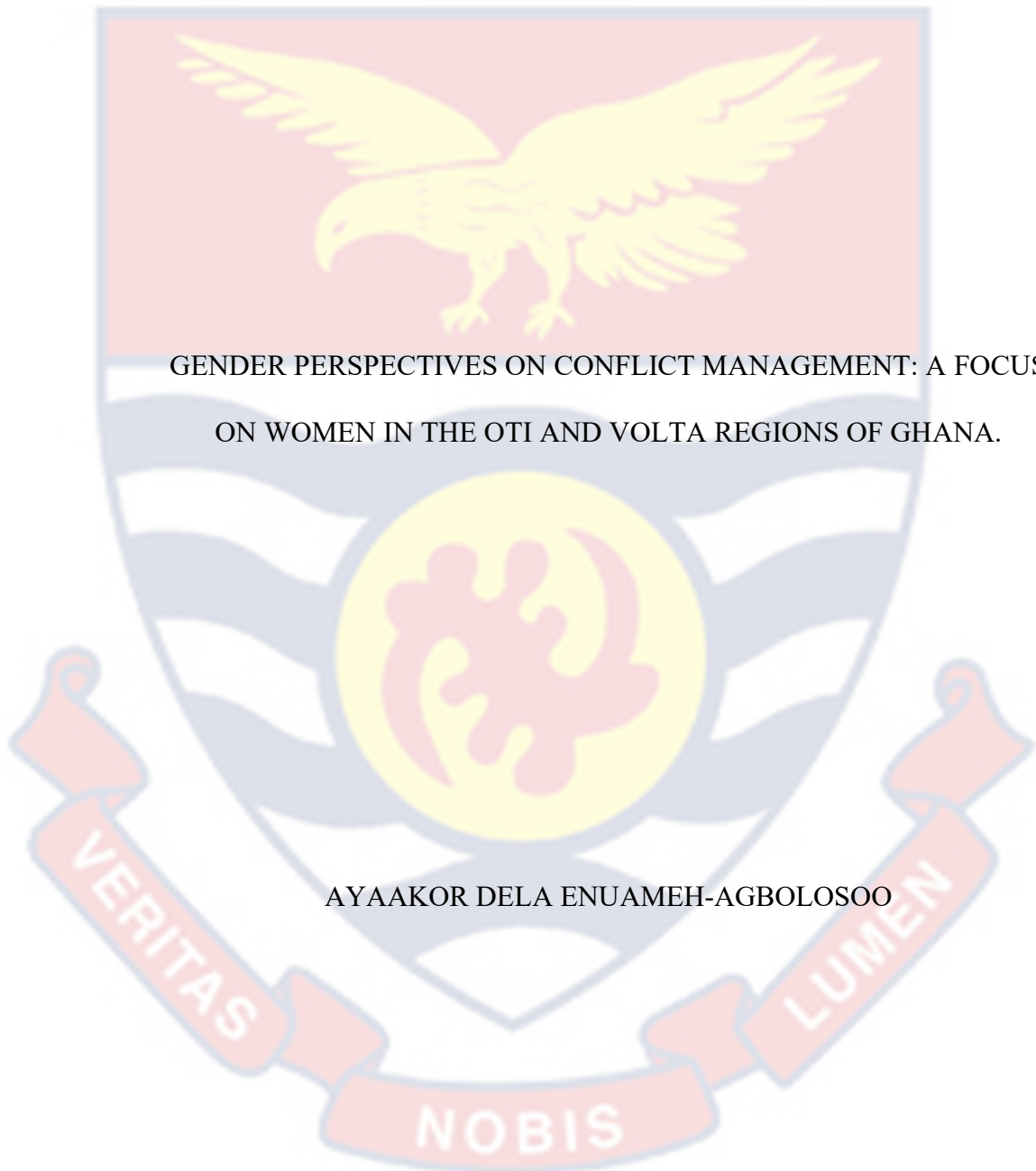UNIVERSITY OF CAPE COAST

GENDER PERSPECTIVES ON CONFLICT MANAGEMENT: A FOCUS

ON WOMEN IN THE OTI AND VOLTA REGIONS OF GHANA.

AYAAKOR DELA ENUAMEH-AGBOLOSOO

2023

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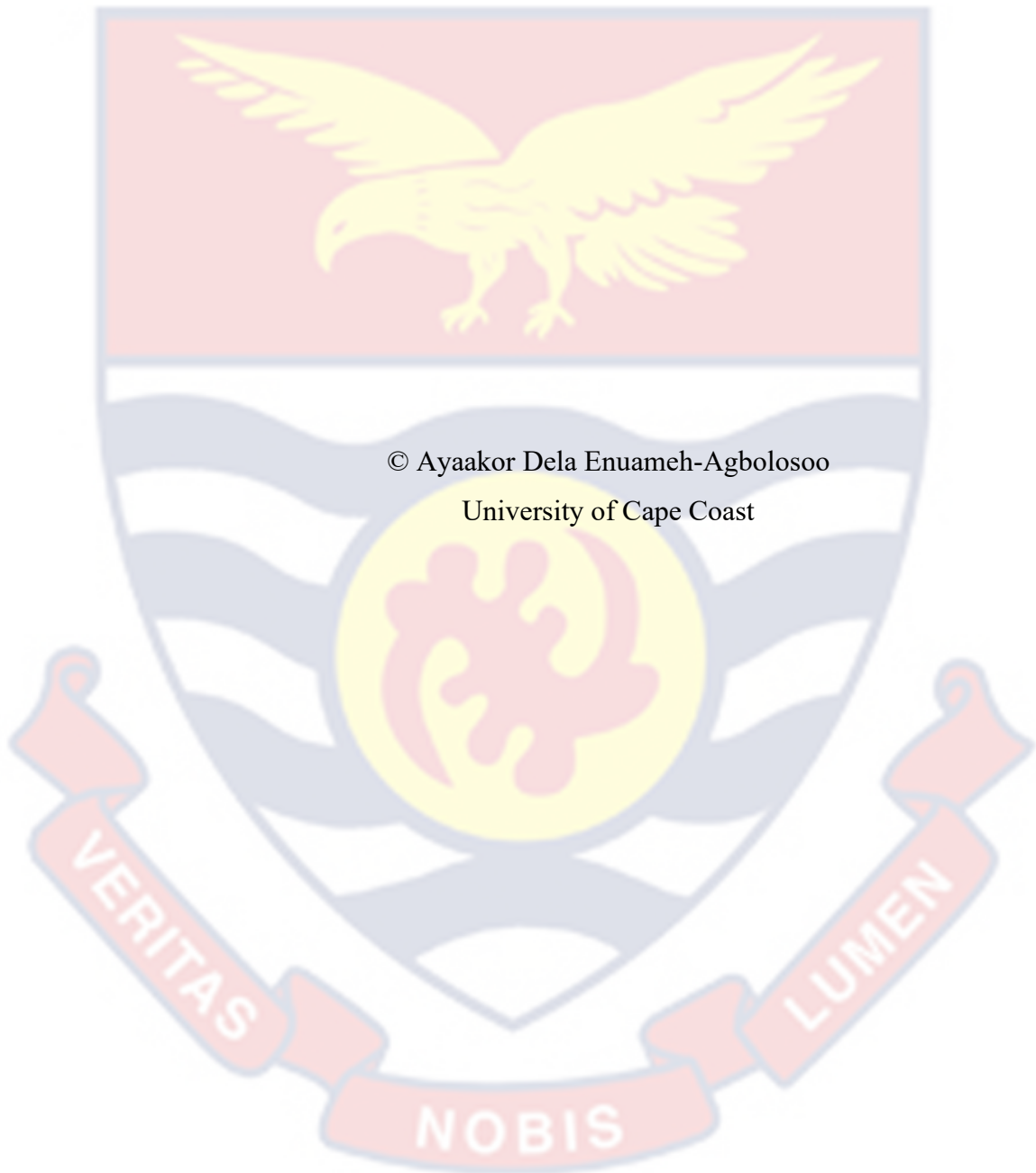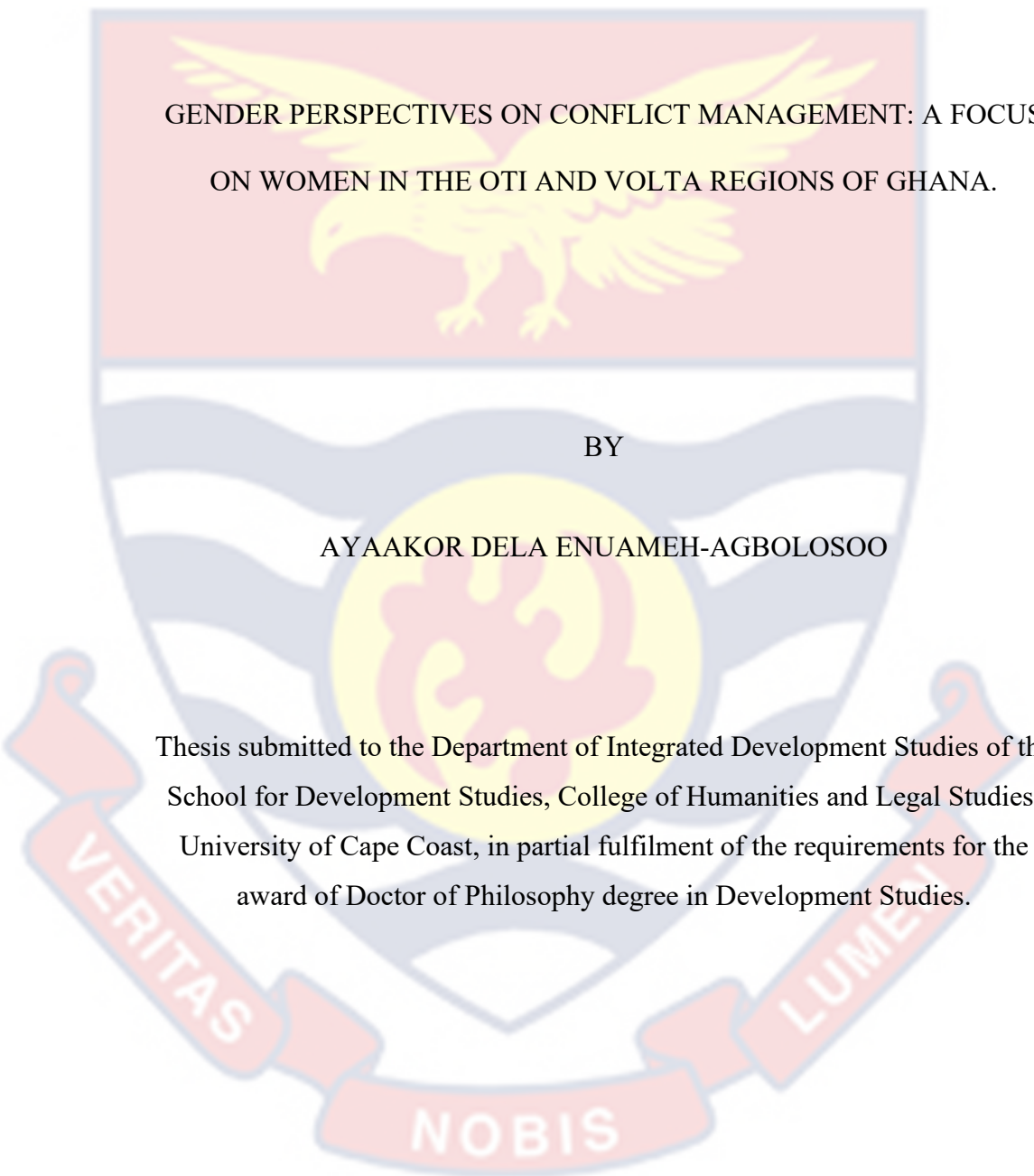University of Cape Coast

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GENDER PERSPECTIVES ON CONFLICT MANAGEMENT: A FOCUS

ON WOMEN IN THE OTI AND VOLTA REGIONS OF GHANA.

BY

AYAAKOR DELA ENUAMEH-AGBOLOSOO

Thesis submitted to the Department of Integrated Development Studies of the
School for Development Studies, College of Humanities and Legal Studies,
University of Cape Coast, in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the
award of Doctor of Philosophy degree in Development Studies.

JANUARY 2023

DECLARATION

Candidate's Declaration

I hereby declare that this thesis is the result of my original research and that no part of it has been presented for another degree at this University or elsewhere.

Candidate's Signature……………………….Date…………………………….

Name:…………………………………………………….........................
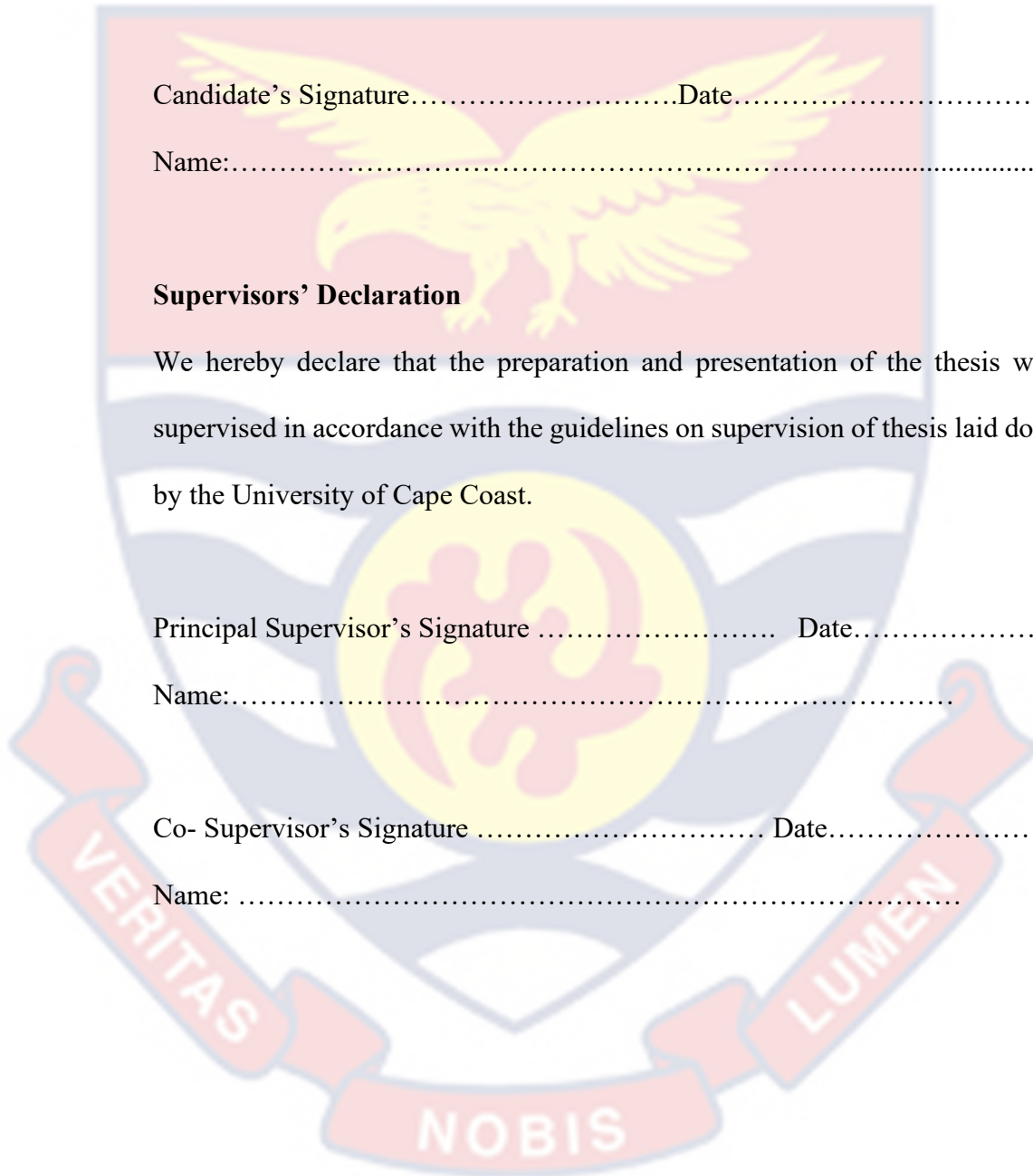
Supervisors' Declaration

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

The Oti and Volta Regions of Ghana have several communal conflict hotspots as old as the age of the communities themselves. These conflicts must be managed sustainably so they do not degenerate into violent situations time after time. The study analysed gender perspectives on conflict management looking at the structure and function of conflict management institutions, their gender dynamics, roles, and social protection measures. A case study design was adopted. Data was collected through In-Depth interviews, focus group discussions and observations. Narrative thematic analysis was used in bringing out key issues related to the specific objectives of the study and others that emerged throughout the study. The findings indicated the availability of specialised traditional structures for conflict management; inadequate social protection measures; an interesting blend of conflict managers – traditional elders and religious leaders; and a low involvement of women in conflict management. In conclusion, conflict resolution in the communities was led by traditional and religious leaders who were predominantly males. There was however a groundswell advocacy for both genders to feature in conflict resolution as their inherent roles would facilitate the process. It is recommended that religious, statutory, and traditional institutions in charge of conflict management should liaise among themselves to create a unique link and framework to enhance the inclusive nature of the conflict management process to meet the needs of the communities in times of conflict and after. The involvement of women was observed as essential, cognisant of their unique qualities in managing conflicts.

KEY WORDS

Conflict Management

Development

Gender

Gender Dynamics

Gender Equality

Gender Perspectives

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

DEDICATION

To my Mum, Beatrice Yawa Osei-Tutu and Dad, Mr. Eugene Eyomekor Kofi

Osei-Tutu.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF TABLES

LIST OF FIGURES

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ACP	Assistant Commissioner of Police
APRM	African Peer Review Mechanism
ART	Anti-Retroviral Therapy
AU	African Union
BRAC	Bangladesh Rural Advancement Committee
CCR	Centre for Conflict Resolution
CDD	Ghana Centre for Democratic Development
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of Gender Discrimination Against Women
CEO	Chief Executive Officer
CFR	Cost and Freight
CHAR	Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue
CIDA	Canadian International Development Agency
CMD	Centre for Multiparty Democracy
COMBAT	Community Based Anti-Violence Team
CSO	Civil Society Organization
DAWN	Development Alternatives with Women for a New era
DPU	Development Planning Unit
DVAC	Domestic Violence Action Centre
ECOSOC	United Nations Economic and Social Council
ECOWAS	Economic Community of West African States
EIGE	European Institute for Gender Equality
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization
FGM	Female Genital Mutilation

GAD   Gender and Development

GHANAP   Ghana National Action Plan

GLAD   Gender Law and Development

GLOWA   Global Action for Women Empowerment

GR   General Resolution

GSDRC   Governance and Social Development Resource Centre

GSFP   Ghana School Feeding Programme

GSS   Ghana Statistical Service

GTA   Ghana Tourism Authority

ICIMOD   International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development

ICPD   International Conference on Population and Development

IDEG   Institute for Demographic Governance

IDI   In-depth Interview

IFAD   International Fund for Agricultural Development

IISS   International Institute for Strategic Studies.

IJBSR   International Journal of Business Systems Research

ILO   International Labour Organization

INSTRAW   International Research and Training Institute for the

             Advancement of Women

IPSTC   International Peace Support Training Centre

KAIPTC   Kofi Annan International Peace Training Centre

LEAP   Livelihood Empowerment Against Poverty

NADMO   National Disaster Management Organization

NAP   National Action Plan

NCCE   National Commission for Civic Education

NDC	National Democratic Congress
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
NHIS	National Health Insurance Scheme
NPC	National Peace Council
OAS	Organization of American States.
OECD	Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development
OSCE	Objective Structured Clinical Examination
OVC	Orphans and Vulnerable Children
PMTCT	Prevention of Mother to Child Transmission
POWER	Promoting Opportunities for Women Empowerment and Rights
RCT	Randomized Control Trial
SADC	South African Development Cooperation
SCR	Security Council Resolution
SDG	Sustainable Development Goals
SIDA	Swedish International Development Association
SSNIT	Social Security and National Insurance Trust
TKI	Thomas Kilmann Conflict Mode Instrument
TRC	Truth and Reconciliation Commission
UCC	University of Cape Coast
UCT	University of Cape Town
UN	United Nations
UN Women	United Nations Women
UNCED	United Nations Conference on Environment and Development
UNDESA	United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs

UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNESCO	United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNGEI	UN Girls Education Initiative
UNICEF	United Nations International Children's Fund
UNIFEM	United Nations Development Fund for Women
UNPF	United Nations Population Fund
UNSC	United Nations Security Council
UNSCR	United Nations Security Council Resolution
US	United States
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
UWA	University of Western Australia
VAW	Violence against Women
WAD	Women and Development
WID	Women in Development
WPS	Women Peace and Security
WSR	Women Situation Room
YLDP	Young Leaders Development Programme

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

The Volta Region's communities of Alavanyo, Peki, Tsito, Hohoe and the Oti Region's communities of Nkonya and Nkwanta are some conflict hotspots located in these two regions of Ghana, which have all experienced conflict management over time. There is a perceived absence of gendered perspectives in the conflict management approach being implemented within these conflict hotspots in Ghana.

Background to the Study

Communal conflicts in Alavanyo, Nkonya, Peki, Tsito, Hohoe and Nkwanta, in the Oti and Volta Regions have been managed over the years thus curtailing their resurgence and preventing any emergent violence. Conflict management, for the purposes of this study, encompasses activities that prevent and manage conflicts in a non-violent way. It consists of conflict resolution, peace-making, conflict transformation and other peaceful procedures that are aimed at ensuring peaceful coexistence among individuals, families, and social groups in a social setting (Bercovitch, 1983; Mckibben, 2017; Miall, 2004).

Conflict management has numerous benefits, whether undertaken by conflicting parties themselves or by outside parties as it alters the nature of a conflict situation by reducing associated violence and hostilities whilst enabling conflicting parties find a common ground (Bercovitch,1983). Conflict management minimizes disruption stemming from existing conflict by providing solutions that are satisfactory and acceptable (Bercovitch,1983). Though conflicts bring up strong emotions, hurt feelings, disappointment, and discomfort, their management increases the understanding of the feuding

parties, builds trust, and strengthens relationships and bonds (Folger, Poole, & Stutman, 2017). Conflicts cannot be avoided in life and are expected, but when managed in time, do not degenerate, and reach violent proportions locally or internationally (Bayer & Schernick, 2015; Kremenyuk, 2002; United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UNDESA), & the Centre for Conflict Resolution (CCR), 2012).

Conflict management brings out challenges and compels interested parties to find common solutions (Omisore & Abiodun, 2014), creating unconducive environments for conflicts and enhances stability (Marquis & Huston, 2017; Mckibben, 2017). The philosophical and theoretical underpinnings of conflict management are non-gendered i.e., it has no agency to women's participation (Duncan, 2004; Hope, 2019; Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection, 2020; Rehn & Sirleaf, 2002; Women, Peace, and Security (WPS), 2011).

