter most should be at the centre of the issue because whatever decision is reached, they will be the direct beneficiaries or victims. And

until they own the process and provide conclusion to the issues, the matter cannot be resolved. The mediation committee forgot that in the Volta region, lands belong to families and not to the paramount chiefs but rather lands belong to families. When lands are the main cause of a conflict, seeing the paramount chief is not enough. In as much as the authority of traditional rulers counts, it is good to bring the main parties of the conflict together by electing representatives to represent them.(June, 2015)

The ineffectiveness of the use of the mediation as a mechanism in resolving the Alavanyo/Nkonya conflict was because of the wrong choice of representatives to take part in the entire process. The individual land owners who were directly affected by the conflict were not involved in the resolution process. Instead, the paramount chiefs were made to represent the people, a situation which the individual land owners were not satisfied with. This finding corroborates the argument by Galtung (1969) that it is important to consider the structure of the society when resolving conflict.

In this case, the mediators failed to realize that the structure of the society was such that lands were owned by individual members of the family and not the traditional authorities. Therefore, it was not proper to engage the traditional authorities only. Rather, they (mediators) should have engaged the individual land

owners since most of them depended heavily on the land for sustenance and survival. It is important to note that as far as mediation is concerned, it is the parties involved in the conflict who must play a key role in the process of resolution. This ensures their acceptance of the resolution reached. Unsurprisingly, the conflict still exists because the individuals whose lands were involved in the conflict were not part of the resolution process.

The Chairman of the Regional Peace Council explained further that the mediation mechanism used by the National Peace Council in resolving the Alavanyo/Nkonya conflict had not been effective due to various challenges. Another factor that contributed to the ineffectiveness was that the individuals land owners involved in the conflict did not contribute in selecting representatives to represent their interest on the committee during the mediation process. This was his response:

It is important to know the needs of the land owners so that they can be part of the selection of representatives from the conflict areas. This is because currently, the immediate individuals concerned with the issue on the land are not represented on the mediation committee. But until that has been done the conflict cannot be resolved.(June, 2015)

One can observe from the statement that the interest and needs of the conflicting parties were not considered by the mediation committee in the

resolution of the conflict. This was as a result of the fact that there was less concentration on the individual land owners which did not help the committee to arrive at concrete resolution for the conflicts. Once the needs of the individual members in the conflict were ignored, there was no way the conflict was going to be resolved since according to human needs theorists like Burton (1997), conflicts and violent conflicts are caused by unmet human needs. And so for them, meeting the needs of the conflicting parties is one of the key principles in resolving conflicts. Violence occurs when certain individuals or groups do not see any other way to meet their needs or when they need understanding, respect and consideration for their needs.

Since the exclusion of the individual members was a reason for the failure of the mechanism, the researcher asked for the reason why the land owners who were the immediate benefactors of the outcome of the resolution were not involved in the mediation process, the Executive Secretary of the Regional Peace Council had this to say:

The landowners were not excluded. We only wanted the community to bring representatives because there was not enough space for the land owners since the divisions in the traditional areas were given more consideration. The mediation committee did not intentionally leave out the landowners. Those who came were not the direct land owners because the issue had gone beyond the individual to become

Alavanyo/Nkonya conflict and forgetting that it was not the whole Alavanyo land or whole Nkonya land but land belonging to few individuals.(June, 2015)

The response explains the reason why the landowners were not included in the mediation process as the traditional leaders were to represent the community. This was because the issue had escalated and expanded from the individual level to a community based conflict. Also, there was not enough space to accommodate every individual land owner involved in the conflict to participate in the mediation process. This therefore called for representatives from both the Alavanyo and Nkonya communities to participate in the process to ensure the conflict is resolved; unfortunately, this approach could not resolve the conflict.

Another reason for the failure of the mediation process in resolving the Alavanyo/Nkonya conflict was that the committee were not given available documents to be used as a scrutiny to validate the claims of the parties. This was given by the Chairman of the Regional Peace Council as follows:

Mediators must get documented evidence whether in judgment or history and scrutinize them. This is because in the mediation process, mediators usually rely on 'on the spot' evidence orally recounted by the parties. However, it is important that documented history, statement and judgment must be used against the evidence given. This is called the 'match work'. It facilitates the process in various ways than

just listening to ‘on the spot’. There is the tendency for people to “sugar-coat” the evidence or twist history and give evidence based on hearsay. But if there is documented evidence, it helps to uncover actual facts. Nkonya conflicts might have been different if the committee had the chance to read some documented judgment. Reading such documented evidence could have informed the mediators to place families at the heart of the issues and this could have resulted in the proper management of conflict. (June, 2015)

Clearly, access to documented judgment for scrutiny by both the conflicting parties and the National Peace Council had been a challenge. This made it difficult to reach a consensus since each of the conflicting parties had the tendency of re-writing the history of the entire case in their favour. However, if there were available documents to aid the process, the mediation process would have been more effective in resolving the conflict than it has been.

In order to understand the reason why the mechanism used by the National Peace Council was not effective in their quest to resolve the Alavanyo/Nkonya conflict, the Executive Secretary of the Regional Peace Council had this to say during the interview session:

If there is any court judgment on the land in question, unless the party, especially the one who

claims he has the judgment put away the judgment, the judgment has consequences on anyone who tries to resolve the conflicts without paying attention to it. It is only when the party says I am not going to go by the judgment, so let us sit and start things afresh, then that you can achieve any meaningful thing but as long as people continue to hold on to their judgment, there will not be enough progress. If you are going into such issue and you do not take care, you may be charged with contempt of court. It is an issue that will require a lot of work and that is a challenge. (June, 2015)

Such narratives depict one of the challenges faced by the National Peace Council in resolving conflict. The inability of the conflicting parties to fully accept the mediation process had been a major set-back for the mediators due to the court judgment. Especially, the party to whom the court verdict went in favour often finds it difficult to forgo the verdict and start the mediation process. The fear of losing what rightfully belonged to them as a result of the mediation process causes the parties to be reluctant in following through with the mediation process. The party which won the court verdict often argues that Ghana is a country that thrives on the rule of law. Hence, anybody who is interested in resolving the issue should resort to the rule of law. By so doing, one must be interested in enforcing the verdict by the court. These are the reasons why the

conflict resolution mechanism had been ineffective in the Alavanyo/Nkonya conflict.

Hohoe conflicts

With respect to the Hohoe conflict, the Council had objectives that guided them in the resolution of the conflicts. These objectives were:

To prevail upon the parties (the indigenes and the Zongo community) to avoid violence and exercise restraint on the issue. To bring the parties together to resolve the outstanding issues. To ensure stability and harmony in the town so that people could live peacefully as they used to.

The Council had achieved some of the objectives. The Council, as part of their objectives, was to prevail on the two parties (the Traditional Council and the Zongo Community) through shuttle mediation not to use violence and exercise restraint on the issue. This objective was achieved according to the respondents. This can be seen in the following response given by the Executive Secretary of Regional Peace Council:

We picked some signals about people trying to do something untoward and that was the first time we went there. So our main objective was to prevail on them not to use violence but rather to exercise some restraint. I think we have been able to do that especially when we gathered that they were planning to do something and we went there and the parties

*assured us that they would not do anything and truly
nothing happened.*(June, 2015)

It could be explained from the data that the Council had been able to achieve this objective. This is as a result of the fact that the parties have not done anything untoward when the Council prevailed upon them to avoid violence. Currently, there has not been any physical encounter (conflict) between the two communities ever since the Council intervened despite some tensions existing among the towns. It was revealed during the interview that there is relative peace existing among the parties and that even the Zongo community can move about freely to engage in their business without any harm equally as the indigenes too.