Gender refers to the social attributes and opportunities related to being male and female, defining the relations and relationships between males and females; males and males; and females and females (UN, 2013) and the opportunities that society accords them. Gender characteristics are socially constructed, learned over the socialization processes, are context/time-specific and changeable. Varying in time and culture, gender of individuals determines what society expects, allows, and values in a woman or man – their responsibilities, behaviours, activities undertaken, resource access and control, and decision-making opportunities. Gender is a component of the broader socio-

cultural context, of which others are class, race, poverty level, ethnic group, and age (UN, 2013).

Gender perspectives focuses on interactions, opportunities, and social roles of people. It is the daily economic, private, and social life of individuals in society with a focus on gender equality, mainstreaming, empowerment, and involving men and women in conflict management (USAID, 2011). Gender equality connotes the equal conditions under which men and women realize their full human rights and contribute to as well as benefit from socio-economic, cultural, and political development. Gender mainstreaming employs legislations, policies, and programmes to ensure that men and women benefit equally in their spheres of endeavour (United Nations Economic and Social Council [ECOSOC], 1997). Empowerment occurs when people focus on their goals and values, whilst making decisions for themselves or others (Prabhu & Elayalaja, 2015).

Gender perspectives must be considered in conflict management. Gender influences conflict dynamics at the individual, interactional and societal levels (Birkhoff, 1998), and contributes to the most common structural causes of conflicts (UN Women, 2012). Conflicts impact people differently based on their gender (Buvinic, Gupta, Casabonne & Verwimp, 2013) – a key factor to be considered in conflict management. Women and girls' contributions to conflict resolution, peace-making, peacebuilding, peacekeeping, and reconstruction cannot be ignored as sustainable peace would not be achieved without fully and equally involving women and men in conflict management (Manchanda, 2012). Men lead all formal peace processes, whereas women are ignored – diminishing their capabilities for peacebuilding (Hudson, 2009).

Women are crucial partners in shoring up the three pillars of lasting peace i.e., economic recovery, social cohesion, and political legitimacy hence their participation in peacebuilding is much more than a right (United Nations Development Programme [UNDP], 2010). The success of several of the world's fastest-growing economies post-conflicts, stemmed, partly from women's increased role in production, trade, and entrepreneurship (UNDP, 2010).

People's ideas, attitudes, and experiences towards violence and conflict are deeply gendered – dependent on gender relations, roles, and norms (De Zwaan & Feenstra, 2015). Based on their gender roles and responsibilities, females and males have different capacities and strategies to deal with conflict (De Zwaan & Feenstra, 2015). Stereotyping men as only perpetrators and women as only victims could marginalize them from peace-building activities. The use of violence in many societies has been attributed to men, and often linked to manliness and masculinity contributing to a normalization or institutionalization of gender-based violence. This could reinforce "unequal dualism" between women and men by painting the latter as strong and the former as weak in conflict management situations (De Zwaan & Feenstra, 2015).

Gender disparities in the form of differences in women's and men's access to resources, status, and well-being exist in the political and economic realms globally in relation to women. The disparities are seemingly institutionalized through law, justice, and social norms with men usually benefiting from them (European Institute of Gender Equality [EIGE], 2020). Adoption of gender sensitive methods in conflict hotspots (Strachan & Haider, 2015) is imperative as gender equality is key to ensuring human rights

(Greenberg & Zuckerman, 2009) as well as transforming conflicts, building peace, and ensuring the realization of development outcomes (Harders, 2011 & Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development [OECD], 2012). Investing in gender equality and women's empowerment can unlock human potential on a transformational scale as they constitute one-half of the human capital in any economy, and countries with greater gender equality are more prosperous and competitive (Adda- Dontoh, 2008; World Bank, 2015). Women participation in civil society and politics, opens governance, enhances democratic credentials, and renders citizens much more responsive. Women at the negotiating table, ensure that peace agreements are more inclusive and durable (UN, 2013).

Theories that would contribute to the current study include the Dual Concern theory (Chou & Yeh, 2007; Rubin, Pruitt & Kim, 1994; Ruble & Thomas, 1976; van de Vliert & Kabanoff, 1990), the Thomas Kilmann's Model, the Feminist theory (Diquinzio, 2016) and the UNSCR 1325. Conflicts manifest from the national, regional, and other levels before reaching the global level. In 2016, the International Institute for Strategic Studies' (IISS) armed conflict database annual survey reported that the number of victims had increased in ensuing years – the numbers of people who died from wars in 2014 increased from 56,000 in 2008 to 180,000, though 42 armed conflicts were counted instead of 63. More than 50 million people were refugees in 2013 for the first time since the Second World War. Worldwide conflict fatalities however were 167,000 in 2015, less than the 180,000 recorded in 2014. IISS acknowledged that though conflict fatalities had reduced globally for 2015 and 2016, the

needed attention to conflicts was imperative as every human life lost was worth saving (IISS, 2016).

The IISS defines military conflicts inflicting 1,000 battlefield deaths per year as "major wars". It further stated that the UN observed that 10 major wars were under way in 1965 and a greater part of the world was consumed in armed conflict culminating in an uncertain peace at the beginning of the new millennium. In the middle part of 2005, about 15 wars at the end of 2003 had evolved into eight major wars under way with differing degrees of intensity all around the world. Victims of these wars were predominantly civilians, and they were fuelled as much by ethnic, or religious animosities as by ideological fervour and racism.

Africa was afflicted more by wars or conflicts than any other continent (UN, 1995). Since 1960, more than 20 mainly civil wars had occurred in Sudan, Liberia, Rwanda, Somalia, Angola, and Burundi. Ghana is considerably peaceful relative to its neighbours like Cote d'Ivoire, Liberia, Sierra Leone, and Togo, but has its communal, ethnic and chieftaincy disputes. Conflicts in Ghana date back to hundreds of years ago (Takyi, Tika, & Anin, 2013). Land disputes are a main source of conflict in peri-urban areas in Ghana currently leading to the use of land-guards to protect interests in land (Pagaa & Dandeebo, 2014). Conflicts in the Oti and Volta Regions are concentrated around Alavanyo/Nkonya, Hohoe/Nkwanta and Peki/Tsito areas (Kendie, Osei-Kufuor & Boakye, 2014).

Other conflict hotspots exist in Awudome, Dededo, Sogakofe, Aflao and Dzodze. The establishment of the Volta Regional Peace Council was an intervention to promote stability in the region by bringing on board a change in

strategy from a "law and order" perspective to an all-inclusive one enhancing the participation of both genders in society to ensure sustainable solutions to conflicts in the region.

Women are generally underrepresented in conflict management - The UN Secretary General reports a persistent gap between rhetoric and practice annually. Women are "missing" as signatories, negotiators, or mediators at peace tables. The United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM) in a review of 24 peace agreements since 1992 indicated that just over 2.2 per cent of women signatories were available, 7.6 were part of negotiating teams, 5.5 witnesses and 3.2 mediators. A detailed gendered survey of UNIFEM's peace agreements between 1990 and 2010 observed that just 16 per cent of peace accords had a focus on women (Rehn & Sirleaf, 2002). In Ghana, this trend is also evinced at the board levels across all the regions of the National Peace Council. In a personal communication with the executive secretary of the Volta Regional Peace Council, he confirmed that the council's existing records show that, the current Peace Council Boards, which were reconstituted in November 2018, is a good illustration of the non-involvement of women in the management of conflicts as well as in security and peace matters.

Statement of the Problem

A major constraint in conflict management is the male-dominated nature of most systems employed in conflict management. The under-representation of women has placed them in a disadvantaged position as far as their inclusivity in conflict management is concerned and attempts are being made to come up with solutions.

The UN Security Council Resolution 1325 (SCR1325) recognizes the importance of increasing the role of women in all aspects of maintaining international peace and security, including encouraging women to play active roles in resolving conflicts. The Fourth World Conference on Women held in Beijing in 1995 for instance, linked the advancement of women to obtaining sustainable peace. This thesis takes on a gendered perspective to investigate conflict management in the Oti and Volta Regions of Ghana.

Women have long been underestimated even though they double as contributors to violence and a driving force for conflict management and peace (Musingafi et al., 2013). Most conflict management organizations basically ignore the participation of women in such situations even though legislations like the UNSCR 1325 give a backing to their participation. The National Peace Council of Ghana is an example of an organization with a weak representation of women on its national and regional boards across the country. The regional representation of women on the board ranges from 15.28% to 30.77%, well below the United Nations 2015 peak of 37.1%.

Civil Society Groups and other institutions such as the Military, the National Commission on Civic Education, the National House of Chiefs, the Police, and the Traditional authorities that engage in conflict management, all show very visible gaps of the non-involvement of women. Women are missing in formal and informal peace processes. This is a very essential gap, which should be bridged because women play very important peacekeeping roles. In post conflict environments, women have been observed not to benefit from social protection measures that are supposed to serve as safety nets for the most vulnerable in society. The reconstruction and peace building focus of the UN

Security Council Resolution 1325 advocates employing a gender perspective in ensuring peace. Adherence to this resolution would inure to responses of local, national, and international systems to women's priorities in conflict situations that would significantly influence stability, and peace (Mjaaland, 2006, p.41).

Purpose of the Study

Conflict management is a widely researched field in conflict circles (Cohen & Arieli, 2011; Gänzle & Franke, 2010; Ikyase & Olisah, 2014; Warner, 2000). This study seeks from a gender dimension to investigate the influence of conflict management on overall peaceful progression of selected conflict hotspots and institutions in communities in the Oti and Volta Regions in Ghana. The study would go a long way to produce relevant ideas that would help inform existing theory as well as contribute to policymaking in gender, conflict management and development.

Also, this work will contribute to knowledge on the roles of men and women in conflict management. Experiences of men and women both traditionally and in formal circles in Ghana and the world at large would also be brought to the fore for different purposes of Gender studies.

Finally, it would help conflict hotspots of the Volta Region and Oti Regions to learn from the past and devise very innovative ways of involving men and women in conflict management to help bring sustainable peace in the regions.

Study Objectives

General Objective

The study aimed at generating evidence on the influence of gender on communal conflict management in the Oti and Volta Regions of Ghana.

Specific Objectives

To address the general objective of the study, the researcher further sought:

i.   To examine gender perspectives in relation to the structure and function of conflict management institutions.

ii.   To examine the gender dynamics in conflict management policies and programmes.

iii.   To assess how gender roles feature in conflict management approaches and techniques.

iv.   To examine the gender perspectives in social protection measures in conflict management.

Research Questions

The following research questions were addressed by the study:

i.   What are the gender perspectives in relation to the structure and function of conflict management institutions in the Oti and Volta Regions of Ghana?

ii.   What are the gender dynamics of conflict management policies and programmes in the Oti and Volta Regions of Ghana?

iii.   What are the gender roles in conflict management approaches and techniques in the Oti and Volta Regions of Ghana?

iv.   What are the gender perspectives in social protection measures in conflict management in the Oti and Volta Regions of Ghana?

Significance of the Study

The study provides a vital conceptual policy framework to guide stakeholders in their consideration of gender perspectives in various conflict management institutions in Ghana, their gender dynamics, roles, and social protection measures. This would guide stakeholders to formulate strategies to better rope in women in all aspects of conflict management.

In addition, the study will add to existing knowledge on gender perspectives on conflict management in terms of the structure and function of conflict management institutions, their gender dynamics, roles, and social protection measures. Of particular significance will be the role of feminist theories to help address the social assumptions /perceptions that seem to devote the conflict management platform to males excluding females.

Delimitations of the Study

This study involved conflict hotspots and conflict management institutions of the Oti and Volta Regions. The study highlights gender dynamics of conflict management processes by looking at gendered perspectives in the management of conflicts in the identified communities. Furthermore, for effective conflict management in communities, stakeholders should be supportive of the process. Participating institutions were thus purposively selected to meet this need. The study focused on the roles assigned to males and females in the selected conflict hotspots and institutions and the resultant effects

of the roles they play in all spheres of their lives. Finally, the research does not focus on conflicts, but the processes of managing conflicts and its gender dynamics.

Study Limitations

The study's results may not portray views from equally represented men and women as planned but reflects the views of a cross section of participants. The sample of participants for this study was purposive in line with its qualitative nature and as such findings would not be generalized beyond the population of study.

Secondly, the multi-lingual nature of the Volta and Oti regions presented the researcher a challenge of having to interpret the guides herself especially when the interviewees could not speak the English language. This prolonged the interview time in some communities more than envisaged. The participants realizing the importance of the issues being discussed were ready to spend more time with the research team than was planned. Where the researcher was not very familiar with the dialect of a particular community, the researcher for obvious reasons and not wanting to compromise the validity of the interview, had to look for a community member who was very fluent in the English language as well as the local dialect to help with translations on the day of interviewing.

Finally, the study contextualised the word gender as a social construct that spelt out the roles played by females and males based on opportunities accorded them by society, and the relationships emerging consequently. It was

however observed that most interviewees perceived gender as a synonym for woman – as most responses to questions on gender began with "women".

Definition of Terms

Conflict

They are pervasive across society when parties perceive their interests as incompatible and are hostile in their quest to achieve their goals (Musingafi et al., 2013).

Conflict Management

The process of identifying and handling conflicts sensibly, fairly, and efficiently.

Gender Perspectives

It delineates the influence of gender on interactions, opportunities, and social roles of people (USAID, 2011). In this study it refers to gender equality, mainstreaming, empowerment, and involving men and women in conflict management.

Gender

It refers to the opportunities that society accords a person as female or male or social roles, relationships, personality traits, values, behaviours, attitudes, relative power, and influence that society associates with the two sexes on a differential ground (OECD, 2017; UN, 2013).

Peace

Peace is "the unavailability of violence (negative peace) or availability of freedom from fear, cooperation, equality, and integration (positive peace)" (Strachan & Haider, 2015).

Gender Analysis

Gender analysis is a systematic procedure to describe, identify, and understand differences in gender with an added focus on gender roles importance and power dynamics in each context (USAID, 2011).

Gender Equality

Equally valuing boys and girls is the beginning of gender equality. It occurs when men and women are accorded equal conditions to realize their rights as humans and potentials for benefiting and contributing to cultural, economic, political, and social development.

Gender Equity

Gender equity is a process that ensures fairness in the treatment of men and women when addressing their respective needs (UN, 2013).

Gender Mainstreaming

It is a procedure that assesses the implications of some planned legislative, policy and programme actions for men and women with the aim of achieving gender equality (ECOSOC, 1997).

Gender Dynamics

The socio-cultural ideas a person has about gender and the power relationships defining them constitutes gender dynamics. They are reinforced through challenging existing social norms (European Institute for Gender Equality [EIGE], 2020).

Empowerment

This constitutes activities and processes that enable populations to have absolute control over their lives (Prabhu & Elayalaja, 2015).

Organization of the Study

The thesis has eight chapters. Chapter One introduces the study. The background, problem statement, purpose, objectives, significance, delimitations, and limitations of the study, as well as the definition of key terms employed constituted this chapter. Chapter Two reviews literature focusing on theories and concepts relevant to the study objectives. The Dual Concern theory (a fundamental conflict management theory), Thomas Kilmann's Model (a sub-theory of conflict management), the Feminist Theory and the concepts of conflict management and gender perspectives are all reviewed. Additionally, the historical developments in conflict management in Africa and Ghana are discussed. It concludes with lessons learnt and a conceptual framework of the study. Chapter Three spells out the methods employed with an emphasis on the research design, study area, population, sampling procedure, data collection instruments, procedures, processing, and analysis as well as ethical considerations. Findings of the study are presented from Chapter Four – that

describes the gender perspectives in the structure and function of conflict management institutions, basically focusing on persons into conflict management and the roles performed by these persons. Chapter Five examines the gender dynamics of conflict management policies and programmes specifically looking at the socio-cultural phenomena of gender and power relationships defining them. Chapter Six assesses gender roles in conflict management approaches/techniques. Chapter Seven looked at gender perspectives in social protection measures. It also looked at the influence of conflict management on the development of the communities of Oti and Volta Regions. Chapter Eight summarized the study, drawing conclusions, and presenting recommendations from the findings.
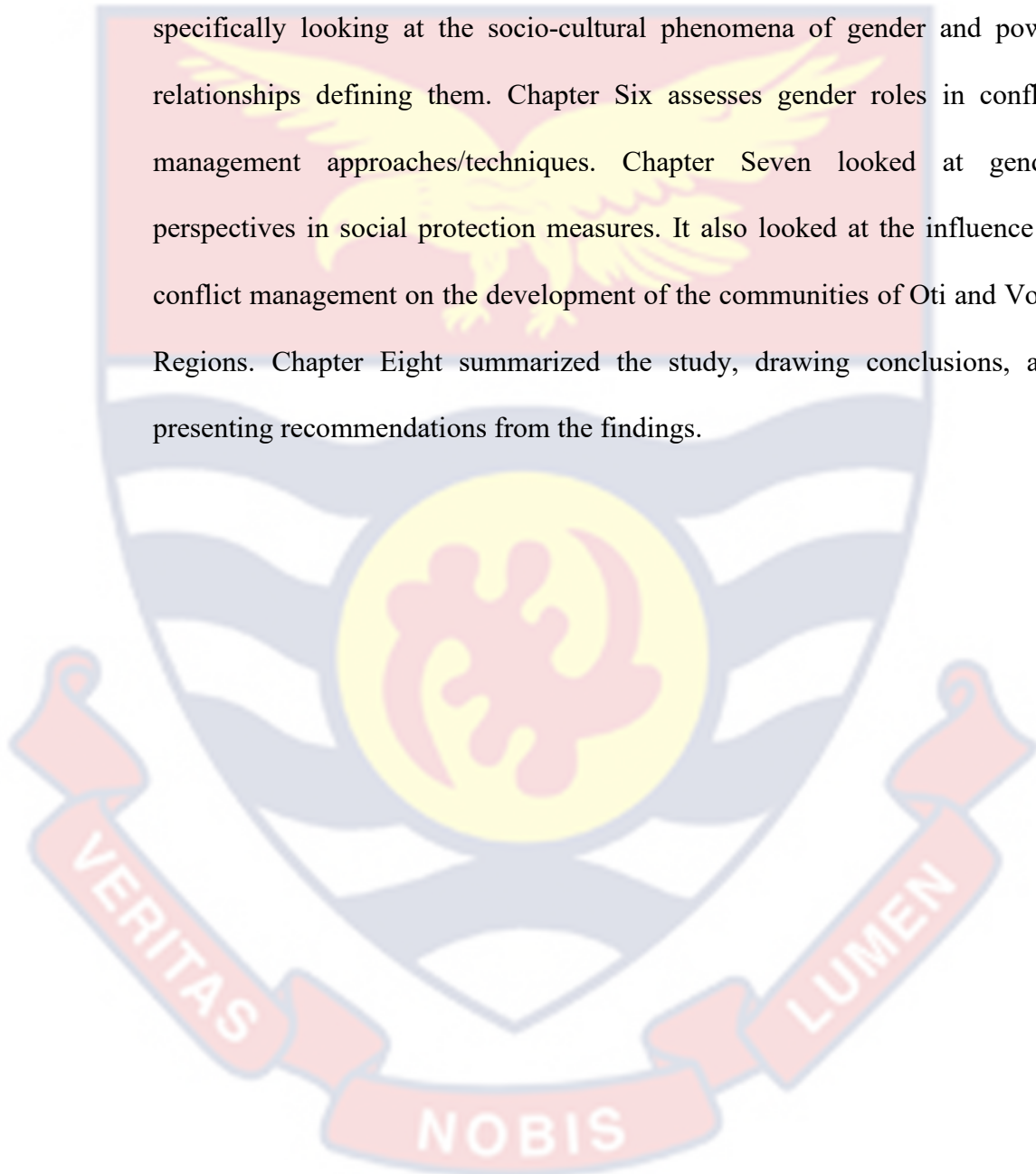
CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Introduction

This chapter reviews the theories and concepts that relate to the study and culminates in a developed conceptual framework. Theories are logically interrelated set of propositions about empirical reality (Bachman & Schutt, 2008) which are employed in development studies for example to indicate measures that facilitated or impeded the attainment of development. They help to keep research in focus.

The conceptual review mirrors the important variables a researcher expects to find in a study, establishes links among them, and elucidates gaps (Griffee,2012; Walliman,2011). The conceptual framework relates key variables to the research objectives of a study and serves as a guide to achieving the ultimate objective. It consists of assumptions, expectations, beliefs, and theories that guide and inform a study (Miles & Huberman, 1994; Robson, 2011).

Theories Guiding the Study

Four theories were employed over the course of this study: the Dual Concern Theory, the Thomas Kilmann Conflict Model, the UNSCR 1325, and the Feminist theory. The first three relate to conflict management and the fourth, gender perspectives.

The Dual Concern Theory

The dual concern theory predicts conflict behaviour based on a person's concern for how outcomes of their actions influence themselves or others. The

theory takes its origins from the works of Blake and Mouton (1964) and Thomas (1976) and proposes five approaches to addressing conflict situations (Pruitt & Rubin, 1986 & Rahim, 1986): Competing (satisfying one's own concern at the other's expense); accommodating (sacrificing one's own concern for the sake of the other's); avoiding (putting aside both parties' concerns by postponing a conflict issue); collaborating (attempting to find an outcome to the satisfaction of both parties), and compromising (finding a middle ground that partly satisfies both parties' concerns). Variations to the theory are generally dependent on differences in concern for 'self' and for 'others' (Cai & Fink, 2002; Klein, 2011; Pruitt, 1983; Pruitt & Rubin, 1986; Sorenson, Morse & Savage, 1999; Thomas, Thomas & Schaubhut, 2008).

A high concern for both one's interests and of other people would result in an individual most likely engaging in problem solving and using an integrating or collaborating style. This style is characterized by a willingness to openly exchange information, address differences constructively, and efforts to arrive at a mutually acceptable solution (Gray, 1989; Pruitt & Carnevale, 1993; Rahim, 1992;). The high concern for oneself and for others is a preferred option as it is most likely to yield win-win solutions.

A low concern for oneself and a high for others would lead to a long-term dependency on others (Pruitt & Carnevale, 1993) – an obliging or yielding or accommodating style. This style is non-confrontational, preserves relationships with others by giving up one's needs and interests in favour of others' – portraying strength on the part of the yielding party (Rubin et al., 1994).

The dominating (competing or contending) style is the most confrontational style that emanates from a high concern for one's interests and a low for others. Force, coercion, threats, unwillingness to change positions, and a purposed sense of "winning" over the others are traits manifested by this style (Rubin et al., 1994).

The avoiding (inaction or withdrawing) style is non-confrontational, depicting little concern for one's or the other's interests. This style is invoked when parties perceive minimal benefits from a conflict, are not interested in concessions made by others, or perceive conflicts resolving without interference (Pruitt & Rubin, 1986).

The compromising style reflects a moderate concern for one's interests and of the other's (Pruitt, 1983), with a modest effort to arrive at outcomes that are mutually acceptable but not at a Pareto optimal level. Compromises are made when aspirations are not too high, or when limitations in time or costs could prolong conflict (Rubin et al., 1994; Yukl, Malone, Hayslip & Pamin, 1976).

Several studies including that by Thomas, Thomas & Schaubhut (2008) portray men to be more competitive than women at all levels of organization. Women are much likely to be cooperative, collaborating, compromising, or avoiding in conflict situations (Thomas, Thomas, & Schaubhut, 2008). This gender perspective was explored in the current study.

The Dual Concern model has strengths such as allowing for conflicts n be managed based on one's behaviour relative to the other's (Pearson & Stephan, 1998). The model however has its critics. Coltri (2004) provided three limitations restricting the generalization of the model. Firstly, the five styles in

conflict situations were relatively untested. Secondly, the relative merits of the styles were anecdotal. Finally, the assumption that the disposition towards 'self' and 'other' is positive or negative is far from reality. Some parties might have no concern for others leading to sadism (interest in harming) or no concern for themselves resulting in masochism (self-harm). The model therefore requires an update considering these components.

The Thomas–Kilmann Conflict Model

The Thomas–Kilmann Conflict model is based on 40 years of research and implementation in relation to conflict management by the authors. The model was inspired by Blake and Mouton's Managerial Grid Model that provided a neat and accessible approach for quickly and effectively dealing with conflict. A key assumption to the model is that although most people will default to one conflict-handling style, that does not always occur. The importance of the outcome and amount of energy one must invest influences the choice from a diverse range of styles in resolving the conflict situation at stake. Hence, persons in conflict situations may respond in one of several ways - compete, accommodate, avoid, collaborate, or compromise regardless of their personality traits (Thomas-Kilmann, 1974).

The conflict styles and their levels of assertiveness and cooperativeness are indicated in Figure 1 below.
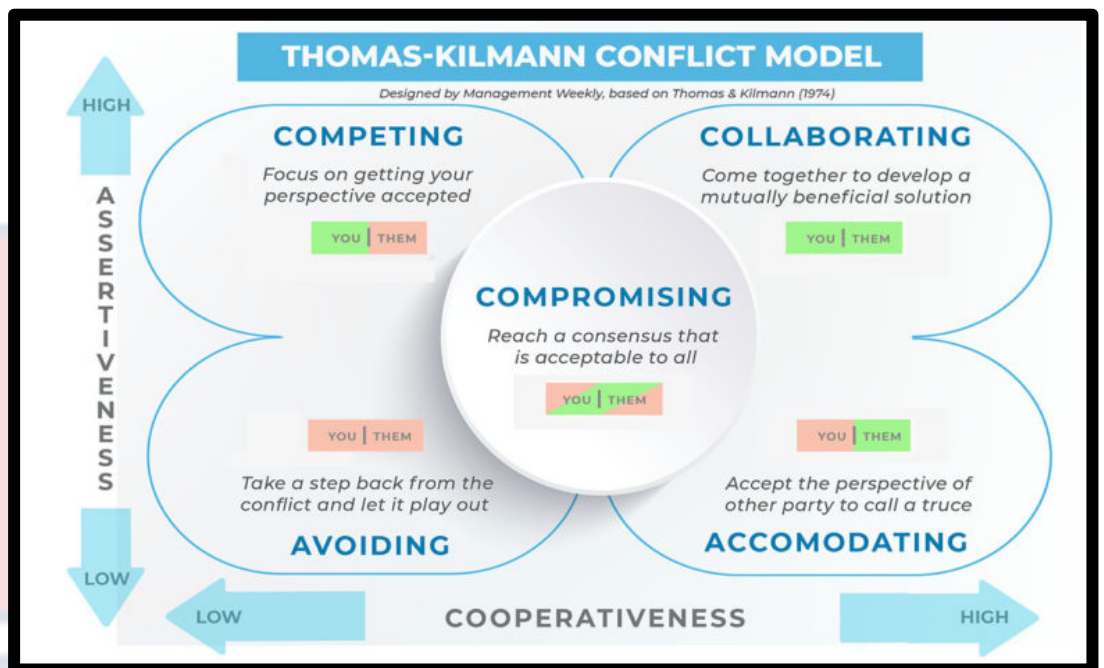
Figure 1: **Conflict Management Styles**

Source: Thomas & Kilmann, 1974.

Strengths of the model include its objective assessment of conflict situations through collaboration. Collaboration tends to foster respect among conflicting parties enabling their concerns to be addressed to ensure mutual understanding culminating in a win-win situation. Collaboration further ensures a blend of various thoughts that result in ideas being shared to the benefit of all. There are some inherent limitations in the model. Collaboration is a very important aspect of the model, but personal biases of involved parties could make it a cumbersome task to accomplish, rendering it a process requiring lots of effort to achieve (Thomas-Kilmann, 1974).

The United Nations Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 1325

One very outstanding legal framework that has supported gender and conflict management is the UN SCR 1325 on Women, Peace, and Security. Schirch (2004, p. 52) indicates that the 18-point resolution encourages member states to increase women's representation at all levels of decision-making. It encourages the Secretary General to implement a strategic plan of action (A/49/587) that calls for an increased women's participation at decision making levels in conflict resolution and peace processes. The Secretary General would appoint much more women as special representatives and envoys, expand the role and contributions of women in UN field-based operations, that is as military observers, civilian police, human rights, and humanitarian personnel. Guidelines and materials with respect to training on women's protection, rights, and needs, and many more are suggested by the resolution.

Ghana has adopted the UNSCR 1325 and prepared an action plan – the Ghana National Plan of Action (GHANAP), that relates to an objective of the Beijing strategy focused on women, peace, conflict management and resolution. Ghana's adoption of the resolution was in line with several ratified treaties, conventions and protocols, legal frameworks of the African Union (AU) and international communities. The action plan focuses on national localized conflicts like chieftaincy and land disputes, and international ones like multilateral co-operation and active participation in several international peace keeping operations within the UN, the AU, and the ECOWAS (Ministry of Women and Children's Affairs (2010). Ghana's action plan is based on three pillars: "Protection and Promotion of the Human Rights of Women and Girls in Situations of Conflict and in Peace Support Operations", "Participation of

Women in Conflict Prevention, Peace and Security Institutions and Processes",
and "Prevention of Violence against Women including Sexual, Gender-Based
and Conflict related Violence" (Ministry of Women and Children's Affairs
(2010), p.2).

Feminism and the Feminist Theory

Feminism is complex with diversities in meaning and connotation for
populations across generations, ethnicities, sexual orientations, social classes,
nationalities, and identities (Pasque & Nicholson, 2011; Pasque, 2011).
Advocating for women's rights based on equality of the sexes (Rajan, 2019),
and the recognition that women face certain disadvantages based on their sex
and the strong belief that the status quo must change (Freedman, 2001) are some
descriptions of feminism. It is both a world view and a social movement
consisting of assumptions and beliefs about the origins and consequences of
gendered social organization, and strategic directions and actions for social
change (Stacey & Throne, 1985 in Simpson, 1989).

As a movement, feminism aims to end sexism, sexist exploitation, and
oppression (Hooks, 2000). As an advocacy of women's rights on the basis of
equality of the sexes, feminism began in the West and spread globally (Browne,
2005; Ranjan, 2019). Different feminist ideologies emerged during different
waves of feminist movements. Liberal feminism has its roots from the concept
of equality of men and women through political and legal reforms without
altering societal structures; Marxist feminism has capitalism as the root cause
of women's oppression; Social feminism aims at ending the economic and
cultural origins of women's oppression; and Cultural feminism seeks to

eradicate the patriarchal system in society (Brown, 2005). Gender-based discrimination exists across social structures and activities including conflict management (Sorenson, 1998; Mngyibisa, 2015; Connell, 2016; Hope, 2019; Bayu, 2020).

Feminism is founded on three main principles: women have something valuable to contribute to every aspect of the world; women are oppressed and unable to attain their potential, be rewarded, or fully participate in society; and feminist research should go beyond critique, and work toward social transformation (Ropers-Huilman, 2002). Critical feminism focuses on systems of oppression and patriarchy as a social structure or system (Aggasi & Aggasi, 1987). Viewed over generations as a "normal" in society, Agassi & Agassi describe patriarchy (male dominance) as a social structure that actively participates in oppression of women.

According to Antwi (2018), the feminist theory is grounded in the fact that women greatly influence development and must be empowered to partake in decision-making and their implementation. It is worth noting that, despite the several activities aimed at improving the standard of living of women, high levels of inequalities persist the world over that are yet to be addressed. In critiquing the feminist theory, Antwi (2018) noted that the theory failed to point out actual actions and procedures to be taken by society and men to facilitate the empowerment of women in the development process by emphasizing on why women must be part and neglecting to touch on how to make them part. The feminist theories are therefore to help address this gap by speaking up and acting against some of these social assumptions /perceptions that seem to devote the conflict management platform to males excluding females.

First, oppression by gender in society is endemic and deeply ingrained into society. It is perceived as normal and is difficult to recognize. Secondly, contesting traditional claims of gender neutrality and objectivity to reveal the self-interests of dominant male groups. Thirdly, gender discrimination and other oppression forms and injustice could only be eliminated via social justice platforms and practices. In the study regions, institutions such as the Traditional authorities, the Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection, the National Commission for Civic Education, the National House of Chiefs, the National Peace Council, and Civil Society Organizations such as the Global Action for Women's Empowerment (GLOWA) are social justice platforms. These collectively could aid in eliminating gender discrimination and other forms of injustice and oppression. Fourthly, women's experiential knowledge or their "unique voice" in the form of storytelling and counter narratives is legitimate, valid, and critical in understanding persistent gender inequality. Women in positions of social prominence such as Lawyers, Doctors, Members of Parliament and Queen mothers should advocate on issues of gender inequality to change the mindset of others. Fifthly, women are differentially discriminated against based on the dominant group's interests. The Critical Feminist Theory has some of its very relevant tenets weaving directly into the research theme. However, the theory has been criticized for its focus on sexual equality – a basis for establishment of several women's movements (Antwi, 2018).

The fourth UN World Conference on women established that, "human rights are women's rights and women's rights are human rights", condemning cultural practices that oppress women (Lorber, 1997 p. 14). However, a key limitation to the critical feminist theory is the fact that doing away with

oppressive traditional or cultural practices is very difficult as it would be perceived as accepting foreign cultures.

All the feminist theories discussed reveal inequalities between men and women in society, portraying women as marginalized in society. They also present some unique differences and peculiarities that tend to reinforce inequalities among the sexes and the best approach to reduce the inequalities. These approaches are the gaps this study is geared towards filling. The feminist theories discussed speak to gender inequalities entrenched in society including conflict management. Additionally, the concepts that have been generated from feminism speak to the various objectives of the study that dwell on gender perspectives, gender dynamics and gender roles.

The Dual Concern theory, the Thomas Kilmann's Model and the UNSCR 1325 all show interlinkages with the feminist theory. Advocating for concern for self and others could also depict a concern for gender in the sense of factoring into the equation both sexes in society in the process of conflict management. A male working with the philosophy of concern for self and others would possibly be concerned about himself and the opposite sex as the other. Similarly, the Thomas Kilmann's Model basically would use cooperation as a best outcome and thus listen to the concerns of both sides in ensuring a level of cooperation between males and females. Cooperation between males and females would further enhance the participation of women in the processes of conflict resolution and peace building to facilitate the creation of sustainable peace.

Conceptual Review

The conceptual review touches on conflict management and gender perspectives as concepts underpinning the study. Essentially, concepts that relate to conflict management, gender perspectives and development are discussed to gain a deeper understanding, whilst simultaneously identifying gaps in knowledge.

Conflict Management

The works of Galadema, 2009 in Kendie et al., 2014; Warner, 2000 point to the existence of conflicts and the dire need for their management. Nwosu and Makinde (2014) define conflict management as a learning process "of managing" to reduce the chances of non-productive escalation of conflicts. The main aim of conflict management as per Bercovitch (1983) is to change a conflict situation, rendering it less destructive and giving the parties involved a solution to their conflict.

Whereas Mullins (1996) describes it as the most effective tool, Warner (2000) views consensus building as a key factor to successful conflict management. Consensus building enhances parties' capacity to directly or indirectly dialogue with each other to define a mutually beneficial way forward, and with optimal benefits and trade-off to all (Warner, 2000). The developed world (e.g., the United States, Canada, and Australia) have over the 1980s and 1990s increased their use of consensus-building in resolving disputes related to allocation of scarce "environmental" resources (Conroy et al., 1998; International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development [ICIMOD], 1996 in Warner, 2000). The standard North American conflict management model

consists of consensual stakeholder negotiation that is facilitated by an impartial third-party mediator. Community-based consensus-building and mediation processes are increasingly being employed in the developing world to prevent disputes escalating into armed violence, and to promote the reconciliation and reconstruction in post-conflict situations (Bush, 1998 in Warner (2000); International Alert, 2004; Ndelu, 1998; O'Reilly, 1997; Organization for International Economic Cooperation and Development [OECD], 1998)

Bloomfield and Reilly (1998) view conflict management as handling differences and divergences positively and constructively. Conflicts must be managed by bringing opposing sides of a conflict together to cooperate through the management of their differences. Effective conflict management processes facilitate the avoidance of tensions and stresses. Awareness of people's preferences in addressing conflict in organizations or social settings is extremely crucial for optimal performance of leadership roles (Kriesberg, 2009).

Collaboration was projected as the best way to manage conflicts by proponents as per the works of Blake & Mouton (1964), Brown (1992), and Thomas (1976). Collaboration seems difficult in larger social structures resulting in alternatives such as the Cooperative Model that creates a trusting atmosphere with mutually beneficial settlement options being proposed (Brown, 1992).

The Volta Region over the years of violent conflicts, adopted some mediation efforts involving the formal court systems, committees of inquiry, the Military and the Police, the Regional House of Chiefs, the Peace Council, the National Security Council, the Regional Security Council, the National

Commission on Civic Education and the Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development (Kendie et al., 2014).

Conflict Management in Africa

Africa's cultural and religious diversity influences the approaches employed in conflict management. In Africa, one or a combination of arbitration, conciliation, negotiation, and peacekeeping have been employed in conflict management (Ikyase & Olisah, 2014). Negotiations are processes in which conflicting parties settle or resolve their differences through dialogue. Negotiations were employed in the resolution of the boundary conflict between Cameroun and Nigeria, and others between Benin – Nigeria, South Sudan, Chad – Libya, etc.

Conciliation – where a third-party persuades feuding parties to agree to peacefully end their differences has resolved some conflicts in Africa (Olisa & Ikaye, 2014). Conciliators separately communicate with aggrieved parties with assistance from a neutral third party to reduce tensions between them. Conciliation has been successfully employed in Nigeria, Guinea-Bissau, Egypt, Kenya, South Sudan, and Ivory Coast.

Arbitration employs a neutral third party to hear evidence from conflicting parties and afterwards delivers a decision referred to as an award that is expected to be binding on the parties. It originated from the charter of the UN Department of Peace-keeping operations as a dynamic and unique instrument for conflict resolution in volatile areas. It is aimed at creating conditions for lasting peace. Neutral, and lightly armed United Nations (UN) troops separate combatants after the signing of ceasefire agreements to promote

environments suitable for conflict resolution (Ikyase & Olisah, 2014). African bodies, the African Union (AU), Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), Southern African Development Community (SADC), among others and international bodies like the UN, and the United States African Command (AFRICOM) have contributed to peacekeeping in countries like Burundi, Guinea-Bissau, Liberia, Somalia, Rwanda, and Sierra Leone.

Joint or bilateral commissions have been employed in solving conflicts or potentially explosive situations in some African countries e.g. the Chad Basin Commission, covering Cameroun, Chad, Nigeria. Bilateral Commissions have mitigated conflicts related to the river Niger management between Nigeria and Niger and the control of River Benue between Cameroon and Nigeria.

Historical Overview of Conflicts and Conflict Management in Ghana

The colonial era was rife with conflicts of diverse origins in Northern Ghana including some due to the slave trade with others being chieftaincy related resulting in a great deal of dehumanization of men, women, and children. After independence, conflict/ violence and its historical catalyst of inequalities did not die down in African countries (Richmond, 2018). Politicians canvasing for votes and support aided the return of violent cycles of conflicts. The Guinea Fowl War between the Konkombas and Nanumbas brought in non-Governmental organizations such as the Heskias Assefa and Bombande consortium that facilitated dialogue among conflicting parties to attain peace (Lederach, 1995).

Ghana in the 1990s faced escalations of conflicts of ethnic and religious (Christian-Moslem) nature (Lederach, 1995). Liberia and shortly after Sierra

Leone were embroiled in very violent bloody conflicts that occurred in parallel with violent and sporadic inter communal conflicts in Northern Ghana (Lederach, 1995).

Though Ghana is referred to as a model of peaceful democratic governance in sub-Saharan Africa (Ayelazuno, 2007), due to her having avoided major violent conflicts pockets of communal-level conflicts do exist. Examples are the Alavanyo/Nkonya and Peki/Tsito conflicts to which no long-term solution has been found.

In 2019, a personal communication with an erstwhile member of the Volta Regional Peace Council confirmed that, the Alavanyo/Nkonya traditional area is a lost gem among peaceful communities as the sister communities have "smoked" several sessions of peace pipes over several decades of conflict but are still at each other's throat – currently. He added that, the communities are engaged in reprisal attacks against each other with a very huge parcel of forested farmland lying fallow between them.

The Peki/Tsito and Nkwanta communities have land disputes that have spanned decades, with parties still in court. On the 11th of June 2012, the exhumation of the body of a Chief Imam, Alhaji Alhassan sparked off the Hohoe Conflict. This was religious in nature, with Christian indigenes and Muslims from the Zongo killing each other and destroying properties of the Gbi traditional area such as the Chief's palace in the process.

Contextual Issues in Gender and Conflict Management

Conflict Cycle, Conflict Management, and the Role of Women
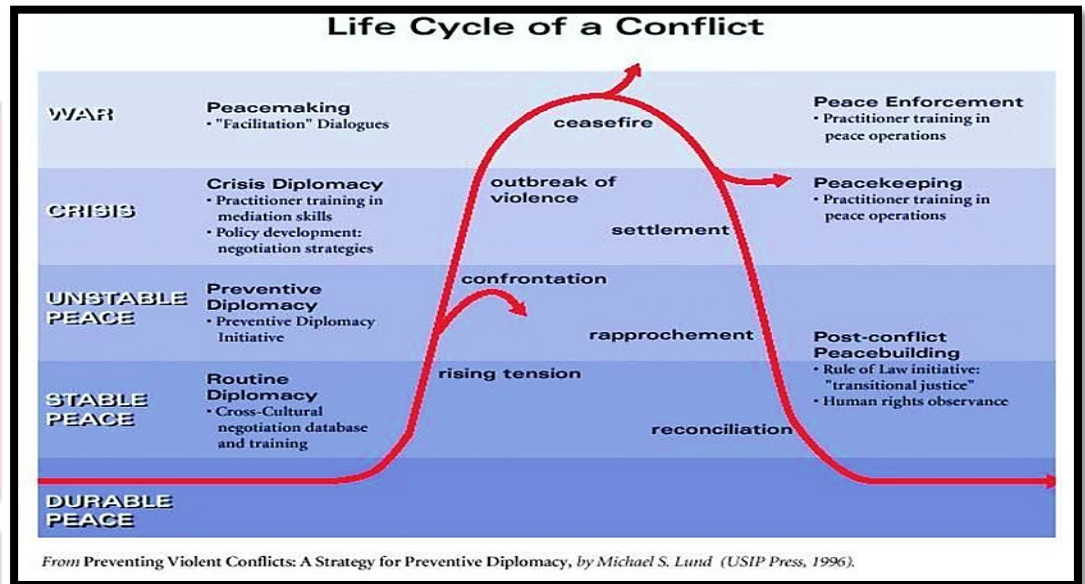
Figure 2: **Life Cycle of a Conflict**

Source: Lund, 1996.

As per the statement by Gen. John Allen "No society has ever successfully transitioned from being a conflict-ridden society to a developing society unless women were a part of the mainstream." (Connell, 2016). Women's roles in all phases of the conflict cycle cannot be underestimated. They naturally have a penchant of peace enforcement, and they should be given the necessary support to ensure sustainable peace through conflict management. Scholars of conflict studies provide numerous scenarios of women serving as pivots to restoring peace in several warring communities globally as they enforced peace in Rwanda, Somalia, Sierra Leone, Kenya, and Congo (Sørensen, 1998). Post conflict peace building is also one very important phase in the cycle. Though women and women groups have performed well in post

conflict peace building, their numbers on peace missions in Africa is low (Sorensen, 1998) - depicting a gap that needs to be addressed.

Understanding the Conflict Cycle

Robinson's Conflict Cycle describes the stages of most community conflicts. The cycle serves as a diagnostic tool to facilitate planning for interventions in conflict situations (Robinson, 1978), as illustrated in Figure 3.
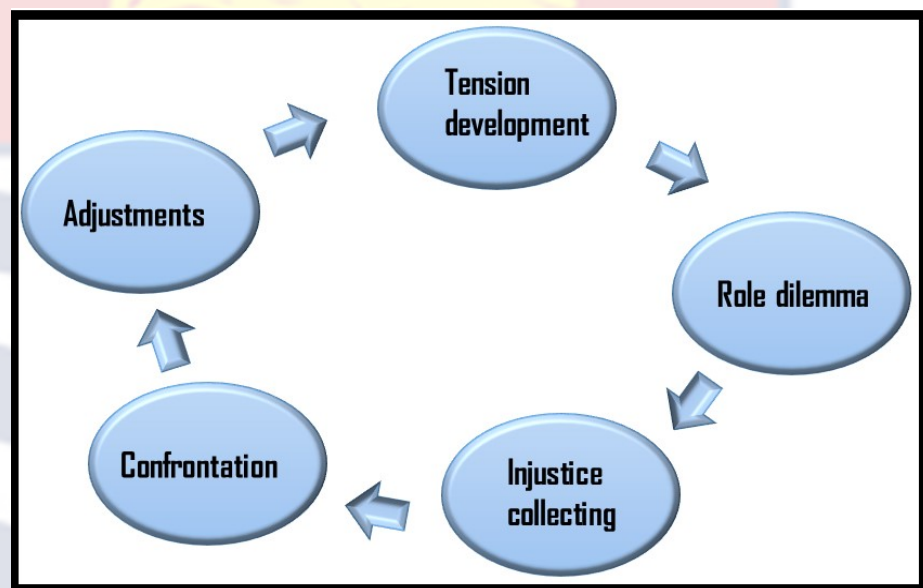
Figure 3: **Conflict Cycle**

Source**:** Pennsylvania State University, 2021.