Another objective of the Council in the Hohoe conflict, according to representative of the Regional Peace Council, was to bring the parties together to resolve the outstanding issues and help the towns to live peacefully as they were before. However, this objective has not been achieved partly because the mechanism has been faced with challenges. Certain items that were destroyed during the conflicts have not been replaced. Items such as regalia and other traditional items belonging to the Gbi Palace, thus, some of the indigenes harbour animosities within them. The following response support the assertion:

*The mechanism has not been entirely effective. At the
end of the day, our objective is to bring the parties
together to resolve the outstanding issues and live
peacefully as they were before. Even though
individual members of the other communities have*

been talking, interacting well with each other, it has not gotten there now and so there is work to be done on the relationship among the people. Also, there are some outstanding issues that have to be exploited but we are not able to go into some of those issues because there is supposed to be a white paper on the investigation and so if they tell you we need our regalia and other things you cannot go and try to find a replacement for the regalia when government has not come out to say what the investigation cover and what they (government) are going to do about it.(June, 2015)

Thus, the mechanism employed by the Council has not been entirely effective which suggest that some outstanding issues need to be exploited to find a lasting solution to the conflict. The shuttle mediation has led to a certain level of calmness in the town. However, the mechanism has not been fully effective since it has not been without challenges. The government has not been able to issue a white paper on the way forward for the findings or recommendations of the committee that was constituted. This is simply because the government claims there is no money. The inability of the central government to respond to the investigations has contributed to the ineffectiveness of the mechanism. The reason is that the Council can no longer proceed to resolve the conflict because the people (actors) keep asking for the replacement of the regalia. Despite being

an independent body, one must not lose sight of the fact that the Council is also a government institution which needs approval from the government to be able make certain decisions. This has been one of the major challenges that have contributed to the ineffectiveness of the mechanism. The mechanism has been characterized by major setbacks. This has obviously made the work difficult for the Council to perform their constitutional duties in resolving the conflicts.

To the Executive Secretary of the Regional Peace Council, inadequate funds and logistics have been challenges faced by the National Peace Council in the Hohoe conflict. When asked why this was so, the Executive Secretary of the Regional Peace Council had this to say:

We visited them on several occasions and most at times we do that out of our own resources. We have to rely on support from the district assemblies to fuel our activity. We do not have vehicles to facilitate our movement.(June, 2015)

In addition, the Hohoe Traditional Council confirmed that indeed inadequate logistics and funds are challenges faced by the National Peace Council in their attempt to resolve the Hohoe conflict. This is what was gathered in the interview session:

Currently, I am not aware of what the Regional Peace Council's roles are. Recently, the Volta Regional Peace Council was in the news and complained that they do not have the means to work.

This was in the news and I am aware of that. It means that they have not been doing much due to the unavailability of resources. (June, 2015)

The comments by the representative of the Hohoe Traditional Council and the Executive Secretary of RPC suggest that the conflict resolution mechanism used by the National Peace Council in the Hohoe conflict had been bedevilled with challenges such as inadequate resources, logistics and funds to resolve the conflict.

Nevertheless, despite these challenges, for the Hohoe Traditional Council, the shuttle mediation mechanism employed by the National Peace Council has been good. This is because it enabled the community members to express their inner feelings and anger as seen in the interview. The mechanism has brought stability in the town despite tension lingering among the parties.

The mechanism has been good in the sense that people were able to pour out their inner feelings and their anger. Nobody knows what would have happened if there was no committee. At least, the committee managed to bring out these things. It was something like the Peace or Reconciliation committee. (June, 2015)

Thus, for the Hohoe Traditional Council, the mechanism has achieved some level of effectiveness. The reason being that it has helped the members to express their worries which have brought relief to them as compared to the

Alavanyo/Nkonya conflict where mediation seems not to have worked effectively. In the Alavanyo/Nkonya case, both parties had taken entrenched positions on the issues which have made the conflict difficult to resolve. The court judgement has made it difficult to resolve the conflicts as well.