Phase one i.e., Tension development is where parties take sides. Interventions at this phase seek to gather and provide objective information, all sides listen to each other, and reframe the issue. Phase two i.e., Role dilemma may occur simultaneously with tension development and is when parties begin to inquire – "what is happening", "who is right" and "what should be done"? Characteristics of this phase are trust building, emphasizing recognition of common ground and identifying appropriate issues of jurisdiction. Parties may attempt to take sides based on responses to these questions. Interventions at this

phase includes providing objective information, listening to all sides, reframing the issues at stake, opening discussions to facilitate an appreciation by all parties of the complexity, values, and perceptions about the issue in question.

Phase three i.e., Injustice collecting involves the parties seeking support, where parties itemize problems, justify their positions, and work towards revenge or "winning" strategies. This phase provides the last opportunity for trust building and establishing a sense of common ground relative to the issue in question, and a solution, or commonly desired outcome. Interventions here are like those of Role dilemma in addition to brainstorming causes, alternatives, and consequences.

Phase four - Confrontation, has the parties meeting head-on. Permanent barriers may occur here when parties maintain their entrenched positions. Together with effective facilitation, the intervention opportunity follows in the stead of the two preceding stages.

The last phase of Adjustments is where confrontation may be lessened or avoided by one or both parties adjusting. The intervention opportunity seeks to emphasize the win-win while applauding the insights and perspectives of everyone even those who may not be completely satisfied. The intervention opportunity here is in providing follow-up information and highlighting lessons learned.

Robinson (1978) stressed that managing difficult community issues often requires using many facilitation techniques and suggested that conflict managers should insist on using objective criteria for evaluating all alternatives and consequences.

Conflict Transformation and Conflict Management

In the words of Lederach (2015), conflict transformation must envision, include, respect, and promote human and cultural resources from within a given setting. Transformation does not view the setting and persons in conflict situations as the problem and the outsider as the solution, but rather as validating and building on people and resources within the setting (Lederach, 2015). Lederach concluded that conflict transformation can be seen as a complex process of constructively changing relationships, attitudes, behaviours, interests, and discourses in violent conflict settings, addressing underlying structures, cultures and institutions that encourage and condition violent political and social conflict.

Conflict transformation was an intervention to help stop the misuse of the terms conflict management and conflict resolution for all manner of things like victory, revenge, and overt violence. These situations instead of being described as management outcomes or strategies of conflict management or management approaches, were rather described as conflict resolution. Conflict transformation is therefore assumed to be an entirely different process from conflict management and conflict resolution (Mitchell, 2002).

Miall (2004) is of the view that conflict transformation as a process encompasses engaging with and transforming discourse, interests, relationships, and, when necessary, the societal constitutions that support or foster the continuation of the violent conflict. Constructive conflict transformation is a vital agent or catalyst for change. Persons from the conflict parties, society or the regions affected, and outsiders with relevant human and material resources do have complementary roles to play in the long-term process of peace building

– suggesting a comprehensive and wide-ranging approach, that emphasizes support for groups within the society in conflict rather than for the mediation of outsiders.

Harders (2011) is of the opinion that for the complex theoretical considerations of gender perspectives to be part of the practical politics of conflict transformation, they always must be put into specific cultural, political, religious, and historical contexts of the projects concerned. This basically means that to have a gender sensitive transformative process, one should be ready to pursue self-reflexivity, where the practitioners of the conflict transformation process themselves are products of gendered habits and regimes that have shaped their lives. He is of the opinion that the "gendered lens" can be applied to all societies basically because they experience a level of violence. Additionally, he confirms that self-reflexivity on the level of personal experience and beliefs, the level of interaction and of professional actions and concepts are crucial. Stock-taking to collect data that are disaggregated on sex, race and age and securing the participation of those who have been previously marginalized were also very crucial.

Concluding, Conflict management theorists view violent conflicts as an ineradicable consequence of differences of values and interests within and between communities, thus making their resolution unrealistic as these conflicts emanate from societal institutions, historical relationships as well as power relationships. It is therefore envisaged that the best one can do is to manage and contain conflicts overtime to reach a compromise in which violence is curtailed. Conflict management is the art of appropriate intervention to settle conflicts. It's also the designing of appropriate institutions to guide the inevitable conflict

into appropriate channels (Bloomfield & Reilly, 1998, page 18). Conflict transformation theorists on the other hand argue that contemporary conflicts require more than the reframing of positions and the identification of win-win outcomes. The very structure of parties and relationships may be embedded in a pattern of conflictual relationships that extend beyond the site of the conflict. Conflict transformation is therefore a process of engaging with and transforming the relationships, interests, discourses and, if necessary, the very constitution of society that supports the continuation of violent conflict. A comprehensive approach, emphasising support for groups within the society in conflict rather than for the mediation of outsiders is used. It also recognizes that conflicts are transformed gradually, through a series of smaller or larger changes as well as specific steps by means of which a variety of actors may play important roles resulting in a constructive conflict (Lederach 1995).

Gender Perspectives

Governments and development agencies have over the past several years prioritized gender issues in development planning and policies. Gender equity with respect to access and allocation of resources coupled with opportunities for economic and social advancement have been prominent items on agendas of most recent international meetings. These meetings have also investigated the link between gender equity and sustainable development and defined specific objectives and mechanisms for international cooperation.

The 1992 Rio de Janeiro UN Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED) in Rio de Janeiro - the "Earth Summit" had gender issues explicitly included in its platform statement of Agenda 21. The 1993

Vienna World Conference on Human Rights made significant progress by recognizing the rights of women and girl-children as an inalienable, integral, and indivisible component of universal human rights. The 1994 Cairo International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) again addressed this principle. Discussions focused on gender issues, stressing the need for the empowerment of women for equitable development. The 1995 Copenhagen World Summit for Social Development made gender equity a core strategy for economic and social development as well as environmental protection. At the 1995 Beijing Fourth World Conference on Women, the importance of gender equity was reiterated with the drawing of an agenda to strengthen the status of women. A declaration was adopted and a platform for action created with the aim of overcoming barriers to gender equity to further guarantee the right of women to active participation in all spheres of life. All stakeholders including Governments, civil society including NGOs and the private sector and the international community, were called upon to take strategic action in these critical areas of concern, such as violence against women; the effects of armed or other kinds of conflict on women, including those living under foreign occupation; among others (UN, 1995**).**

Most Africans are not constantly exposed to very widespread violent situations or human welfare crisis, the conflicts they experience over resources, trade, refugees, borders, water, and defence are not that devastating (Fairhead, 2001). The management of conflict can be done negatively through avoidance and threat of force or positively by building consensus, negotiation and joint problem-solving (UNDP/UNDESA/CCR, 2012). Conflicts can be managed by those engaged in the conflict or third parties (Wall & Callister, 1995). Ensuring

that gender perspectives are catered for enables conflict management to be well executed in all instances (Sikoska & Solomon, 2002).

Gender equality, gender mainstreaming, and women's empowerment are key gender perspectives this current study would throw light on. Fredman and Goldblatt (2015) in a United Nations Women's publication conceptualized gender equality substantively as a fourfold process of redressing disadvantaged positions; doing away with stigma and humiliation; transforming institutions and social structures; and enhancing social inclusion and political participation. The European Commission defines gender equality as the culminating effect of the absence of discrimination in relation to a person's sex in opportunities and the allocation of resources or benefits or in access to services (European Commission, 2010).

Gender mainstreaming is "a strategy that ensures gender equality and the advancement of the rights of women through the process of gender analysis and research that is gender sensitive all with the common goal of projecting the perspectives of women and ensuring gender equality into mainstream policies, projects and institutions" (Association of Women's Rights in Development, 2004, p 4 in Porter & Sweetman, 2005). Also, one very popular definition of gender mainstreaming endorsed across the globe is that of the UN Economic and Social Council:

> *Mainstreaming a gender perspective is the process of assessing the implications for women and men of any planned action, including legislation, policies, or programmes, in all areas and at all levels. It is a strategy for making women's as well as men's concerns and experiences an integral dimension of the design, implementation,*

monitoring and evaluation of policies and programmes in all political, economic, and societal spheres so that women and men benefit equally, and inequality is not perpetuated. The ultimate goal is to achieve gender equality. (ECOSOC, 1997, p 2).

Gender mainstreaming can therefore be described as the building block for gender equality.

Empowerment according to Kumar (2005) could probably be all the following or other capabilities like these: access to information and resources; a range of options for one to choose from; assertiveness in group decisions; positive thinking; possessing skills; changing others' perceptions democratically and positive self-image. Women empowerment to Kumar therefore connotes increasing the spiritual, social, political, and economic strengths of women, while the women develop their own confidence and capacities along the line. Gender equality, mainstreaming and women's empowerment are major development objectives and therefore key to effective and sustainable development outcomes (Prabhu, 2015).

Patriarchy, an Enemy of Gender Inclusiveness and Development

Bhasin (2006: 3; cited in Sultana 2011), noted that 'patriarchy' literally means the rule of the father or the 'patriarch' and was originally used to describe a type of family that was male dominated. A patriarch's household is large, with women, junior men, children, slaves, and domestic servants who are all being ruled by a dominant male. Patriarchy refers to "male domination" which revealed the power by which men dominated women, thus keeping women as subordinates in several ways. In a theoretical analysis of patriarchy and

women's subordination, Sultana (2011), sees patriarchy as the main obstacle to the advancement and development of women. He mentioned that men are in control even though their level of control may differ across space and time.

Reeves and Baden (2000) describe patriarchy as systematic societal structures that institutionalize male physical, social and economic power over women. Societal structures work to favour men through constraining women's life choices and chances. Furthermore, some feminists use the concept to explain the systematic subordination of women by both overarching and localized structures. Women's reproductive role and sexual violence were interwoven with capitalist exploitation as the root of patriarchy, whereas housework, paid work, state, culture, sexuality, and violence were the main avenues of patriarchal oppression. Behaviours that discriminated against women because of their gender were therefore labelled as "patriarchal practices".

Reeves and Baden (2000) criticised the patriarchy concept resulting in some trade-offs between the autonomy of women and responsibility of men to their wives and children. Women are not a homogeneous group constrained in identical ways. Gender inequalities are rather crosscut by other social inequalities such as class, caste, ethnicity, and race which could even be given more attention than gender issues.

Research around the globe indicates that, the voices of women are extremely difficult to be heard in patriarchal institutions. For women to be heard, it is important for them to come together in a unified manner. Bandana Rana, Executive Chair, Saathi, and member of UN Women Global Civil Society Advisory Group, in Nepal stated that women naturally find security and strength

in each other's experiences (Action Aid, Institute of Development Studies & Womankind Worldwide, 2012). She observed that in a study involving five countries around the globe (Liberia, Afghanistan, Pakistan, Nepal, and Sierra Leone), all the women came together in support networks creating spaces where they could be heard, settle disputes, address unjust treatment, promote women's involvement in decision making, propose initiatives for community development and seek justice for female survivors of violence and sexual abuse. The research confirmed that the collective action of the women resulted not only in a greater impact in building peace in the community, but also offered a degree of protection and support for the women. The study helps to nullify the assertion by Reeves and Baden (2000) that the societal structures work to favour men through constraining women's life choices and chances. When women develop themselves and create several opportunities where their voices are heard they would surely hide the invisible hands of patriarchy in society.

Gender Perspectives on the Structure and Function of Conflict Management Institutions

Function of Conflict Management Institutions

Conflict management is an essential tool in everyday life as men need not fight each other but live together in peace. Conflicts are inevitable in life and have some advantages when correctly handled. They expose problems and compel parties to find acceptable solutions for all. Conflicts that escalate and get out of control are detrimental to all stakeholders, making conflict management a necessity (Chambers, 2000).

Conflict management aims at containing the destructive components of a conflict process by guiding the feuding parties with incompatible goals to identify some solutions to their differences. Effective conflict management minimizes disruptions and provides satisfactory and acceptable solutions to the parties involved (Bercovitch, 1983). Considerate management fosters an environment that minimizes precursory conditions for future conflicts and organizational stasis (Marquis & Huston, 2014 in Mckibben, 2017).

Shifting behavioural and attitudinal components of a relationship from a competitive to a cooperative orientation is the most important aspect of a successful conflict management strategy (Blake & Mouton, 1964 as cited in Omisore & Abiodun, 2014). Consultation-based interventions, openness of communication, greater participation in decision-making and problem-solving interactions constitute better approaches to conflict management. Specialized interactions that prevent a dispute from becoming a battle by attending to personal issues allow for a constructive relationship, even though the objective issues may not be resolvable (Omisore & Abiodun, 2014). According to Thomas (2006), conflicts that are efficiently managed quickly, directly and with clean settlements, produce gains in productivity that far outweigh the cost of those conflict management programmes.

Effective conflict management can be beneficial and depends on transparent communication, listening, and understanding the perceived focus of disagreement (Ellis & Abbott, 2012). Pondy (1992) further stated that recognizing the early signs of conflict, sourcing the origins, and acting on them constitute the best means for preventing them (Pondy, 1992).

Gender Perspectives of the Functions of Conflict Management

Institutions

In their study on gender and its role in conflict management, Benharda, Brett & Lempereur (2013) observed that females and males functioning as third parties could yield unique outcomes. They further observed that women's traditional leadership strengths of collaboration and participation manifested more, when they had less rather than more authority over disputants. This is possibly the reason why some males in the conflict hotspots are still of the view that women's involvement could be beefed up later and not now.

Bayu's (2020) study in Ethiopia demonstrated the critical roles women played in times of war and peace as community organizers and activists. Their role was low and insignificant (more of an indirect role) while some played very important roles in solving conflicts among clans in other communities. A paradigm shift in approaches/ strategies towards preventive diplomacy, peace-making, peace building and post conflict reconstruction has occurred in conflict management (Ogunsanya & Mngqibisa, 2000). It seems to be more concentrated on military capacity building associated with conflict management in relation to regional, sub-regional issues as well as freeing the burden of the United Nations (UN). Women are seemingly not being speedily and effectively involved as the military originally has fewer women (Ogunsanya & Mngqibisa, 2000).

In Ghana, the chairperson of the National Peace Council in November 2019 observed that Ghana cannot flourish by stifling women's potential and in so doing deprive itself of their contribution towards conflict resolution. According to the Chairperson, if Ghana was desirous of development, it should

be twice as desirous of empowering and including women in conflict management decision making. He challenged Ghanaians to know that there is much urgency to empower women more than ever as the country's socio-political space was highly polarized (Hope, 2019). However, the National Peace Council of Ghana, just like the United Nations, is ironically battling with low numbers of women, especially in their top ranks. Furthermore, several research works in Ghana advocate for the inclusion of women in conflict management and decision making (Acheampong, 2010; Kilu, 2015; Avornyo & Sekyi, 2015; Shepherd, 2015).

Gender Perspectives of the Structure of Conflict Management Institutions

The structure of conflict management institutions has involved both men and women with the latter always lagging the former in terms of numbers for several reasons. Shepherd (2015) states that women historically have contributed to global peace and security mostly outside the seemingly formal systems of military decision making and international dispute resolution. Women might not be involved in official peace building and conflict management efforts but find ways to organize themselves through grass root activism, non-profit organizations and in other non-official ways (Shepherd, 2015). To meaningfully address post-conflict issues that strongly affect women, peacemakers need to secure women's involvement and their inputs have to be incorporated into the drafting, interpretation, and application of the legal instruments prepared during the transition to peace period. Women need to be included in formal and informal processes that underlie the design of post-conflict dispute resolution processes and structures (Brahnam et al., 2005).

The Ghana National Action Plan for the Implementation of the UN Security Council Resolution 2 (GHANAP 2) (an amendment of GHANAP 1 in 2020) is to enhance the role of women in the maintenance of peace and security in Ghana in line with the UN Security Council Resolution 1325 on women, peace and security and other related resolutions. The plan indicates the participation of women on international missions but points out a gap locally. An increase in women's participation in peacekeeping missions and post-conflict processes was the focus of the GHANAP 1, which expired in 2015. The GHANAP 2 established that Ghana was the second highest global contributor of uniformed female personnel to international peace keeping missions with about 12 percent being uniformed. Females were however not deployed for domestic peacekeeping operations in places like Alavanyo, Nkonya, Bimbila and Dagbon (Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection, 2020).

The governance and political structures of the Ghanaian society have women doing different but complementary tasks to men. Women have therefore been active within institutions of the family, politics, and the economy since the pre-colonial days. In the family they also take care of their siblings, help during funerals as well as marriage ceremonies (Oppong, 1973 as cited in Abukari, 2019).

Women play less leadership roles in patrilineal societies but assume leadership positions like Queen mothers, assembly women in their communities. Women's roles in conflict prevention, management, and resolution have received much attention in recent times – possibly due to the successful peace campaigns by women's organizations in Liberia, Somalia, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Sudan, and others (Abukari, 2019).

Before colonization, societies had their own "indigenous conflict management mechanisms" (Adjei & Adebayo, 2014 as cited in Ibrahim, 2018) that were based on the culture and customs of a group of people, utilized local actors and traditional community-based judicial and legal decision-making to manage conflicts. Based on indigenous institutions, values, beliefs, customs, etc., there is restoration of order, harmony, and the sense of the "community" (D'Saouza, 2011; Osaghae, 2000 as cited in Ibrahim, 2018). According to Gedzi (2009), chiefs in current times play a remarkable role in conflict management in communities in Ghana, their role and responsibility prior to their curtailment by the native administration ordinance of the British Colonial regime in 1927. The Chieftaincy Act of 1971 (Act 370) repealed the previous acts, but restrictions placed on Chiefs' judicial powers made them act outside the judicial system as arbitrators in conflicts that the parties brought to them voluntarily (Gedzi, 2009).

Abukari (2019) posits that though few studies describe the position of women in contemporary chieftaincy, governance and political systems in the Ghanaian society, female leadership is recognized in the political systems of most Ghanaian communities, examples are Queen mothers who are part of the chieftaincy institution. Their respective communities duly recognize them as chiefs. The Queen mothers also lead celebrations like funerals, festivals and occasionally pour libation to the ancestors for protection as well as mobilize community members for community development work (Stoeltje, 1997: p. 52 in Abukari, 2019).

Gender Dynamics of Conflict Management Policies and Programmes

Gender dynamics are informed socio-cultural ideas about gender and the power relationships that define them. They can reinforce or challenge existing norms (EIGE, 2020). Conflict situations creates developmental challenges – conflict management helps build on and sustain gender role changes that result from conflicts (Kumar, 2005; Makau, 2018). Conflict management should necessarily include economic assistance programmes that would build on newly acquired skills of women and men, encourage them to continue their participation in new economic tasks and activities, and ensure more gender balance in accessing productive resources and labour markets (Bouta et al., 2005; UN, 2000).

Reimann (2014) suggests six structural changes to enhance gender dynamics. Providing opportunities for implementing gender-sensitive provisions or demands for gender equality should begin with creating permanent structures at the national and regional levels. E.g., in the Philippines, a Women's Peace Table was established in 2012 to bring together women of different religious, social, and ethnic backgrounds to promote their participation. Reimann further suggests the introduction of quota systems as in Burundi, Kenya and Somalia that gradually gave a voice to women engaged in different peace processes. Burundi passed laws that set a quota of 30% female representation in higher levels of decision-making. Ensuring legal and political improvements for women – Burundi adopted and ratified statutes recognizing the rights of all citizens to participate in the public life of their country, without discrimination – passing laws and provisions to improve the integration of women into political and economic life. Monitoring the implementation of

peace agreements, combining international pressure, with highly personal and local commitments. Finally, awareness raising and knowing one's rights through capacity building to promote the participation of women in local land management.

The Canadian International Development Agency's (CIDA) gender equality and peace building operational framework in 2001 stated that gender equality issues must be considered in peace building initiatives as gender is a relevant dimension in peace building. Conflict is a gendered activity and there is a gender division of labour, where men and women have differential access to resources (both power and decision making) as well as experiencing conflicts differently. These differences were brought to the fore in Beijing in 1995. Though conflict and terrorism affect entire communities, the social status and sex of women and girls renders them much more vulnerable. (Woroniuk, 2001).

Men and women have a fundamental stake in building peaceful communities and should therefore be supported (Woroniuk, 2001). Canada is an example of a country with a formal commitment to gender equality that has agreed to gender perspectives being an integral part of their peace building initiative. Canada therefore instituted an active and visible policy of mainstreaming gender perspectives into all policies and programmes. Consequently, the country before taking any decision on conflicts and armed conflicts, conducts an analysis of its effects on men and women respectively. Peace is said to be a prerequisite for gender equality and women's empowerment. Gender equality is also necessary for true peace (Woronuik, 2001).

According to Robinson & Cordaid (2016) understanding the policy framework of gender, peace, and state building matters because gender equality and women's rights are of great essence, as articulated in Goal 5 of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Secondly, integrating gender into peace and state-building is of instrumental value – evidence has it that interventions aimed at peace and state-building may be more effective when they are gender-sensitive or linked to promoting gender equality. Thirdly, gender-sensitivity enhances accountability, inclusion, and legitimacy, which are key underlying principles of peace building and state building. Finally, applying a gender perspective brings an important analytical dimension to peace building and state building processes.

Bouta and Frerks (2002) suggest that developing an effective and transparent policy on women in armed conflicts, required that women and gender policies be translated into concrete plans of action with qualitative/quantitative benchmarks that are continuously monitored and evaluated. It is also important to develop mechanisms to hold states accountable for not complying with internationally agreed gender policies and objectives such as the UNSCR 1325. Gender perspectives are essential in the policies and programmes of conflict management institutions (USAID, 2007; Greenburg & Zuckerman, 2009; Reimann, 2014; Strachan & Haider, 2015).

In Ghana, the Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection (2015) spells out issues on the involvement of men/ boys and women/ girls with the aim of removing systemic social-cultural practices that slow down women's empowerment, ending violence against women and girls, and improving gender relationships in homes and public places. The GHANAP 1 and 2 are also

policies focused on female and male involvement in conflict management and thus deal with gender dynamics in relation to conflict management.

Approaches to Conflict Management

Conflict management approaches are often related to the dual concern theory's model of concern for self and for others (Desivilya et al., 2005). Desivilya et al. (2005) describes two of these approaches "obliging" and "avoiding" as passive and the other three "integrating", "compromising", and "dominating" as active.

Hughes, Ginnett and Curphy (2009), Thomas (1976) and Buchanan and Huczynski (2004) divided conflict resolution into two independent dimensions of "cooperativeness/uncooperativeness" and "assertiveness/unassertiveness". They on that basis describe five common approaches to conflict management, namely "Competition" – a desire to achieve one's own ends at someone else's expense – also referred to as domination or win-lose orientation; "Accommodation" or appeasement - the opposite of competition, when one gives in entirely to someone else's concerns not making any effort at achieving their own; "Sharing" - a compromise between "Competition" and "Accommodation" where both parties surrender something but get something, rendering the parties moderately but incompletely satisfied; "Collaboration" – an effort to fully satisfy both parties that requires the integration of each party's concerns, is akin to win-win orientation; "Avoidance" indifference to the concerns of both parties, it literally is a withdrawal from any party's interests. When addressing conflicts, one should choose the appropriate approach based on the context as each approach has its advantages and disadvantages

(Buchanan & Huczynski, 2004; Hughes, Ginnett & Curphy, 2009; Thomas, 1976).

The Role of Gender on Conflict Management

Gender perspectives in conflict management basically means using gender as an analytical tool in the management of conflicts. Works conducted using the Thomas Kilmann's model of conflict management and those of Kriesberg (2012) portray the importance of gender in conflict management. A social system consists of a group of persons or groups whose existence depends upon the interactions among them (Boulding, 1956; Jackson, 2003; Rosenhead, 2009 in Kriesberg, 2012) to presumedly sustain that system (Parsons, 1951), a situation that is not always the case. Constituent groups within social systems tend to contend with each other, would have different goals and would seek improvements relative to others – making their interactions contentious to varying degrees from time to time. A social conflict system is when conflicts occur within social systems (Parsons, 1951).

Groups in a conflict with each other engage in interactions that sustain the status quo – threatening or injuring each other. Members of antagonistic sides in a conflict are likely to share numerous values and interests and have various interdependent needs.

An institutionalized system for regulation of social conflicts could be described as a dispute resolution system. A conflict management system may coexist with a particular social conflict system. The dispute resolution system may be viewed as a subsystem of the conflict management system. No one party fully determines the course of a conflict, each party has some effect on its course

(Kriesberg, 2009; Mitchell 1995). Importantly, social systems are not closed but interconnected with others in diverse ways - some nested in each other, some crosscut each other, and some are linked (Ross, 1920; Kriesberg, 1980). External agents do influence social systems. In large-scale conflicts, each organized party in the conflict is, to some degree, a social system itself (Kriesberg, 2012).

The communities and institutions such as the Peace Council, the National House of Chiefs, the National Commission on Civic Education, and Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) involved in this study are interconnected in the management of conflicts in Ghana and would all be studied as parts and components of the Ghanaian social system.

Women's Participation in Conflict management

The conflict management discourse on the international scene has increasingly focused on women's participation in peace agreements as mediators, observers, negotiators, and signatories. The United Nations Secretary General's WPS report of 2011, persuaded international organizations to take active steps in ensuring gender expertise by involving women. Feminist scholars have described and criticized this strategic approach and structural change as reductionist basically because they believe such actions create the impression that women do participate for the sake of their gender and are more sensitive to gender perspectives of conflict and conflict resolution. This assumption is as problematic, as it seems to be essentialising women as "women for peace". However, Bell and O'Rourke (2011) and Manchanda (2012) identify "the difficulties of navigating the boundary between using gender as a category disruptive of traditional military and political assumptions, and 'essentialising

women' as bringing a 'different voice', a different set of priorities, and a form of 'transcendent' identity politics" (Bell & O'Rourke, 2011; Manchanda, 2012, p.15). Their analysis concluded that when women participated and contributed to peace efforts, they have been key to arriving at resolutions in conflict situations as demonstrated in the Mano River countries of Sierra Leone, Guinea, and Liberia; in the Middle East and Latin America; in East Timor, Cambodia, the Balkans, and the Great Lakes region of Africa (Burundi, Rwanda, the eastern Democratic Republic of Congo) (Laukka, 2018).

As defined by UN SCR 1325 (2000), women's participation refers to the "role of women in the prevention and resolution of conflicts and in peacebuilding, and their equal participation and full involvement in all efforts for the maintenance and promotion of peace and security, and the need to increase their role in decision-making with regard to conflict prevention and resolution."

Women are naturally imbibed with a penchant of peace enforcement (Sørensen, 1998). Their role in conflict management, resolution, and prevention have in recent times been acknowledged – a possible outcome of their successful peace campaigns in countries such as Liberia, Somalia, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Sudan (Abukari, 2019), Congo, Sierra Leone, Rwanda, Kenya, among others. "In war torn societies, women often keep societies going. We must ensure that women are enabled to play a full part in peace negotiations, in peace processes, in peace missions."- Kofi Annan, United Nations Secretary General (As cited in Schirch, 2004, p.5).

The symbol of the National Peace Council of Ghana, an Adinkra symbol, signifies the different functions of the teeth and tongue but how they

help to break down food consumed in the mouth. Traditionally this symbolizes a societal fact that, even though men and women are different, they need each other and are interdependent. Communications with Executive Secretaries of the National Peace Councils across the regions of Ghana revealed a gross gender disparity with fewer women than men exist in offices of the NPC with women to men ratios as follows: Volta 3:10, Eastern 4:9, Greater Accra 2:11, Central 2:11, Western Region 1:12, Ashanti Region 3:10, Bono East 3:10, Upper East 4:9, Upper West 2:11, Northern Region 1:12, Governing Board 1:12. The chairperson of the council in November 2019 observed that the country cannot develop if it suppresses the potentials of women and deprives itself of their contribution. He stated that if Ghana was to develop, it should be desirous of empowering and involving women in managing conflicts. He advocated for a high level of agency to empower women to reduce the country's highly polarized socio-political atmosphere (Hope, 2019). Research works in Ghana mention inclusion of women in conflict management and decision making and its potential benefit to sustainable peace and development (Acheampong, 2010; Avornyo & Sekyi, 2015; Kilu, 2015; Shepherd, 2015).

Duncan (2004) in a study confirmed that in the Oti and Volta Regions, males dominated the decision-making processes – a key feature of the Ewe culture that saw and revered men as natural leaders. This underestimated the ability of women to take part in effective decision-making processes.

Girls develop more leadership skills in single sex schools than in mixed schools. It is often difficult for women to take on leadership roles in the presence of men, possibly from them being excluded, or they being passive. "Women only" workshops give them the space to talk about difficult subjects, to find

their own voices, and to practice taking leadership roles (Sandler & Hall, 1986). In piloting this study in Nkonya, women who were victims at a trauma healing session had critical trauma issues but were silent for the men alone to be talking. To remedy the anomaly, a "women's only" discussion group helped elicit pertinent information from the women.

Though both men and women have the responsibility to build peace, women seem more creative and effective in waging peace … possibly due to their emotional strength to transcend pain and suffering (Schirch, 2004). Some roles women could play in peace building, referred to as a "map of peace building activities" include waging conflict non-violently; reducing violence; transforming conflicts and doing justice, and building the capacities of people to keep peace. Women play numerous roles in managing conflicts and maintaining peace across the globe, but not in Africa due to the patriarchal culture that values men much more than women (Schirch, 2004).

The Role of Women in Conflict Management

Women played traditional roles such as caring for the wounded and performing domestic chores, and non-traditional ones such as being combatants, activists, perpetuators, and advocates during conflicts (Amedzrator, 2014; Shepherd, 2015). These roles are barely discussed in literature though these have served as a blueprint for most peaceful negotiations across the globe. Women are naturally brave and work tirelessly toward peace efforts respecting individual dignity not considering nationality, economic background, or ethnicity (Laukka,2018).

According to the Democratic Progress Institute (DPI) (2012), sustainable peace through conflict management can hardly be achieved without

the full and equal participation of both women and men. Peace-building efforts by women is the right thing to do as they form about half of the population and their competencies need to be tapped (Anderlini, 2007). Their strength to transcend pain, bitterness, and hatred hold families and communities together in the worst of conflicts maintaining stability in periods of chaos, conflict resolution and peace building.

Women's rights are human rights backed by international law that should not be violated under any circumstance, hence the need for gender mainstreaming (Anderlini, 2007; Chhabra, 2005). In 1991, after the collapse of Siad Barre's rule in Somalia, though women actively participated in peace building efforts, their involvement was found to be very low, except in advocacy (health, education, peace, and security) (Gichuru, 2014). Low levels of women's participation could also be explained by way of existing patriarchal institutions and structures, cultural and religious norms, armed conflict and insecurity, and intra-household bargaining power. Women played a significant but underestimated role in the management of Kenya's post-election violence in 2007/2008. Their activities were mostly through grassroots organizations due to lack of formal processes. Shared values of security and concerns for peace rooted in social justice and freedom got women engaged in confidence-building programs across communities that culminated in fostering reconciliation both during and after the conflict (Chebet, 2013).

The importance of women's engagement in peace processes has been recognized through numerous international institutions, resolutions, and member state commitments, such as the UN SCR 1325 (which formally recognized the relationship between women, peace and security and the critical

importance of women's participation in the form of leadership, empowerment, and decision-making), and the UNSCR 1820 and 1888 (that focused on gender-based violence and emphasized the need for women's participation in combating them). Decades on, not enough progress has been made to increase women's participation in conflict prevention, peace processes and post conflict recovery. Women signatories to peace agreements account for less than 2.4% in 21 peace processes reviewed since 1992, and the United Nations has yet to appoint a woman as a lead mediator (Chebet, 2013). Women should be seen as powerful agents for peace and security in communities rather than as victims in conflict and post conflict situations (Suthanthiraraj & Ayo, 2010, p .19).

The most significant institutional development in women, peace, and security was the creation of the UN – Women wing to leverage the UN system to accelerate the implementation of all women, peace, and security resolutions (UN - Security Council, 2011, p. 2). Calls for the representation and participation of women in decision making fora, institutions and mechanisms related to conflict prevention, resolution and peace building are at the core of all five women and peace security resolutions (UN Security Council, 2011, p.8). The Chief Adviser of Governance, Peace, and Security of the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM) Anne Marie Goetz in 2008 affirmed that a gender-sensitive perspective on conflict resolution, peace building, and rehabilitation is essential, hence facilitated the direct engagement of women in peace processes in Darfur and Juba, Sudan.

Gender Perspectives on Social Protection Measures in Conflict Management

Social protection measures are safety nets designed to support the most vulnerable in conflict situations. More importantly as a measure of support to the vulnerable, it should be intentionally designed to meet the exact needs of victims of conflict, whether they are men, women, girls, boys, old, young or babies. Social protection is a human right enshrined in several UN conventions including the Convention for the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. It is an effective tool for poverty reduction that challenges gender roles by increasing income for women, decreasing intimate partner violence, and increasing school attendance for girls. Social protection programs have been criticized for insufficient gender integration (SIDA, 2019).

Conflicts and poverty impact men and women differently (Luttrell & Moser, 2004), hence social protection needs be tailored accordingly during conflict management. Social cohesion is a key intervening variable between social capital and violent conflict. It also entails accepting societal differences but ensuring equity so that differences and disparities do not undermine stability and cause conflict (Idris, 2016). Violent and prolonged intrastate conflicts do lead to erosion of social capital and cohesion. Building or rebuilding of social cohesion is essential to lasting peace in post-conflict reconstruction. Regardless of how other forms of capital (human, financial, or physical) are replenished after conflict situations, without the requisite social capital sustainable development will be constrained. Though described as non-gendered, rebuilding social capital and cohesion are deeply influenced by gender. Social cohesion and conflict analyses have regularly been employed to address various

conflict situations in society based on ethnicity, religion, economics, caste, or class, but not gender dimensions (Bouta, Frerks, & Bannon, 2005).

Participatory and Community Driven Development (CDD) processes do strengthen social cohesion and bridge social capital during post-conflict periods. With the CDD process, a more gender-balanced representation in decision-making could be encouraged, sustained, and ultimately serve as a springboard for greater women's empowerment and involvement in broader political processes (Bouta, Frerks, & Bannon, 2005; Luttrell & Moser, 2004). Women's voices and works should be recognized, valued, and supported, with decisions made with their active participation (Ren & Johnson Sirleaf, 2012).

A gender equality approach to social protection policies, strategies and programs enables equal access to protection from extreme poverty, vulnerability, and social exclusion. Prioritizing women as beneficiaries of social protection programs, is in part due to their being seen as disproportionately in need than men, or much more vulnerable to poverty from a lack of capital or discriminatory gender norms. It is therefore necessary for social protection policies and programmes to be looked at through gender lenses as a matter of necessity for them to impart change and be sustainable in the long-term (Newton, 2016).

There are four types of social protection – Protective social assistance for the poor e.g. disability benefits and old age pensions; Preventive measures to avert poverty e.g. food for-work schemes, school feeding programmes, and measures to safeguard health e.g. Anti-Retroviral Therapy (ART) and prevention of mother-to-child transmission (PMTCT) programmes; Promotional income enhancement through activities e.g. life skills, vocational

and agricultural training for youth, and increasing access to credit through microcredit opportunities; Transformative – addressing of social inequity and exclusion through awareness and stigma reduction campaigns, psychosocial support and therapy, and policies and laws to protect Orphans and Vulnerable Children (OVC), e.g. protection of inheritance rights (Greenblott, 2008 in Iloh & Olewe, 2009).

Social protection contributed significantly to enhancing the quality of life of individuals and societies by developing and unleashing human potential, facilitating structural change, increasing stability, advancing social justice and cohesion, and promoting economic dynamism (Babajanian, 2012 in Idris, 2016; Garcia & Gruat, 2003; United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UNDESA), 2018).

In Ghana, traditional and cultural concepts of social protection, based on the notion of mutual support, are still strongly rooted, though eroding under the influence of modernization. After World War II, modern forms of social protection evolved with the introduction of pensions for formal sector workers and their families. These formal social security provisions cover only less than 10% of the Ghanaian population, leaving most who are very poor unprotected and relying on subsistence agriculture and the informal sector (Jones & Doh, 2009).

Some Social Protection Schemes in Ghana include the Social Security Act 1965 , the Social Security Law 1991, the Pension Scheme (SSNIT), the Ghana Growth and Poverty Reduction Strategy (GPRS I) 2002-2005, the National Health Insurance Scheme (NHIS) 2003, the Ghana School Feeding Programme (GSFP) 2005, the Ghana Growth and Poverty Reduction Strategy

II (GPRS II) 2006-2009, the National Social Protection Strategy (NSPS) 2007, and the Livelihood Empowerment Against Poverty (LEAP) 2008 (Abebrese, 2011).

Empirical Review

Introduction

The empirical review discusses findings of prior research works in relation to the current one preventing duplication and deepening knowledge in research (Griffee, 2012 & Neuman, 2011). The section outlines studies associated with gender perspectives in conflict management. The lessons learnt from the empirical studies are also discussed followed by a conceptual framework of gender perspectives in conflict management to help keep the study focused.

Gender Perspectives in Conflict Management

The various works that were reviewed in line with gender perspectives in conflict management were, Bayu (2020); Avornyo and Sekyi (2015); Shepherd (2015); Ogunsanya and Mngyibisa (2000); Kilu (2015); Benharda, Brett and Lempereur (2013) and Bouta, Frerks and Bannon (2005).

Bayu (2020) assessed the role of women in indigenous conflict management across different regions of Ethiopia. The work projected the assumption that the inclusion of gender perspectives into conflict analysis would benefit communities, ensuring a good grasp of conflict dynamics and its linkage to poverty and development. A qualitative review of literature was done. The review revealed different and distinct customary approaches to conflict

management in the different regions of Ethiopia. Indigenous conflict management was pivotal in resolving conflicts, so must be strengthened for use by policy makers. The indigenous conflict management approaches are better mechanisms for management of conflicts as the formal court systems do not provide timely justice for disputants in conflict. Ethiopian women were observed to play a major role in maintaining peace and security across the regions of the country, a sign that gender equality and women's empowerment are central to global peace and security.

Avornyo and Sekyi (2015) studied the role of women in promoting and building peace in Ghana's body politic, observing how they perceived themselves as peace promoters. A mixed methods study, data was collected from 56 women in the Cape Coast metropolis of the Central Region of Ghana using interviews and focus group discussions. Majority of the women were of the view that, women in Ghana were not given the chance to contribute towards peace even though they had the ability to do so. The study recommended that women be involved in diverse areas of the body politic, to help ensure peace and stability in Ghana.

The studies of Bayu (2020) and Avornyo and Sekyi (2015) highlighted the essence of involving women in issues of peace building to ensure lasting peace, security, and stability across their various countries. Although Avornyo and Sekyi (2015) pointed out clearly that Ghanaian women needed to be supported by the men to promote the culture of peace, Bayu (2020) called for gender equality and women's empowerment which was in line with indigenous conflict management mechanisms employed by the women across the regions of Ethiopia to maintain peace.

Shepherd (2015) focuses on the role of women in International Conflict Resolution. The study is premised on the assumption that a level playing field for men and women provides equal political and social chances for decision-making that shapes policy choices culminating in development. The study advocates for the International Community including women in peace processes to foster sustainable peace through the building of friendly relationships between conflicting parties. Premised on the five conflict management styles linked to the Dual Concern Theory and the Thomas Kilmann's Conflict Model, the study highlights the collaborative approach that helps to handle delicate conflicts successfully. A qualitative case study, post conflict communities were purposively selected, revealing that women are entirely absent from peace negotiations. The state's endorsement of UNSCR 1325 did not lead to any practical inclusion of women. Women were involved in peace processes at the informal stage.

Ogunsanya and Mngqibisa (2000) drew attention to a variety of strategies aimed at increasing the involvement of women in decision-making processes during peacekeeping missions and reconstruction. The study titled "A Gender Perspective in Conflict Management" focused on attempts to integrate women in the process of preventive diplomacy, and peacebuilding by the African Centre for the Constructive Resolution of Disputes (ACCORD). The study was qualitative involving women in conflict management and capacity-building in peacebuilding. The results portrayed that ACCORD's peace keeping training workshops done five years to the study in eleven SADC countries with participants from the Military, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Police, Civil Society and Academics had very limited participation of women (56 out of 431

participants). Civil society organizations accounted for most of the women who were trained - an indication that government institutions lacked a balanced gender representation. Prior consultation with government institutions to map out their needs to help in designing acceptable content for capacity building for members was recommended by the study.

Kilu's (2015) work, Engendering Peace Building in Ghana: The Role of Queen mothers in Traditional Conflict Management in the Ga Traditional Areas, explores the roles queen mothers play in conflict resolution among the people of the Ga traditional area of the Greater Accra Region of Ghana. The study was qualitative using the interpretivism philosophy. The results of the study confirmed that conflict was endemic and universal in nature citing group, individual and communal conflicts as examples. Additionally, some causes of traditional conflicts were land, chieftaincy and marital (polygamy), which all affect socio- economic development. Queen mothers were identified as playing a major role in conflict resolution using Alternate Dispute Resolution (ADR). This justified the essence of women in conflict mediation. It was recommended that queen mothers be well trained and resourced through capacity building to be able to utilize the ADR method to the fullest.

Gichuru (2014), in a publication titled; Participation of Women in Peace Building in Somalia: A Case Study of Mogadishu explores the conflict in Somalia since the collapse of the Siad Barre's regime and its effects. The study examined the loss of lives and livelihood, displacements, physical injuries, loss of trust and social protection afforded by the clan systems, among others. Premised on the Social Exclusion Theory that looks at the prevention of people from normal social activities, women were victims alongside children during

the conflict. Sexual and gender-based violence had impacted the lives of women resulting in very bitter experiences for women. These experiences spurred women on to actively participate in peace building at informal levels to put a stop to these happenings, although their efforts remained unrecognized. Women's participation in peace building efforts of advocacy and micro-enterprise economy were low, and attributable to the war. International legislations and civil society organizations especially women's groups had helped in the participation of women in peace building. Patriarchy, culture and intra household bargaining power influenced women's participation in peace building. Education, skills, time constraints, perceptions and experience were seen not to influence participation. The study concluded by recommending that government devises a strategy to mainstream gender through activities that would increase women's formal participation in peace building. The study further suggested a framework for security and order to be sustained by the government and the African Union (AU).

The study by Benharda, Brett & Lempereur (2013) was to test the hypotheses drawn from literature on gender, leadership, and conflict management about the outcomes facilitated by men and women in third party roles in dispute resolution in organizations. A qualitative review, findings indicated that women in third party roles lacked authority over disputants but were able to facilitate an outcome that was acceptable to disputants and met organizational interests, much more than men in these roles or than men and women in third party roles with authority.

Bouta, Frerks & Bannon (2005), looked at local women's needs in conflict related interventions. They needed a strategy that would approach

women in a realistic way, looking at how different they are from men as well as their multifaceted roles in society. The study was qualitative and mapped out seven roles of women at the pre conflict, actual conflict, and post conflict stage. In addressing the roles of women in conflict, three approaches were employed by the intervening agencies in policy and practice. It was observed that an overall challenge had to do with integration of suggestions and options into conflict policies and making them operational guidelines and procedures that would enable the intervening agencies bring on board conflict and gender sensitive activities. Women were observed to play very vital roles in conflict management and peacebuilding activities. Even though women played these vital roles in managing conflicts in various communities and countries, there was the need to ensure gender equality and empowerment of women through the practicalisation of legislations to ensure actualization of gender equality and the empowerment of women. Gaps in the non-participation of women especially in relation to the government agencies were to be bridged through capacity building to equip these agencies to train more women in conflict management and peace building activities.

The works reviewed for the study are all summarized in Table 1, below. The summary captures the Authors, the year of publication, location, Research/ Study Design, Population, Sampling, and methods of data collection.

Table 1: Summary of Empirical Reviews

No.	Author (s)	Year of publication	Topic	Location	Research Design/Study Design	Study Population	Sampling	Instruments for data collection	Findings/*Gaps*
1.	Bayu	2020	Gender and Conflict Management: The Role of Women in Indigenous Conflict Resolutions for Peace Building in Ethiopia: A Systematic Review and Meta-Analysis	Ethiopia	Qualitative/ Case study	Traditional community members and women	Purposive	Available documents for review	Use of diverse indigenous mechanisms as better alternatives in managing conflicts/ Women's involvement in decision making in CM limited (at the formal Level). Justice not realized in formal conflict mechanisms like the courts.
2	Avornyo & Sekyi	2015	Women's Role in Promoting and Building Peace in Ghana's Body Politic: A Case Study of Women in the Cape Coast Metropolis	Ghana	Qualitative/ Quantitative (Mixed Methods) Case Study	Women	Purposive/ Convenience	Interviews and focus group discussions	Women are not given the opportunity to contribute towards peace though they have the ability/ *Lack of Opportunity for women to build peace.*
3.	Shepherd	2015	The Role of Women in International Conflict Resolution	USA	Qualitative/ Case studies	Post conflict societies	Purposive	Available documents for review	Involving women in peace processes is not just fair, but builds sustainable, and amicable relationships between conflicting parties/*Women are historically ignored from the negotiation table.*
4.	Ogunsanya and Mngqibisa	2000	A Gender Perspective for Conflict Management	South Africa	Qualitative/ Case studies	Women in the conflict management, capacity building area of peace building.	Purposive	African Centre for the Constructive Resolution of Disputes	-The effect of conflict on women, makes it inevitable for meaningful management of conflicts without a significant role of women. -Lack of gender debate in CM capacity building/*Limited women in conflict management- Counselling women and humanitarian work.*
5.	Kilu	2015	Engendering Peace Building in Ghana: The Role of Queen	Ghana	Qualitative/ Case study	Queen mothers	Purposive, convenience	Review of documents/ Interviews	- Majority of conflict resolution roles were by queen mothers

Table 1 continued

			Mothers in Traditional Disputes Resolution				e & Snow balling	-Queen mothers effectively resolved conflicts using their processes and procedures /Gender differences in conflict resolution roles amongst chiefs and queen mothers
6.	Gichuru	2014	Participation of Women in Peace Building in Somalia: A Case Study of Mogadishu	Somalia	Qualitative/ Descriptive	Women NGO groups, Local NGOs, International NGOs, members of Parliament, youths, Elders, Government and Private officials.	Purposive	Key In-Depth Interviews	Level of participation of women in peace building low, because of patriarchal institutions, cultural and religious norms/ Low level of involvement of women
7	Benharda, Brett & Lempereur	2013	Gender and role in conflict management: Female and male managers as third parties.	USA	Quantitative /Qualitative (mixed Methods)	Men and women in third party roles in organisations.	Purposive/ convenience	Documentary review of literature on gender, leadership, and conflict management	Traditional leadership strengths of women in collaboration and participation can result in unique outcomes when they have less and not more authority over disputants.
8	Bouta, Frerks & Bannon, 2005	2005	Women's Roles in Conflict Prevention, Conflict Resolution and Post Conflict Reconstruction.	The Hague	Qualitative	Women	Purposive	Documentary review & Institutional Analysis	Mapping out women's needs in conflict in a strategic way/*The need for operational guidelines and procedures to enable intervening agencies bring on board conflict and gender sensitive activities.*

Source: Author's Compilation (2020), of related research works to the study.