A member from the Moslem community also attested to the fact that the shuttle mediation mechanism employed by the National Peace Council has brought stability in the town. One member had this to say:

The mechanism has been very effective because tempers have now calmed down. The problem now is the Presidential Commission that was set-up. We have submitted our findings to the President but there has been no response. Currently, the government has finished putting up the new house for the paramount chief which was destroyed during the violence but it is yet to be commissioned. Also, we told the commission that some people must be compensated. We are only waiting for the government to come out with the white paper. Once those things are done, I think it will solve the problem naturally. (June, 2015)

Although the Moslem community was convinced that the shuttle mediation mechanism used by the National Peace Council in conflict resolution worked and is still working, it was not devoid of challenges. The following were

revealed by a respondent from the Muslim community as the challenges faced in the use of shuttle mediation in the Hohoe conflict as revealed in the interview:

I will say that the challenges were from the two sides. Mostly, the Gbi Traditional Council was writing and trying to influence the minds of the indigenes to disagree with the resolution reached. The interaction between us when we met them mostly was unfriendly. Most of the time, you will hear statement like 'do not receive them'. We were getting those types of information. At times, we receive anonymous letters, but we were not perturbed. These were mainly from the indigenes. This is the only problem we faced during our mediation.(June, 2015)

It is clear that in spite of the mediation process, members from the conflicting parties are not at peace with the outcome yet. This is because they still threaten to resurrect the conflict through the writing and issuing of anonymous letters.

Summary

In summary, the relevance and efficiency of the National Peace Council in exercising its constitutional mandate to resolve conflict in Ghana, to a very large extent, is not in doubt. From the study, it is clear that mediation has been the most

frequently used resolution mechanism employed by the Council in resolving the Alavanyo/Nkonya and the Hohoe conflicts.

Also, it became evident in the study that the rationale for the selection of mediation as a resolution mechanism was because mediation makes it possible for conflicting parties to own the decision-making process and to accept the outcome of the process thereby ensuring lasting peace. Another reason for the selection of mediation was that the parties had reached an impasse over the issues and therefore, they opted for mediation as a way to resolve the conflict confirming the assertion held by Bercovitch (1992) and Bercovitch & Jackson, (2001).

Mediation mechanism was chosen because of the failure of the other mechanisms used by the conflicting parties. These methods included violence and adjudication, military intervention, none of which worked. Lastly, mediation was employed as a conflict resolution mechanism because it ensured that the NPC got a fair idea of the issue from the point of view of the conflicting parties. The study also revealed that the strategies involved in the use of mediation were Joint Consultative Committee and pre-mediation in the Alavanyo/Nkonya and Hohoe conflicts respectively.

A significant point to be made from the study is that the National Peace Council has not been able to resolve the Alavanyo/Nkonya and the Hohoe conflicts in Ghana. The mechanism employed in the resolution has not been effective. This stems from the fact that NPC has not been able to achieve the objectives they set for themselves (to resolve the root causes of the conflicts and ensure a lasting peace in the affected areas). Again, the mediators failed to

identify the needs of the parties who were not represented in the mediation process.

Another contributing factor to the unsuccessful resolution of the conflict was the inadequate know-how and experience on the part of the mediators. The lack of available or access to documented judgment for scrutiny by both the conflicting parties and the mediators made it difficult for the National Peace Council to reach a consensus since each of the conflicting parties had the tendency of re-writing the history of the entire case in their favour. Another reason for the ineffectiveness of the mechanism was the inability of the conflicting parties to fully accept the mediation process. Especially, the party to whom the court verdict went in favour often finds it difficult to forgo the verdict and start the mediation process. Finally, inadequate funds and logistics were challenges that hindered the effectiveness of the mechanism.

CHAPTER SIX

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Introduction

The primary aim of this study was to assess the effectiveness of conflict resolution mechanisms used by National Peace Council (NPC) in resolving the Alavanyo/Nkonya and Hohoe conflicts. Emphasis was placed on the identification of the various resolution mechanisms that have been used by the National Peace Council (NPC) to resolve the conflicts. Further, it also sought to analyse the rationale for the selection of conflict resolution mechanisms; again, to examine the strategies involved in the use of conflict resolution mechanisms and evaluate the effectiveness of each conflict resolution mechanism. In effect, this chapter summarises the findings, the implications of the study and gives recommendations for further studies.