Lessons Learnt

Methodology

From the studies reviewed (Table 1) it was evident that qualitative research approaches were mostly used. This was basically due to qualitative methods presenting a simple way to report and analyse real-life experiences associated with the theme. Also, the case study design was used most of the time with the qualitative research approach, portraying a good match between case studies and qualitative methodologies. Purposive sampling technique was employed in selecting participants to the studies.

In-Depth interviews, observation and focus group discussions were the dominant methods of data collection employing In-Depth interview guides, the observation guides, and the focus group guides as instruments. Appropriateness of outcomes was ensured through triangulation.

Gaps

Almost all the empirical works examined showed a gap of non-inclusion of women in decision making in issues concerning peace and conflict management. Women's involvement in decision making in conflict management has been limited (Ogunsanya & Mngqibisa, 2000).

Conceptual Framework

Theories that guided the study and the conceptual framework are the Dual Concern theory, the Thomas Kilmann's Model, the UNSCR 1325 and the Feminist theory. These theories facilitate the assessment of the "Gender Factor" in conflict management institutions and hotspots. The institutions whether in charge of

managing conflicts at the community or institutional level should involve women and engage them meaningfully in their functions. The study looks at "gender perspectives" in relation to the structure and function of these institutions that are engaged in conflict management. This would help identify the non-gendered philosophical and theoretical underpinnings of these conflict management systems that are skewed towards men. Additionally, it is envisaged that the policies and programmes of these institutions should show a complete consideration for gender perspectives and its implementation enforced through the 'real' engagement of women in the policies as well as on programmes. Women and men should also be seen playing pivotal roles in the various approaches and techniques in conflict management. This if done, and pursued very well, would inure in the provision of the needed social protection measures to communities in conflict situations as well as post conflict periods - basically because women would now be part of the conflict management process, and get to bring out the needs and concerns of women and their unique conflict management qualities under such circumstances. Sustainable peace and security will be ensured as the "how" gap of the Feminist theory would have been catered for, with the cooperation of parties in the Thomas Kilmann's theory also playing a role whiles the Dual Concern Theory would also be effective here basically because there would be concern now for men and women and not just for men only. (Figure 4).

Gender Perspectives

| Gender Aware institution | → | Gender perspectives (structure and function) |

DUAL CONCERN THEORY

FEMINIST THEORY

| Gender sensitive policies and programmes | → | Gender dynamics of conflict management policies and programmes |

Conflict Management

THOMAS KILMANN'S MODEL

UNSCR 1325

| Gender equality and empowerment & mainstreaming | → | Gender roles (Conflict Management approaches and techniques) |

| Gender sensitive social protection | → | Gender perspectives (Social protection measures in conflict management) |

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT
- Peace
- Citizen empowerment
- Socio-economic

| Sustainable Peace and Security | → | Influence of Conflict Management on Community development |

Figure 4: **Conceptual Framework Guiding the Study**

Source: Author's Construct (2018)

Chapter Summary

The chapter reviewed the Dual Concern Theory, the Thomas Kilmann Conflict Model, the UNSCR 1325 and the Feminist theory. Additionally, the chapter explored a conceptual review which touched on conflict management and gender perspectives as the two main concepts underpinning the study. Concepts that relate to conflict management, and gender perspectives were discussed to reveal the gaps the study would want to fill.

Furthermore, empirical studies around eight different themes that were in line with gender perspectives in conflict management were reviewed. The themes included Gender and Conflict Management, Women's Role in Promoting Peace, Gender Perspectives for Conflict Management, Engendering Peace Building, Participation of Women in Peace Building, Gender Roles in Conflict Management and Women's Roles in Conflict Prevention, Conflict Resolution and Post Conflict Situations. The reviews on gender perspectives in Conflict management revealed a general use of qualitative research methods such as In-Depth interviews, observation, and focus group discussions. Purposive sampling stood out as a key participant selection approach. A conceptual framework concluded the chapter by portraying a very dynamic linkage between the theories of the study, the concepts that were derived from these theories and the linkages established between these concepts and the main themes of the study.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODS

Introduction

This chapter discusses the research approach, followed by the Study Design, Study Area, Study Population, Pre-Testing, Sampling Procedure, Data Sources, Data Collection Methods, Data Collection Instruments, Data Collection Procedures, Data Management, Data Processing and Analysis, and Ethical Considerations. One important aspect of research methods is congruity between the varying philosophical perspectives, methodologies, methods of data collection, analysis, and interpretation of collected data and presentation of outcomes. This study does well to ensure that at each level, congruity is ensured to enhance the reliability of the study outcomes.

Research Design

The research adopted the qualitative research paradigm with a focus on Interpretivism as a philosophy, which looks for culturally derived and historically situated interpretations of the social world (Chowdhury, 2014). Social research, which deals with the social world, operates with philosophical paradigms as its bedrock. Positivism, Interpretivism and Pragmatism are some main philosophical paradigms underpinning empirical social research. These philosophical standpoints influence the ontology, epistemology, methodology and the methods that researchers adopt in the research process (Crotty, 1998). Just like building blocks in a construction process, the main philosophical standpoints in social science serve as the building blocks of the process of research in that area.

The interpretive approach was chosen for the study mainly because it is best suited for studying human experiences that are basically complex and dynamic forms of social phenomena. Interpretivism is often linked to the thought of Max Weber (1864-1920) who suggested that in the human sciences we are concerned with Verstehen (understanding) in comparison to Erklaren (explaining) processes rather than "facts". Interpretivism has many variants such as hermeneutics, phenomenology, and symbolic interactionism (Hughes & Sharrock, 2016). Chowdhury (2014) further points out that an interpretive approach for the social sciences first grows from the sense that the social world is either ontologically different from the natural world, and/or requires specific methodological tools to be understood.

According to Hughes & Sharrock (2016), interpretive studies assume that people create and associate their own subjective and inter-subjective meanings as they interact with the world around them. Interpretive researchers thus attempt to understand phenomena through accessing the meanings participants assign to them (Orlikowski & Baroudi, 1991). According to Walsham (1995), interpretive methods of research start from the position that our knowledge of reality, including the domain of human action, is a social construction by human actors and that this applies equally to researchers. Thus, there is no objective reality, which can be discovered by researchers and replicated by others, in contrast to the assumptions of positivist science. For Geertz (1973), "what we call our data are really our own constructions of other people's constructions of what they and their compatriots are

up to". In line with this, the qualitative research design acknowledges the possibility of multiple interpretations of similar phenomena.

The main strength of the qualitative data collection tools and approaches were that via their use of open-ended questions, they allowed respondents to express themselves and did not limit them to fixed responses as done by the quantitative methods. As a result, responses obtained were meaningful and culturally salient to the participant, unanticipated by the researcher and rich and explanatory in nature. Additionally, the qualitative methods gave the researcher the latitude to probe responses further for more details (Mack et al., 2005).

However, one shortcoming of the qualitative research method adopted was the fact that the same research carried out in a different area was not going to give the same results due to issues of subjectivity unlike quantitative studies which are generally reproducible once the same methodology is utilized. Denzin and Lincoln (1994, p. 2, in Rahman, 2017), claimed that "Qualitative research is multi-method in focus, involving an interpretive, naturalistic approach to its subject matter." Van Maanen (1979, p. 520, in Rahman, 2017), also defines it as, "an umbrella term covering an array of interpretive techniques which seek to describe, decode, translate, and otherwise come to terms with the meaning, not the frequency, of certain more or less naturally occurring phenomena in the social world." This very nature of qualitative research inures to an advantage of understanding complex social phenomena. Rahman (2017) continues by highlighting some disadvantages posited by Silverman 2010, in Rahman, 2017 which argues that qualitative research approaches sometimes leave out contextual sensitivities and focus more on

meanings and experiences. The Interpretivism approach looks for culturally derived and historically situated interpretations of the social world (Hughes, n.d.). More so from a gender perspective the study would delve into culturally derived as well as historically situated interpretations of the role of men and women traditionally and in formal circles. This would help bring out the gender dynamics at both the traditional and formal circles of conflict management and how they all help to ensure sustenance of a peaceful atmosphere.

Phenomenology, which prioritizes and investigates how the human being experiences the world (Van Manen & Adams, 2010) would be used as a methodology of the interpretive paradigm to provide a deeper insight into contextual and societal issues that influence gender perspectives in conflict management. The approach is to ensure an understanding of the gender dynamics in conflict management and how it influences the peace and development of communities in the Oti and Volta regions of Ghana. This is basically because the phenomenological approach tries to present, uncover, and describe the essential nature of a situation and presents it in such a manner so much so that a person who has not experienced the situation before might begin to appreciate the situation. For instance, since gender issues involve both men and women, these two categories of people should be allowed to describe their various perspectives. The study does this by providing an exclusive opportunity to males as well as females in focus groups as well as during interview sessions. The phenomenological approach for instance was noted to uncover, interpret, and understand study participants' experience which is the very thrust of the study that would use the lived experiences of

community members, stakeholders as well as people who have worked on mediation committees and various organizations. (Wilson, 2014; Tuohy et al., 2013, in Rahman, 2017)

According to Van Manen and Adams (2010), it could be argued that human experience is the main epistemological basis for several qualitative research traditions. Phenomenology in this study therefore prioritizes how various institutions in conflict management as well as individuals in conflict hotspots in the Volta Region all experience gender perspectives in conflict management in the form of gender equality, gender mainstreaming, empowerment, and the involvement of women in issues of peace and security. It therefore helps in investigating the involvement and non-involvement of gender in issues of conflict management in the various institutions and conflict hotspots of the study.

Study Design

A case study design was adopted for the study because it seemed highly appropriate. It was used to determine gender perspectives of the various processes and conflict management mechanisms using constructs to order the data obtained and relating it to earlier relevant reviewed literature. The design also focused on a number of key personalities in organizations/ institutions engaged in conflict management as well as individuals and groups in the conflict hotspots of the Oti and Volta Regions. The distinctive use of case studies arises out of the desire to understand complex social/natural phenomena (Yin, 2003 & Zainal, 2007). A look at gender perspectives in conflict management (which in this case is a complex

research phenomenon) should cast light on any gender inequalities which exist in the hotspots studied.

Yin (2003) further explains that case studies allow investigations to retain holistic and meaningful characteristics of real-life events such as managing conflicts and its gender perspectives. He also observes a detailed and technical definition of case studies as empirical inquiry that investigates contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context, especially when the boundaries between the phenomenon and the context are not clearly defined. Grassel & Shimmer, 2006; Lovell, 2006 and Johnson, 2006 also justify the use of case studies in sociology and community-based problems. A good reason for using a case study for this study is that it generates qualitative accounts that help to explore or describe data in real-life situations, explains the complexities of real-life situations that research cannot capture (Zainal, 2003 as cited in Zainal, 2007). Also, Zainal notes that it helps the researcher to work on a phenomenon within its context which is evinced in the exact and detailed responses from respondents. However, Yin (1984) states that case studies are too long and difficult to conduct, lacks vigor and allows investigators to be sloppy, and depends on single cases which makes generalization difficult. All these he observes are setbacks to the use of the case studies.

Specifically, this case study dealt with multiple cases to make a way for an analysis of data from various communities which were conflict hotspots as well as various institutions in charge of conflict management.

Study Setting

The study by location covers two regions of Ghana basically the Oti and Volta Regions. This enables the study to cover multiple cultures thus bringing up multiple experiences in relation to gender perspectives and conflict management. The various institutional settings enhanced rich conclusions based on the experiences from across relevant institutions in addition to the researcher's own knowledge base.

The Oti Region is bordered on the north by the Northern Region, to the south by the Volta Region, and to the west by the Volta Lake. It is one of the sixteen regions of Ghana, and it forms part of the six newly created regions out of the existing ten regions. It has its capital as Dambai with eight Municipal and District Assemblies (MDAs) under its jurisdiction. This New Region was created on the 15th of February 2019 with the Constitutional Instrument (C.I) 112 after the people in the catchment of the region voted YES for the creation of the Region representing 98.64 percent. 323,708 out of the 366,481 voters cast their ballots in a referendum on 27th December 2018 (Ghana-Districts, 2020).

The MDAs in the region are Kadjebi District, Jasikan District, Nkwanta North District, Nkwanta South Municipal, Krachi East Municipal, Krachi Nchumuru District, Biakoye District and Krachi West District. The Oti region is therefore comprised of nine districts. The region has grasslands with clusters of drought resistant baobab or acacia trees making up its vegetation. The climate presents a wet season and dry season with temperatures at their peak in the dry

season. Generally, the region has a drier climate compared to other southern portions of the country (Ghana-Districts, 2020).

The Volta Region can be located at 3^0 45" latitude north and 8^0 45" longitude north and covers a total land area on 20,572km^2. It stretches from the Gulf of Guinea, running through all the vegetation zones found in the country. It also has a landscape of rolling hills and valleys, with rocky outcrops, lagoons, rivers, and waterfalls, is one of nature's most attractive gifts to Ghana (Ghana Tourism Authority [GTA], 2020).

The current newly created Volta Region is divided into 18 administrative districts unlike the 25 districts of the former Volta Region. It is therefore a region which is reduced in size as well as number of districts. The Volta Region is multi-ethnic and multilingual, including groups such as the Ewe, the Guan, and the Akan peoples. The Guan peoples include the Lolobi, Likpe, Akpafu, Buem, and Nkonya (now part of Oti region) people, et al. The New Patriotic Party (NPP) carved this region out of the bigger Volta Region in December 2018. (GTA, 2020) The climatic conditions vary tremendously within the Volta Region, which stretches from the coastal plains on the Atlantic coast to the arid lands of the north. The region has a tropical climate right from the coastal plains, fringed by sunny beaches and mangrove swamps, through the deciduous rain forests of the central belt (the location of Mount Afadjato) and arid savanna of northern Ghana. The western part of the region, which is dominated by the River Volta and Lake Volta also provides a major source of power and water for the region and serves as a 'water highway' to the north (GTA, 2020).

The focus of this study was on some identified conflict spots – Nkonya/Alavanyo, Peki/Tsito, and Hohoe/Nkwanta areas in the Oti and Volta Regions, indicated by leafy green pentagonal dots in the map indicated as Figure 5 below.   Institutions, all selected from the Volta regional capital Ho, namely the Peace Council, the National House of Chiefs, the National Centre for Civic Education, the Gender Ministry, the Security Forces i.e., the Police and the Military (66 Artillery Regiment) as well as an NGO (GLOWA), were studied. This was basically because these institutions determined social relations as evinced by Kabeer's statement that, 'Gender relations do not operate in a social vacuum but are products of the ways in which institutions are organized and reconstituted' (Kabeer & Subrahmanian, 1996: p.17 in Reeves & Baden, 2000, p. 36). A preliminary visit to the conflict spots by the researcher revealed a series of conflict situations in the past and a current level of simmering discontent among conflicting parties.
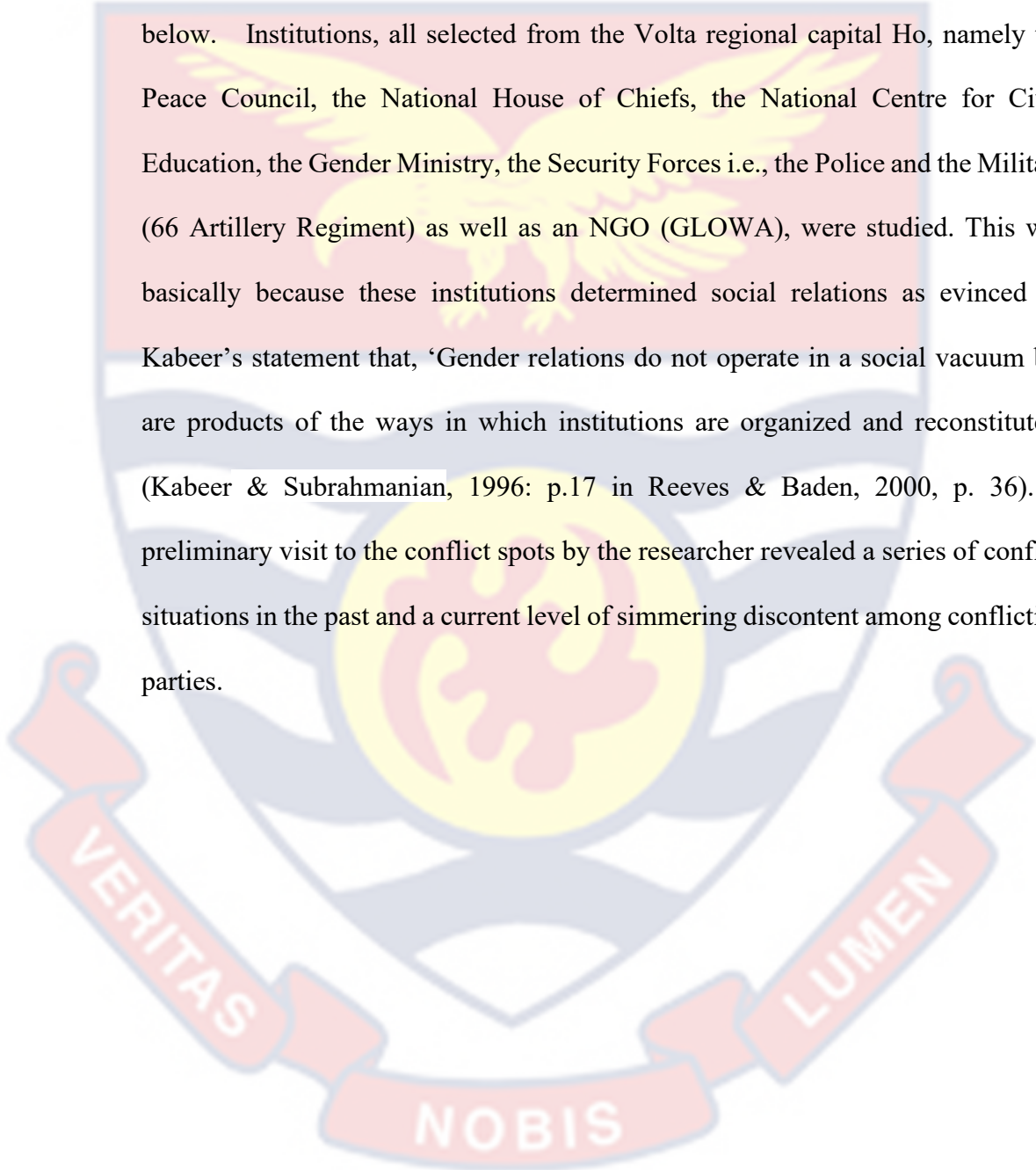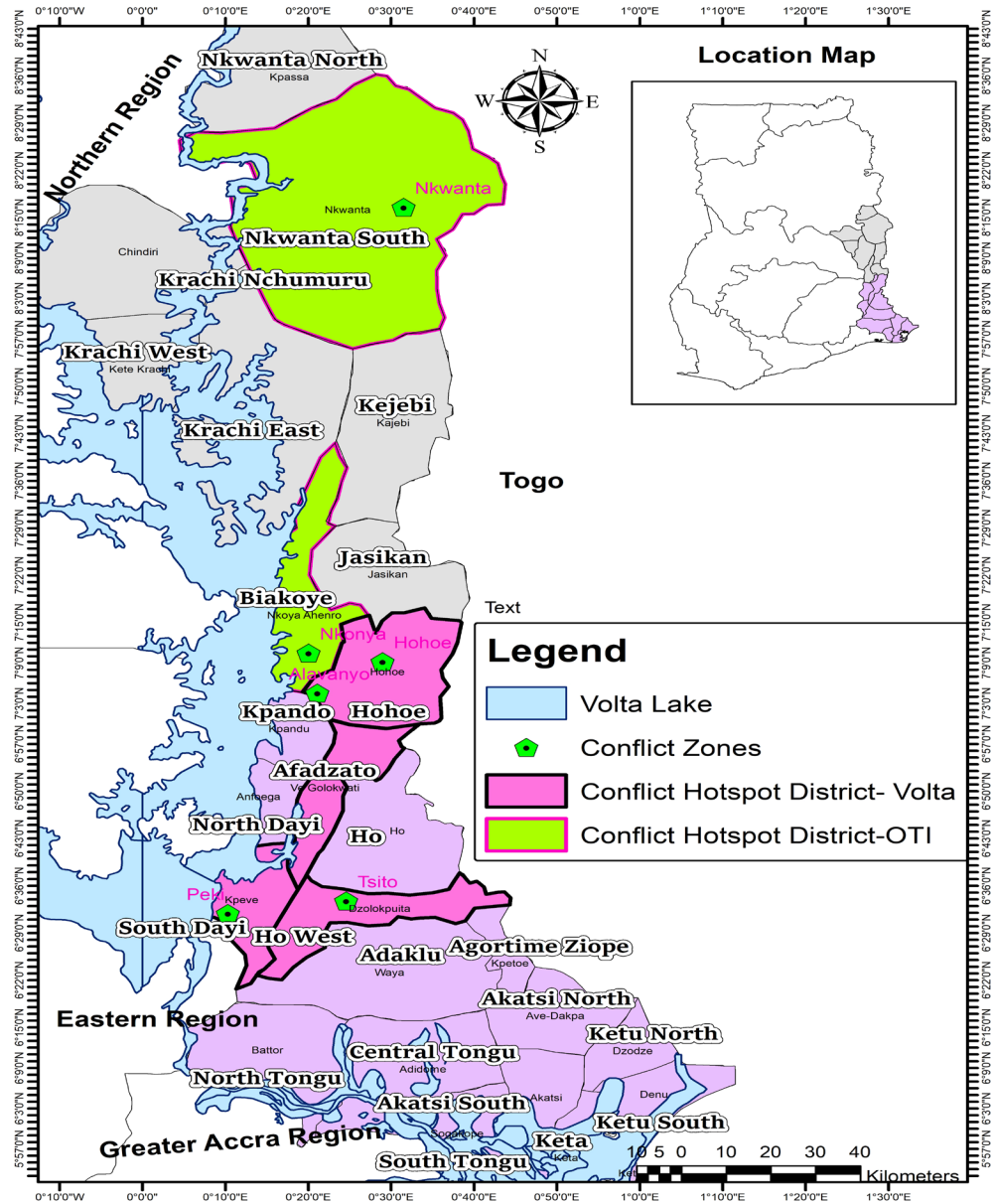
Figure 5: **Location of Conflict Hotspots**

Source: Author's Construct (2019).

From the map (Figure 5) above, the study covered two districts in the Oti region with the Nkonya community located in the Biakoye district and the Nkwanta community located in the Nkwanta South district. In the Volta region however, the study covered four districts. The Peki community is in the South Dayi district, the Tsito community in the Ho West district and the Alavanyo and Hohoe communities in the Hohoe municipality. The study therefore generally covered two regions in Ghana and five districts in the Oti and Volta regions altogether.

A personal communication with an assembly woman of Alavanyo and an opinion leader of Nkonya in 2017, revealed reprisal attacks between the communities. The Alavanyo and Nkonya communities were selected purposely because they are communities in the Volta Region that keep coming into the news time after time with reprisal attacks after so many decades of a resource conflict. Additionally, the Peki, Tsito Nkwanta and Hohoe traditional areas are known conflict hotspots which are currently enjoying some semblance of peace for several years now. The Nkwanta traditional area which is popularly known for its age-old and generational land dispute also keeps coming up with its issues through the courts. This was confirmed through a personal communication with an elderly opinion leader in 2019.

Study Population

The study population was made up of members of the study communities outlined as conflict hotspots in the region. Additionally, individuals/ key informants who had worked during conflict resolution sessions in the regions as well as representatives of organizations and institutions that worked with the communities

in the regions were contacted. Representatives from institutions such as the Volta

Regional Peace Council, the House of Chiefs, and National Centre for Civic

Education, Department of Children, Department of Gender, the Ghana Police, and

the 66 Artillery Regiment which are Security council representations in the Region

were also utilized as key informants to the study.

Sampling Procedures

Purposive sampling, a non-probability sampling procedure was used in the

selection of key informants from thirteen conflict management institutions. These

key informants were the heads of various relevant conflict management institutions

who in addition to themselves, selected two more key informants totaling three (3)

for each institution. In all, the twelve institutions considered gave a total of thirty-

nine (36) participants. Purposive sampling was again used for the selection of

chiefs, Queen mothers, opinion leaders, community elders, leaders of mediation

committees and peace clubs, men, women, and the youth representatives for focus

group discussions in all the 6 conflict hotspots/ communities. This selection of

members of the focus group was to ensure the selection of a sample population that

cut across the community's real population. Each focus group had eight (8)

participants giving a total of 48 for the six (6) hotspots. The overall sample for the

study was 84 (Table 2). Purposive sampling helped to focus on characteristics of

the population that helped in answering the research questions of the study. Also,

all the key respondents as well as members of the focus groups were people who

had spent an average of 1- 25 years in the various institutions and communities.

Again, the key informants who were interviewed were people who occupied high

ranking positions in the organisations and traditional areas and who had equally spent an average of 1- 25 years at these places. These were the best methods to address the objectives of the study in as much as the study was a case study and had to use a small sample that needed to be studied in-depth. Additionally, the selection of the members of the focus group from the conflict hotspots was well designed to select a group of people who cut across the population to ensure a high level of homogeneity in selection across the communities. This was also ensured in the selection of the key informants. More so, based on the summary of the empirical reviews on gender perspectives in conflict management, there is enough evidence on the use of non-probability methods for such purposes.

Table 2: Characteristics of Study Participants

Characteristics of study participants	Female	Male	Total
Key-informant interview of key institutions			
1. NCCE	1	2	3
2. Peace Council	1	2	3
3. Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection.	2	1	3
4. House of Chiefs	1	2	3
5. NGO (GLOWA)	1	2	3
6. Alavanyo Traditional Authority	2	1	3
7. Nkonya Traditional Authority	2	1	3
8. Peki Traditional Authority	1	2	3
9. Tsito Traditional Authority	1	2	3
10. Hohoe Traditional Authority	1	2	3
11. Nkwanta Traditional Authority	1	2	3
12. Security Services (Police and Army)	1	2	3
Sub-total of key informants	**15**	**21**	**36**
Focus group discussions in conflict hotspots			
1. Alavanyo	4	4	8
2. Nkonya	4	4	8
3. Peki	3	5	8
4. Tsito	1	7	8
5. Hohoe	2	6	8
6. Nkwanta	1	7	8
Sub-total focus group participants	**15**	**33**	**48**

Table 2 continued

Respondents of key informant interviews and focus group discussions per region			
Oti	8	14	22
Volta	24	38	62
Total number of participants	**32**	**52**	**84**

Source: Field survey (2019)

Data Sources

The study used basically primary data (Table 3). The primary data was acquired from key respondents of institutions such as the Department of Gender, Department of Children, Department of Social Welfare, and the National Commission on Civic Education (NCCE), the Peace Council, the House of Chiefs, the Police and the Army, GLOWA (an NGO), traditional authorities, and Opinion leaders in the purposively selected communities (hotspots) and the focus groups in the conflict hotspots. Physical evidence of conflict outcomes was documented over the course of the study.

Data Collection Methods

Interviews and focus group discussions were the two qualitative data collection methods used for the study. Additionally, observation was used to augment the interviews and the focus group discussions (Table 3). The Interview which was the major data collection method for the study, played a paramount role in the collection of qualitative data because it allowed participants to report on themselves, their views, their beliefs, practices, interactions, and concerns hence produced powerful data that provided insights into the participants' experiences, perceptions, or opinions (Peter & Halcomb, 2015). The In-Depth interviews therefore helped to produce a quality of data that helped in checking the reliability

of responses by asking the same question differently and at different stages of the interviews to help receive relevant responses.

Also, the unstructured nature of the interviews helped in building good rapport and creating a relaxed and healthy atmosphere for participants who easily cooperated and answered questions. Furthermore, for many of the residents of the selected communities who could not read and write the English language, the interview method enabled the research team to translate questions into the local languages that the study communities were familiar with. The interview guide was used as the instrument for the interview method of collecting data. It captured issues relating to all the objectives of this study.

Focus group discussions, are another form of qualitative research methodology in which a group of people are asked about their attitude towards a product, service, concept, advertisement, or an idea (Neuman, 2000). The various themes of the study were introduced in an interactive group setting where participants freely discussed the themes with other group members. This to a greater extent brought on board participants' attitudes, feelings, beliefs, experiences, and reactions in a way that could not come up using the one-to-one interviews. According to Creswell (2003), these attitudes, feelings, and beliefs were partially independent of a group but were revealed via the social gathering and the interaction in a group. Compared to individual interviews which aim at obtaining individual attitudes, beliefs, and feelings, focus groups elicit a multiplicity of views and emotions in a group. Finally, observation was used to observe some gender perspectives in conflict management and its influence on the general development

of the conflict hotspots. This was done through the observation of deployed security personnel at post in conflict hotspots, community meetings, community outlook, abandoned buildings, curfew sessions and commerce.

Data Collection Instruments

Interview guides, Focus Group Discussion guides and Observation guides were the qualitative instruments used for the study (Table 3). These instruments were used in collecting in-depth information on naturally occurring behaviours in their usual context. The observation guide facilitated the observation and gathering of information on physical evidence of conflicts in the study such as general outlook of communities and how freely people went about their duties, signs of abandoned buildings, bullet holes in buildings and availability of security forces or the imposition of a curfew.

The Interview guides were two in number. The first guide was the Appendix "A" which was the Interview Guide for people coming from Institutions in charge of conflict management. It had seven sections that focused on the specific objectives of the study, to capture data on individuals' personal histories, perspectives, and experiences, particularly when sensitive topics such as gender perspectives were being explored.

The Appendix B was the interview Guide for Opinion Leaders in the Communities (Conflict Hotspots) was also made up of six sections of themes around the specific objectives. The Focus Group Guides (Appendix C) were effective in eliciting data on the cultural norms of a group and in generating broad overviews of issues of concern to the cultural groups or subgroups represented in

relation to gender perspectives in conflict management. It also had seven sections that dealt with themes in line with the specific objectives of the study. The types of data these methods generated were field notes, audio (and sometimes video) recordings and transcripts as well as minutes of meetings. The Observation guide is presented in Appendix D.

Data Collection Procedures

The data for this study were collected between September 2019 and December 2019. Four field assistants were employed to help with the data collection, as a result of the number of institutions and conflict hotspots involved. Prior to the data collection, the field assistants were trained briefly on the administration of the interview guides, use of the observation guide and the focus group guide.

Additionally, during the training session of the team of field assistants, how to obtain maximum responses through follow up questions as well as probing questions were discussed. Importantly, the training gave the field assistants the core skills for the study. To ensure that the guides were properly administered, training was done to give the field assistants the chance of interviewing themselves to have a feel of how the whole process would unfold once they got to the field.

On the field, respondents were first approached; the purpose of the study was explained to them as well as showing them an introductory letter (Appendix E) from the Department of Integrated Development Studies. Their consent was then sought while they were assured of confidentiality before the interviews and focus group discussions were initiated. The interviews were mainly conducted in the

mornings (between 8am and 12 noon) so as to help the researchers get the various key informants at their various places of work. This was followed by the administration of the observation guide between 1 and 2 pm. However, the focus group discussions were conducted in the evenings between 4 pm and 6 pm to enable the researcher to get the various people involved together at a neutral place without disturbing them at the workplace or home. A day was normally spent for interviews, observation guide administration, and focus group discussions in each of the conflict hotspots. Also, a maximum of a day was used for the key informant interviews in the conflict management institutions.

In all, a total of six communities were visited by the researcher and her team. The communities were: Peki, Tsito, Alavanyo, Nkonya, Hohoe and Nkwanta. The institutions however were: NCCE, GLOWA, Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Welfare (Department of Gender, Department of Children, Department of Social Welfare), Peace Council, 66 Artillery Regiment, and Ghana Police.

Table 3: Data Types, Population, Data Collection Methods, and Instruments

Type of data/Source of Data	Study Population	Data Collection Method	Data Collection Instrument	Remarks
Qualitative/Primary	Key Informants from Institutions and conflict hotspots (Mainly head of institutions and top ranks as well as traditional authorities)	In-Depth Interview	Interview guide	
Qualitative/Primary	Gate keepers and opinion leaders from conflict hotspots/Communities	Focus Group Discussion	Focus group guide	

Table 3 continued

	(Mainly Queen mothers, traditional representatives, opinion leaders, the youth, women, and men)			
Qualitative/Primary	Infrastructure and human activities within Conflict hotspots/ communities	Observation	Observation Guide	Structural changes and human activities influenced by conflict

Source: Author's Construct(2019)

Data Validation

Data validation, triangulation, and saturation even though quantitative research concepts are applicable in qualitative research especially if one is to look at the credibility of data collected for a study. In qualitative studies therefore, these terms must be redefined so to reflect different ways of establishing the truth (Golafshani, 2003). The term validity or data validation for instance can be described with a wide range of terms in qualitative studies. It is therefore not a fixed or universally accepted concept but rather grounded in the processes or intentions of a particular research's methodologies (Winter, 2000, p. 1).

In ensuring validity for this study, well-trained and skilled moderators (or facilitators) were selected by the researcher. Moderators who were educated to the second-degree level and who had a good command over the English and the Ewe language were used. This was to ensure the right information got to the participants as well as was elucidated from the participants. Secondly, it was ensured that

participants were truly members of the segment from which they were recruited. In this case, the study made sure that participants in conflict hotspots and institutions were people directly on the ground and who were representative of their segments so to ensure valid results from them. Triangulation can also be used to ensure validity by essentially using any technique that would inform the results from different angles. This study used focus groups from a number of communities as well as various In-Depth interviews to compare the results. Different locations and multiple interviewees as well as transcriptionists were used to ensure triangulation. Respondent validation was also ensured by calling respondents to confirm the meanings or responses of some answers to questions the researcher transcribed but could not get a full meaning of.

All the above methods were applied to reduce the levels of subjectivity which is known to accompany qualitative studies basically because it deals with the researcher (a human) trying to understand other humans. Noble and Smith (2015), are of the view that exploring biases in research and devising strategies to reduce these biases creates a level of rigor and integrity that goes with research thus ensuring a level of credibility.

Data Management

Electronic recorders were used in collecting qualitative data with notes taken as a backup. Sensitive documents were stored in a safe and locked location and electronic records stored on a passworded personal computer.

Data Processing and Analysis

The audio recordings of the In-Depth interviews and the focus group sessions were transcribed in the English Language. The transcriptionist listened to the tape and typed out verbatim its content. Additionally, non-verbal sounds such as laughter, sirens, and knocking on doors were also noted on the transcripts. Notes taken alongside the recordings during the interviews were incorporated into the transcript where relevant. The transcription was performed by the data collectors.

Narrative analysis was used in the analysis of all the five objectives of the study. Specifically, Narrative Thematic Analysis which encompassed, organization and preparation of data, obtaining a general sense of the information, coding, creating themes and interpreting data (Butina, 2015) was used. This method analysed content from the various sources such as the interviews of respondents, the focus group discussions, and the observations from the field. Narrative analysis dwells on stories and experiences shared by people to answer one's research questions (Bhatia, 2018). The stories and experiences of key informants and members of the focus group discussions were therefore shared as a response to the research questions of the study to generate the data for the study. The analysis of the data therefore encompassed the five objectives of the study. A number of steps were used in the clustering of the recorded data using specific themes related to the various objectives of the study to help make sense out of the objectives. Also, meanings and patterns of responses were derived from the clustered data to interpret the data and draw conclusions for the study.

Ethical Considerations

The study proposal and other relevant documents such as data collection tools and consent forms were presented to the Ethics Committee of the University of Cape Coast's Institutional Review Board for approval ahead of data collection. The participants of the study were informed of the nature of the study, benefits or otherwise of the study to them as well as their rights as study participants. All concerned institutions and their study participants as well as the various communities which are conflict hotspots were all informed of the purpose and relevance of the study for the purpose of ethical acceptance. Oral and written consent was obtained from the respondents prior to data collection. They were also informed of their rights to leave the study anytime over its course. Persons, who accepted to be part of the study after they had been well-informed, signed or thumb-printed a consent form – evidence of their consenting to be part of the study.

The respondents were therefore selected to participate in the study based on their willingness. Study participants were assured of their anonymity and confidentiality. The participants were informed that the information recorded and collected would remain anonymous. Additionally, study participants were compensated with something little to take care of the time they spent with the researcher. In writing the research report, there was no use of language or words that were biased against persons because of gender, disability, or age. A copy of the letter for ethical clearance by the University is available as Appendix D in the appendices.

Chapter Summary

The qualitative research paradigm with a focus on interpretivism as a philosophy was adopted for the study. A case study design was used for the six conflict hotspots as well as the fourteen conflict management institutions. All key informants of the study were purposively selected. In all, a total of 36 key informants and 48 focus group members were selected, generating a sample frame of 84 study participants for the study. Interview guides, observation guides and focus group guides were used as instruments for data collection. Data was collected between September 2019 and December 2019, after which narrative thematic analysis was used to analyse the data collected.
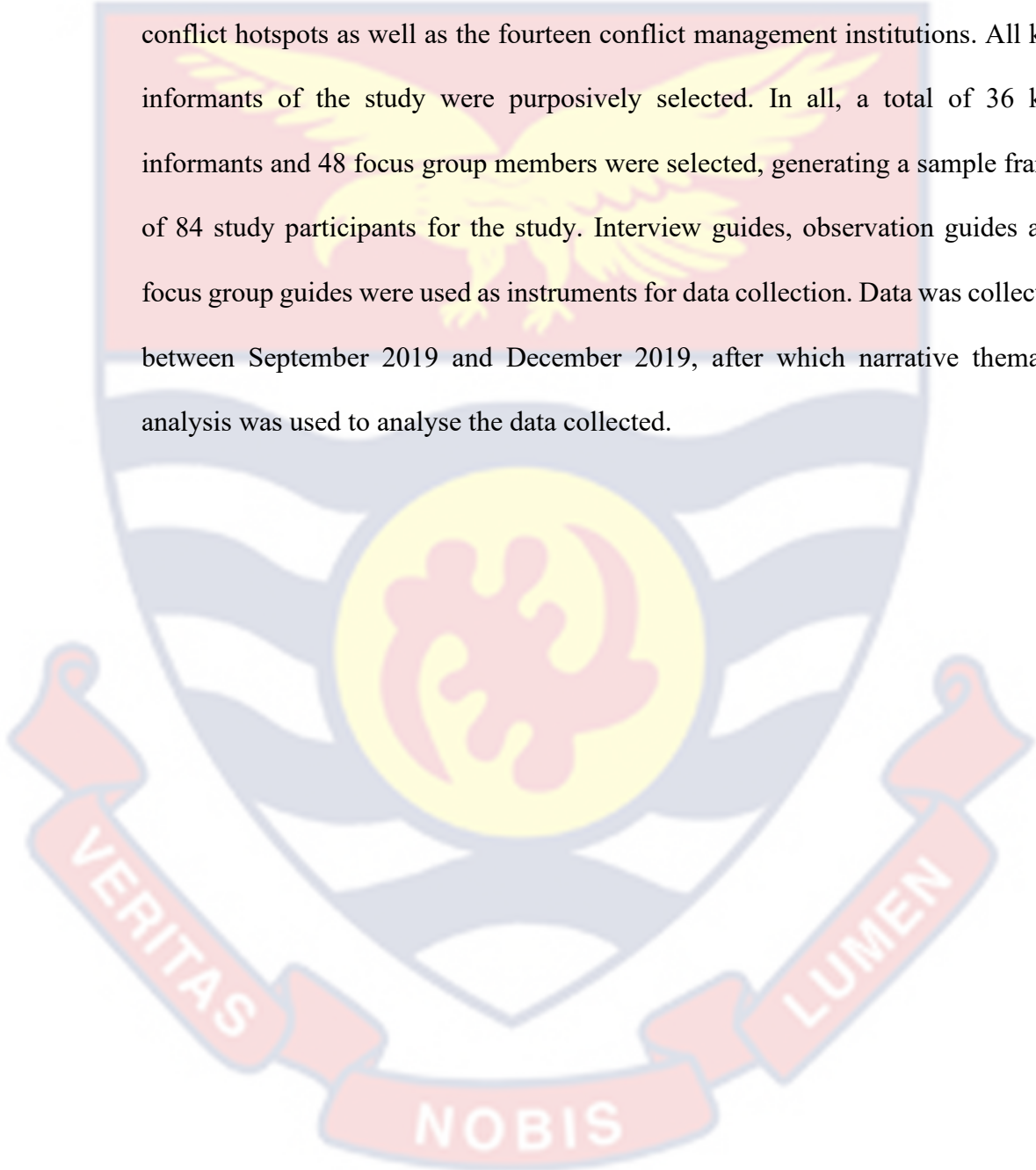
CHAPTER FOUR

GENDER PERSPECTIVES ON THE STRUCTURE AND FUNCTION OF

CONFLICT MANAGEMENT INSTITUTIONS

Introduction

This chapter presents and examines findings that emerged on gender perspectives on the structure and function of formal and informal conflict management institutions. The structure of conflict management institutions focused on persons who oversaw managing conflicts when they came up in communities. The function of such institutions pertains to the diverse roles conflict management institutions take on over the course of conflicts.

Perspectives on Structure of Conflict Management Institutions

Persons in Charge of Managing Conflicts in the Community.

Perceptions of respondents that emerged from the qualitative interviews in this study pointed to the essential role of traditional leadership in the structure of conflict management institutions across the different communities. There were some permutations of traditional leadership oversight of conflict management reported by participants. Other persons overseeing the management of conflicts included religious leaders, leadership of youth groups, elderly women, and members of formal peace committees. Political leadership did not seem to have a prominent role in leading conflict management drives.

Traditional Elders Lead Conflict Management Sessions

Traditional leadership of the community was overwhelmingly perceived by study participants to lead deliberations when conflicts were being managed. Such leadership was predominantly the Chiefs, their elders, and clan/Asafo leaders. A key informant from Tsito confirmed the predominance of chiefs in leading deliberations during conflict management by remarking:

> It is the chief and elders who are in charge, though the ministers contribute to solving some of the problems, it is mainly the chief and elders of the Tsito community who are in charge (5th November 2019).

Additionally, a key informant in Nkwanta after several weeks had this to say as a confirmation: *It is generally the paramount Chief (12th December 2019).*

A later discussion with a focus group in the evening in Nkwanta also alluded to the fact that chiefs played a paramount role in conflict management. It was established that a chief in charge of a single lingua town deals with any conflict situation that arises in the community. However, it was noted that, in bigger towns with sub chiefs superintending different lingua groupings, the sub chiefs were the ones who handled conflicts. Such conflicts it was said, if still unresolved at the level of the sub chiefs proceeded to the paramount chief and further to the traditional council if it is still unresolved. The role of the chiefs was again confirmed by an earlier discussion in Hohoe which indicated that, way before the coming of the Europeans, Chiefs were the first to be notified when something happened in Gbiland (Hohoe land). It was also confirmed the chiefs had subjects who are always

updated on happenings, so they inform the Chiefs. This act it was said enabled Chiefs and their elders to deal with issues appropriately.

These quotations above generally point to a consensus that projects chiefs and traditional elders in the various conflict hotspots as having roles which are non-negotiable when it comes to issues of conflict management. It also puts the chiefs in perspective as those in charge of conflict management. Queen mothers were not even mentioned as people who help the chiefs. This finding of the study confirmed the feminist theory's philosophy of the non-empowerment of women and reasons why women should be empowered and actively involved in processes such as conflict management.

It is also confirmed in literature by Gedzi (2009), who stated that chiefs in current times play a remarkable role in conflict management/managing disputes in indigenous areas of Ghana. This was also buttressed by an observation I made at Alavanyo, one of the conflict hotspots on the very day I arrived in the community to conduct the interviews, observation, and focus group discussions. On that fateful day, the 10th of November 2019, the paramount chief of the traditional area was in a meeting with his elders over a misunderstanding between two main clans in the community. It was at this meeting that I had to present some schnapps to enable me ask permission to interact with community members. Even though this scene just echoed the role played by the chief and his elders, I could hardly count the number of women who were present at such a meeting. It is in view of bridging this gap of non-inclusiveness in conflict management that the conceptual framework of the study is well positioned to address the various types of gaps that exist in the process

of conflict management and with recourse to theories such as the Dual concern theory, the UNSCR 1325, Thomas Kilmann's Model and Feminism.