The study used 10 respondents which comprised the traditional authorities, opinion leaders and staff from the National Peace Council both at the national level and regional level. Semi structured interviews were used to illicit information from the respondents. The sampling procedure was exclusively purposive in selecting the respondent for the study. The analysis for this study was done using the qualitative research paradigm specifically the exploratory to aide in the description and the explanation of conflict resolution mechanisms used by NPC. Based on the analysis presented in this research and using the work of Deutsch (2001) as a model, the following findings were established:

RQ 1: Resolution mechanisms used by the National Peace Council (NPC) to resolve conflicts.

The most used mechanism by the Council was mediation. It was observed that the National Peace Council has the role in creating and facilitating the platform for the parties to resolve their conflict. This, therefore, makes it very suitable for the National Peace Council to use mediation as a mechanism for conflict resolution.

RQ 2: Rationale for the selection of conflict resolution mechanisms

It became evident in the study that the rationale for the selection of mediation as a resolution mechanism was due to many reasons:

1. Mediation helps them (conflicting parties) to own the decision making process and accept the outcome of the process to ensure lasting peace.
2. Another reason that accounted for the selection of mediation was that the parties had reached an impasse over the issues and therefore, they opted for mediation as a way to resolve the conflict.
3. Mediation was employed as a conflict resolution mechanism for the conflicts because it ensured that the council got a fair idea of the issue from the point of view of the conflicting parties.
4. Mediation mechanism was chosen because some other mechanisms used by the conflicting parties had failed to resolve the conflict. These methods included violence, military intervention and adjudication, none of which worked.

RQ 3:The strategies involved in the use of conflict resolution mechanisms

The study also revealed that the strategies employed in the mediation were Joint Consultative Committee and pre-mediation used in the Alavanyo/Nkonya and Hohoe conflicts respectively. In the Alavanyo/Nkonya conflict, the consultative committee performed a background work to get both parties to accept to resolve the conflict. Members of the consultative committee were chosen from each conflicting party with the role of ensuring peace within each party and translating this peace to the process involved in resolving the conflict. It was realised from the Hohoe conflict that pre-mediation was used as a strategy to understand the issues on the ground. This helped the Council to fully comprehend the details of the conflict from each conflicting party which might be hidden from outsiders.

RQ 4:Effectiveness of each conflict resolution mechanism

The National Peace Council has not been able to resolve the Alavanyo/Nkonya and the Hohoe conflicts. The mechanism used in the resolution has not achieved the maximum effectiveness. The following are the reasons:

1. The Council has not been able to achieve the objectives they set for themselves (to resolve the root causes of the conflicts and ensure a lasting peace in the affected areas). So, the root causes are lingering among the parties in the Alavanyo/Nkonya conflict.
2. In the Alavanyo/Nkonya conflict, the mechanism has not achieved the maximum effectiveness because the mediators failed to identify the needs of the parties who were not represented in the mediation. The mediation

team engaged the traditional authorities who were leaders of the party. The reason being that the conflict had moved from individual conflict to communal conflict.

3. Another contributing factor to unsuccessful resolution of the Alavanyo/Nkonya conflict was evident from the comments of the Chairman of the Regional Peace Council that mediation failed because of the inadequate know-how and experience on the part of the mediators.
4. Lack of available or access to documented judgment for scrutiny by both the conflicting parties has made it difficult for the council to reach a consensus since each of the conflicting parties had the propensity of re-writing the history of the entire case in their favour.
5. Another reason for the ineffectiveness of the mechanism was the inability of the conflicting parties to fully accept the mediation process. Especially, the party to whom the court verdict went in favour often finds it difficult to forgo the verdict and start the mediation process.
6. Finally, inadequate funds and logistics were challenges that hindered the effectiveness of the mechanism. The inability of the government to implement the recommendations by the mediation committee has had set backs on the mechanism.

Conclusions

The following conclusions were drawn based on the findings of the study:

The National Peace Council used only mediation as mandated by the Act to resolve Alavanyo/Nkonya conflicts and Hohoe conflicts. Although it had its challenges, it was widely used in the conflicts because the conflicting parties called for the mediation when some other mechanisms had failed. The NPC uses western forms of mediation at the neglect of the indigenous forms of resolution.

The National Peace Council has varied reasons for selecting mediation as a resolution in resolving conflicts. From the findings, it can be concluded that mediation was chosen because the conflicting parties own the decision making process, the conflicting parties had reached a stalemate over the issues and some other mechanisms used by the parties had failed to resolve the conflicts.

The Council used Joint Consultative Committee and pre-mediation as the strategy involved in the use of mediation for Alavanyo/Nkonya and Hohoe conflicts. Nonetheless, the National Peace Council, as a body, does not have an in-house procedure used in resolving conflicts.

The mediation mechanism has not been effective because the objectives the mediators had when they engaged the conflict were still persisting (to find lasting solutions to the conflict, to bring the parties to the negotiation tables). The reason is that the mediators failed to identify the needs of the parties who were not represented in the mediation. Also, mediators did not know much about mediation. Finally, lack of available documents for scrutiny, the inability of the party who had the court judgment to put aside and accept the mediation process

and lack of logistics and funds contributed enormously to the ineffectiveness of the mechanism.

Recommendations

Based on the findings and conclusions from the study, these recommendations are made:

1. In addition to mediation, the National Peace Council should use conciliation to support other mechanism. Conciliation places much emphasis on relationship between the conflicting parties by restoring the previous relationship that existed among the parties. The NPC should also try to use the various indigenous resolution mechanisms to resolve conflicts. The researcher is therefore of the opinion that methods of conflict resolution that are originated within the people themselves and fit the circumstances of the conflict must be considered and traditional approaches of conflict resolution that takes care of the core values and traditions as well as customs of the people is the sure panacea to Africa and particularly Ghana's numerous conflicts situations.
2. The National Peace Council should have an in-house procedure that can guide them in the use of mediation. This can serve as a reference point for other stakeholders who wish to use mediation to resolve conflicts.
3. The mediation committee should consider the structure of the society when using mediation to enable them to know who should be represented on the mediation team. Individuals involved in the conflict should

contribute to the selection of the representatives to represent their interest on the committee. Frequent training workshops should be organised for the members to get acquainted with current resolution mechanisms.

4. Available documents on conflicts should be made accessible to mediators by the National Peace Council to be able to scrutinise the evidence given by the conflicting parties. Also, the National Peace Council should be given adequate funds and logistics to be able to carry out their mandate as enshrined in the Act 818 that establishes it.

Suggestions for Further Research

Further studies can be carried out to find out the effectiveness of the conflict resolution mechanism on the Bawku and the Dagbon conflict.

Secondly, further studies can be done to find out the contributions of civil societies organization in the management of conflict in the country.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

(In-depth interview guide for conflict actors)

- What are the causes of the conflict? (To know the root and proximate cause)
- What is the history of the conflict? (To probe for various interests and needs of the actors)
- Who are the other parties involved in this conflict?
- What conflict resolution mechanisms have been used for the conflict by the National Peace Council?
- What have been the outcomes of these mechanisms?
- Were these mechanism(s) geared toward your needs in the conflict? (to know why the mechanism was not targeted to their needs)
- What are the challenges of the current mechanism?
- What can be done to make it more effective?

APPENDIX B

(In-depth interview guide for National Peace Council)

- In your view, what are the interests and needs of the actors in the conflict?
- What are the causes of the conflict? (both remote and proximate causes)
- Have there been any common grounds for agreement? (To know the incompatible goals)
- What is your understanding of resolution mechanism?
- What are some of the various resolution mechanisms used by the council?
- What do you consider when selecting a resolution mechanism?
- What are the indicators that must be present in each mechanism to ensure effective resolution?
- At what point in time do you intervene?
- What challenges do you face when using a particular mechanism?
- What are the strategies involved in the use of a mechanism?
- What results have you had so far with the current mechanism(s) you employ?