Traditional Leadership Working in Tandem with Religious Leaders and Others in Managing Conflicts in the Community

Traditional leadership with oversight responsibilities were observed by respondents to collaborate with religious leaders of diverse denominations in leading the management of some conflicts in the community. There were instances when traditional leadership took on leadership roles with religious leadership in a supporting role. This was evident in a key informant statement captured in the Hohoe community as follows: *The Elders of the community, the Mallams, the Chiefs and so on (21st October 2019).*

Likewise, in the Tsito community, a key informant also reiterated the fact that traditional leaders were taking up leadership roles with religious leaders: *It is the chief and elders who are in charge, though the ministers contribute to solving some of the problems mainly it is the chief and elder of Tsito community (5th November 2019).*

To buttress the statements above, a focus group discussion at Peki categorically stated that chiefs and pastors helped in managing conflicts in their community as already stated in statements from Hohoe and Tsito. In all this, the role of chiefs in conflict management was still evidently clear even though they were now enjoying a kind of partnership from pastors. This part of the study reveals cooperation (a necessary tool for conflict management) at its best and which is a

very vital foundation of the Dual Concern theory and the Thomas Kilmann's Model which are also captured in the conceptual framework.

Religious Leaders Had Oversight of Conflict Management in Collaboration with Community and Political Leadership, and Others

There were instances when religious leaders primarily took the initiative and led in conflict management or in collaboration with other stakeholders such as traditional, political and youth leadership. This was what an opinion leader who was a key informant from Tsito had to say:

> *In the case of conflict management, people approach us as Pastors. People approach their clan elders. They also approach their Paramount Chiefs. Even though the paramount chiefs are not in town, there are representatives such as the Linguist and Okyeame who are all approached to manage conflicts (5th November 2019).*

The stance of the Tsito key informant was confirmed during group discussions in Hohoe and Peki. In Tsito for instance, the Christian Council, Chief Executives and the Zongo chiefs all helped to bring peace under such circumstances while leaders of youth groups that the youths confide in were also involved in Peki.

Reasons provided by respondents justifying the leadership roles of religious leaders during conflict management were the fact that, traditional leaders at a point in time were perceived to be themselves fomenting conflicts. There was a loss of trust in them resulting in religious leadership playing a greater role in conflict management. This was indicated by a community leader from Tsito as follows:

> *But it came to a time where the pastors came together because they realized that the chiefs and elders were interested in fighting than resolving the conflict, so the pastors came together to form a committee that began to mediate with one committee in Tsito and another in Peki. Since the pastors intervened as far back as 2004, there has been no such conflict situation in Tsito and Peki. (5th November 2019)*

The inclusion of pastors in issues of conflict management or the use of religion in conflict management is an age-old phenomenon. On the flip side however, religion could also be a source of conflicts especially as pertains in most parts of the Islamic world today. Nyamwaya (2014), states that religion in as much as is destructive can also be successfully used in managing conflicts. He confirmed in his statement that religion can also be used for the management of conflict in order to attain sustainable peace. This is indicated in the result of the conceptual framework (Figure 4 on page 72), which was tailored to help in achieving sustainable peace and development. Most importantly, responses from all the study areas revealed a substantial role of religious bodies working to achieve sustainable peace.

Community Members Took the Lead in Conflict Management and Further Involved Traditional Leadership

Findings also revealed that depending on the level and scope of some conflicts, members of the community took the lead in conflict management. Conflicts within the family or the home for example, were managed by family or clan heads initially. When outcomes were not favourable or progress was stalled,

that was when the traditional leadership was brought into the process. An opinion leader who was a key informant from Alavanyo indicated this in a statement below.

> *Conflict management in the community is at different levels depending on the severity of the conflict. They include parents, Family heads, Clan heads, and Community elders including the chief. Minor conflicts among women are handled by the Queen mother and her elders (10th November 2019).*

To buttress the statement above, a group discussion at Nkwanta had community leaders and opinion leaders stating that family conflicts were settled by the family leader or clan leader. The chief linguist was then brought into the picture if things don't go well for people at the family stage. The courts are the last resort if conflicting parties are still not satisfied.

The role of religious and traditional leadership in conflict management has been demonstrated in diverse conflict hotspots across the globe. The Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) of Liberia as part of the findings of their report noted that civil society representatives such as the religious community, traditional organizations and other stake holders participated in contributing to ceasefires that culminated in the Comprehensive Peace Agreements. The commission did this by explaining its mandate to the stakeholders, as well as educating them on the various roles they could all play in healing the nation through their various groups (TRC, 2009).

Ettang and Ogunnubi (2018) mentioned the importance of religious actors and institutions in preventing or managing religious conflicts in Northern Nigeria. Leadership by Chiefs as per the current study is congruent with findings of Gedzi

(2009) who mentioned that historically and in modern times they played and continue to play remarkable roles in conflict management or managing disputes in indigenous areas of Ghana. Gedzi further mentioned that, in the past Chiefs resolved conflicts in indigenous courts, a position which was curtailed by the colonial authority but repealed by the Chieftaincy Act of 1971. The Chieftaincy Act however maintained some restrictions on the judicial powers of the Chiefs resulting in them having to act extra judicially as arbitrators to conflicting parties that voluntarily appeared before them in the community. Adjei & Adebayo, 2014 (as cited in Ibrahim, 2018) also mentioned the existence of "indigenous conflict management mechanisms" in communities prior to the colonial era in Africa. Most of these interventions by the leadership have been informal as opposed to formal conflict management roles.

Involvement of Other Societal Groupings in Conflict Management

Youth groupings were observed in the study to have taken on leadership roles in managing conflicts. The leader of one such group in Nkwanta was perceived to have actively engaged in managing conflicts in their community as per the quote: *Speaking from the perspective of the youth, our youth chairperson is the one who directly handles conflict (12th December 2019).*

Waldman (2009) states that Youth involvement and interaction with conflict or their role in post-conflict peace building and conflict management is a new and emerging concept. The youth in the Central African Republic were engaged in diverse roles in the conflict transformation process during the wars between 2013 and 2016 (Waldman, 2009).

Women were identified in the study communities to have provided leadership in conflict management. These were mainly elderly women and those who felt the responsibility to step in to ensure conflicts did not escalate. Some of these women served as referees in that, when such conflicts did not end as expected, they helped in seeking further help in addressing issues for example from the security services or other forms of leadership. A key respondent from Peki had this to say: *At times we also have women to help the men realize the peace we want (10th December 2019).*

This was re-echoed in a group discussion at Nkwanta which indicated that if you are a woman in an area and there is misunderstanding or conflict, you can call for the conflicting parties and make peace especially if you are an elderly woman. If that happens and there is peace, that ends it. If the parties are not still convinced, the issue can be sent to the assemblyman or better still the police station depending on how the issue evolved.

Women's role in conflict management has received lots of attention over the past decades. The leadership role of women in traditional settings emanates from Queen mothers who are seen in the image of Chiefs. As noted by Abukari (2019), most Ghanaian communities recognize female leadership with Queen Mothers being essential parts of the chieftaincy institution and dully recognized as leaders in their communities. They are therefore very important personalities in addition to the chiefs in conflict management.

Political leadership was the least referred to of the themes with respect to leadership in conflict management in the community. Local political operatives

such as assemblymen were those who were perceived to be involved with conflict management. In one such statement, an opinion leader in Hohoe made it clear that:

The political leadership was made up of the Regional Minister/Community Leaders (21ˢᵗ October 2019).

A discussion in Nkwanta indicated that beyond the home, the management of conflicts could be passed on to the assembly man. When politics is introduced into conflict resolution, it operates by means of compromise, conciliation, and negotiation instead of coercion (Centre for Multiparty Democracy - CMD – Malawi, 2001). Political leadership at the diverse levels requires these skills and competencies to navigate conflicts among their constituents.

Perspectives on Gender Representation on Committees in Charge of Conflict Management

There were much more males than females on committees in the conflict management process. Some interviewees were not sure of the male/female representations on the committees. The only exceptions to the rule of men being more were with organizations that had female heads such as GLOWA (an NGO) and the Alavanyo community which had its leader as a Queen mother.

Gender Representation on Committees of Conflict Management Was Skewed in Favour of Males

A key finding emerging from the interviews was that there were much more males than females on committees in the conflict management process. This cut across all the study communities. Key informant interviews in Tsito, Peki, and

Nkwanta all confirming more males than females are indicated below: *Normally the men or males are always more than the females. Sometimes they take four (4) men and two (2) females (5th November 2019).* Furthermore, *in fact, at most Committee levels the men are more than the females. But the female court /committees also are dominated by females to deal with issues that concern the women (10th December 2019).* Finally, *I think both women and men are on the various committees. We don't discriminate, only that almost everywhere, men dominate on such committees than the women (12th December 2019)*

Group discussions in Hohoe, Nkwanta, Alavanyo and Nkonya all reiterated the submissions of the key informant interviews. In Hohoe for instance, it was noted that, the women were formally relegated to the background in the community, as most conflict management sessions had more males than females, precisely 70% men as against 30% of women.

In Nkwanta however, it was categorically stated that women were not part of such committees and that if even they were, they just made up about 10 % of the members of the committees. Observation also revealed that most of the focus group meetings except for Alavanyo and Nkonya were male dominated even though the researcher called for a 50/50 representation. These were very interesting revelations on the non-involvement of women in conflict management. This was a gross non-involvement of women across board. The Conceptual framework of the study is therefore designed to help bring out the conflict management process as one that is not discriminatory with sex, so as to help in the sustainable management of conflicts in the Volta Region of Ghana. To buttress this, Mr. Emmanuel Bombande (the co-

founder of the West Africa Network for Peace Building and the Executive Director), stated on Joy News that, more women promote peace than are welcome at peace tables.

Gender Representation Skewed Towards Females.

There were few instances however, when women were much more represented than men on conflict management committees. These happened when such committees were focused on issues related to females. As per the narratives: *In my case they are all women. Sometimes they involve one or two men on adhoc basis (10th November 2019)* AND *More women were represented than men in the women's situation rooms (4th September 2019).*

Gender Representation on Conflict Management Committees Uncertain

Some participants were uncertain of the gender composition on some committees they had been part of. A key informant from Tsito had this to say: *I cannot tell. I need to find out from some of the committee members whether they have women represented on the committee (5th November 2019)*

This was reinforced by a group discussion in the same Tsito community where a respondent indicated he could not remember the number of men and women on the committee, but the respondent acknowledged there were both men and women on the committee.

Gender is a development issue; it is therefore an important consideration in development. It is a way of looking at how social norms and power structures impact on the lives and opportunities available to different groups of men and

women. Globally more women than men live in poverty (Marks, 2016). The emerging issues from the study are looking at the existing structures of conflict management and how they are impacting both men and women (not only women) as well as highlighting some gaps in women's involvement which will eventually help in gender mainstreaming by mapping out the differences between men and women within the conflict management structure especially looking at the unequal exercise of power (SIDA, 2015). This explanation (SIDA, 2015) is what will help mainstream gender into all social activities such as the conflict management structure in this study. When gender is mainstreamed into all social activities right from the structural level, it would eventually help to ensure gender equality in all facets of society. All these perspectives of gender at the end of the study will serve as tools in ensuring effective gender equality in social life.

Views on Gender Representation Within Institutions Managing Conflict

The predominant view that emerged pointed to the fact that fair gender representation in conflict management processes was necessary as each gender brought to bear unique qualities that facilitated the process. De Zwaan and Feenstra (2015) are of the opinion that the unequal power relations can contribute to an institutionalization of gender-based violence. According to the World Bank (2012), investing in gender equality and women's empowerment can unlock human potential on a transformational scale. The statement below from a key respondent who was interviewed reinforces the need for a look at a fair representation/ gender

equality in the process of conflict management which was a predominant view of respondents.

> *It is good we have a fair representation. Exactly, because we are not the same, the women differ from us; the men also differ from the women. Yes, maybe our levels of understanding also differ from each other, so when the man thinks violence, he may be calmed down by the woman. Men will be ready to fight whilst women will calm them down or women will be ready to let things escalate by shouting or quarrelling with others. Men can also calm everything down and vice versa. Anything at all can happen so if there is gender balance, then we can manage the conflicts very well (5th November 2019).*

More importantly and a confirmation of fair gender representation, discussions by opinion leaders of the Nkonya community established that gender balance was very effective in conflict management because the difficult and harsh nature of men could be toned down by bringing in women who would come in with their naturally calm voices to calm down tempers. They were therefore of the opinion that, if women are not part of such sessions, it would be very difficult at times to come to a peaceful conclusion on matters. Also, in a similar discussion in Hohoe, fair representation was seen as helpful and very important. They noted that, it should be the stance of all communities in conflict management as it would inure to gender balance. They categorically stated that a (50/50) representation of men and women should be the case. They were also of the view that women were always more than men population wise and should therefore be fairly represented. They also stated that men keep issues to themselves and hardly would want to give explanations whereas women are naturally predisposed to very good conversation

and explanations. They finally concluded their discussions by stating that, if conflict management sessions are to be all men, things would definitely not go very well.

An analysis of these statements show that a fair representation of both genders is essential in the conflict management processes as both bring on board perspectives unique to their type that ensures fairness in deliberations. It also establishes the fact that each gender is also equally endowed with the properties of providing good counsel in addressing conflict situations.

Male's Appreciation of Role of Females in Conflict Management

Males admitted to having better appreciated the relevance of women to the conflict management process and wanted their voices heard in such situations. This was buttressed in the statement of this opinion Leader from the Zongo community in Hohoe:

> The most important thing is what we are already saying that men and women have to be involved in conflict resolution. So, I am thinking it should be that. Anything apart from that will not bring peace and unity and therefore the community will not grow. Women naturally know their role and in conflict resolution sometimes you need to send women to the other party to go and talk to them, sometimes when men and men come face to face, you will see that the respect is not there, so sometimes men will listen to women because they have that respect for them, so sometimes we have to use the women as a strong weapon if we want to solve conflicts so that there will be unity and growth (10th November 2019).

A male pastor from the Peki community and an opinion leader had this to say to affirm his stance for a fair inclusion of men and women in the conflict management process.

> I would love a 50/50 representation because God has given every human the brain to do anything possible. A woman or a man can have very good pieces of advice for our community. As a pastor therefore I do not discriminate but give everybody the chance to bring his/her view to bear in church building (Peki Opinion Leader 3- IDI).

In a group discussion, a youth representative of the Zongo community in Hohoe who could not hide his joy of now seeing women on board in their deliberations in conflict management stated with so much passion that:

> Years ago, there was that ignorance that made us relegate women to the background but this time it is not so with the Islamic setup. This time we try to seek views from our "Magagiers" within the community. They contribute a lot. God has endowed them a lot with knowledge. In fact, it is very important in all conflict management circles (21st October 2019).

Women's Involvement in the Conflict Management Architecture

Conflict management institutions have always had a structure of involving both men and women with a question mark of the women always lagging the men in terms of numbers for several reasons. Shepherd (2015) states that overcoming such gender assumptions underlying the design of post-conflict dispute resolution processes and structure and working toward greater inclusion of women in formal and informal processes was a way out. The tradition of the low levels of

involvement of women in conflict management sessions especially the very formal sessions was echoed by some community leaders that gave some hope on the inclusion of women. These community leaders also related to Shepherd's statement of overcoming such gender assumptions, in their various statements below. First is a key informant from the Nkonya community.

> *The most important thing for me is for the voice of women to be heard. Because sometimes when you go for reconciliation sessions, women don't talk in these sessions, they just sit and are not called to give their opinion (14th October 2019).*

Discussions in the Hohoe community highlighted the fact that in the past, women were never involved in Conflict Management, unlike current times when women leaders as well as their representatives are involved. A deliberate effort was also made by the community to at least involve two women in any conflict management session. This they said was because they realized the contribution of women to a greater extent helped to add up to that of the men to calm down tempers and ensure a peaceful atmosphere in their communities.

In the Nkwanta community, group discussions pointed out that Ghana was growing and had to change its old ways. The respondents also confirmed that at first women were not regarded in such instances of conflict management but that the generation of today had realized that mothers were better in resolving conflicts basically because their involvement always culminates into the achievement of peace. They concluded they had therefore decided any issue that borders on the management of conflicts should involve women as well as the men.

An analysis of the above statements is indicative of the fact that gender mainstreaming is catching up with conflict management institutions. The mere fact that respondents are saying they never involved women in the past but are now doing that is an attestation to the fact that gender is being mainstreamed into the institutional framework of conflict management institutions. This will help in empowering both men and women and eventually lead to gender equality which would also culminate into the involvement of women in peace and security architecture.

Reasons for low Representation of Women in Conflict Management

There were instances where fair representation by gender was perceived as not feasible in all circumstances as there were no women with the needed competencies to be involved, as in the church for example. The following statement from an opinion leader and a church leader from Peki in a group discussion was indicative of this.

> *A fair gender representation would work in some instances and not work in other instances. In the community where we are looking for people to form a peace committee, the 50/50 could be gotten for both men and women, but in instances like trying to get Pastors' representation on peace committees in a church, it would be difficult to get a 50/50 representation basically because women pastors are few in number (10th December 2019).*

Perspectives on the Functions (Objectives or Concerns) of Conflict Management Institutions in Conflict Situations

Maintaining or bringing peace, facilitating amicable management, settlement, or resolution of conflicts in the community were themes that emerged from interviews with respect to the perceived objectives and concerns of conflict management institutions in conflict situations.

Conflict Management Institutions Maintained or Brought Peace to the Community

A key theme that emerged from the various communities was that conflict management institutions were perceived as those to maintain or ensure that peace prevailed in the community. Some key informants from Tsito and Hohoe indicated this below: *Normally the objective of conflict management is to bring mutual understanding or living in peace with each other (5th November 2019),* AND *To bring peace to the Community (21st October 2019).*

> *In the first place if you are a community leader and there is conflict among some individuals or groups in your town, you have to be very fast to see what will bring about peace in the community. You have to send the "Tsiame", a sub chief to do some background checks on the conflict and send the feedback to you as the chief. The various parties involved in the conflict are called by the "Tsiame" who finds out from each of the parties what has caused the existing state of conflict. After picking the feedback from the "Tsiame", the chief then sits the parties down as a leader and try to settle the conflict amicably (12th December 2019).*

In group discussions, the Peki community observed that their main aim generally was to ensure a peaceful community. They stated they are peace loving people who hate conflicts and bloodshed. They concluded that even though people would currently be relating them to a conflict hotspot because of some occurrences in the past, they would want to say that they are a peace-loving community.

Conflict Management Institutions Facilitated Amicable Management, Settlement, or Resolution of Conflicts

Another emergent theme was that conflict management institutions were perceived to facilitate the amicable management, settlement, or resolution of conflicts in the community. Statements of key informants from Peki and Alavanyo who were opinion leaders who attested to this were as follows.

> *Our concern is to ensure amicable settlement (10th December 2019).*
>
> *My major concern has always been to resolve the issues that brought about the conflict and to restore relationships back to normalcy (10th November 2019).*

In a group discussion it was observed that there was a misunderstanding causing a problem that should be solved. Additionally, it was noticed that conflicts happening in the community was basically among individuals or groups. It was also established that the chief's role was to ensure that there was an amicable settlement of minor conflicts whereas conflicts among various tribes and which were seen as a security threat were reserved for the police who are called to see how they can relate to the situation and ensure some calm or peace. All these expositions buttressed and confirmed the earlier statements of the key informants which all

perceived the function of conflict management institutions to be the amicable settlements of conflicts.

Eschborn, 2000 (as cited in Eschborn 2002), defines conflict management as the attempt to regulate a conflict by acting to help prevent or end violence. It seeks to bring about constructive solutions from which all the parties involved can benefit. The findings of this study in relation to the concerns or objectives of conflict management institutions fall directly in line with the definition by Eschborn. To achieve peace and to facilitate amicable management, settlement or resolutions of conflicts are all attempts to prevent and end violence which are findings of the study in line with the findings of Eschborn.

To Bercovitch, (1983) the purpose of conflict management, is to affect the entire structure of a conflict situation so as to contain the destructive components in the conflict process (e.g., hostility, use of violence) and help the parties possessing incompatible goals to find some solution to their conflict. Effective conflict management to Bercovitch succeeds in minimizing disruption stemming from the existence of a conflict and providing a solution that is satisfactory and acceptable. The findings of the study basically talking about achieving peace, amicable management and resolution of conflicts are all congruent with the findings of Bercovitch.

To concretely confirm all the statements above, whether from key informants, discussions or from literature on the amicable settlement of conflicts, the Military (the 66 Artillery from the Volta Regional capital) patrolled the outskirts of Alavanyo and Nkonya as well as the disputed land area which separated the two

communities. Also, there was heavy presence of members of the Volta Regional Police Service at various barrier posts erected before these two communities. All these pointed to activities that would help limit the probability of conflicts coming up again thus helping in amicably settling the existing conflict which had metamorphosed over the years into different complex forms.

Perspectives on the Mandate of Institutions in Relation to Conflict Management

Themes that emerged under perspectives on the mandate of institutions in conflict management were mainly maintenance of peace, crime prevention, education on conflict avoidance, addressing the needs of the vulnerable and facilitating conflict resolution drives.

Conflict Management Institutions were Perceived to have a Mandate of Maintaining Peace in the Community

Institutions in conflict management were mandated to ensure the maintenance of peace in their constituencies. This was well articulated in the statement of the following respondent: *For the 66 Artillery of the Oti and Volta Regions, we basically maintain the peace in the Oti and Volta Regions. We focus on all the regions and the borders of the Regions. (10th September 2019).*

Conflict Management Institutions were Perceived to have a Mandate of Preventing Crime

Respondents from the security services in the Volta Regional Capital, Ho confirmed that that conflict management institutions were mandated to ensure crime was prevented in the communities in which they were operating.

> *Prevention of crime, detention, and apprehension. We are to prevent crime, but if we are not able to prevent it and it occurs, then we make arrests. Then we also enforce all the laws enacted by Parliament (3rd September 2019).*

Conflict Management Institutions were Perceived to be Mandated on Educating on Conflict Avoidance

The perception of respondents from civil society groups in Ho, the Volta Regional Capital was that conflict management institutions were mandated to educate the community on conflict avoidance as indicated in the statement of a key respondent below: *Our mandate is to create and sustain awareness in all aspects in relation to what it takes to maintain a civil society. A civil society is basically a conflict free society (5th September 2019).*

Conflict Management Institutions were Mandated to Facilitate Conflict Resolution Drives

Some respondents from civil society groups in Ho, were of the perception that institutions in conflict management were mandated to lead conflict resolution drives in the community.

Conflict management is one of the aspects of our mandate. We handle conflicts in the society either between couples or members of the communities, as well as conflicts between politicians and communities. The APRM (The African Peer Review Mechanism) is one tool the NCCE uses in its work. It is to enable more women to get into decision making fronts in society. Basically, we educate people to uphold the democracy (5th September 2019).

The Mandate of Conflict Management Institutions included Addressing the Needs of the Vulnerable in Society and Empowering them during Conflicts

Some respondents perceived the mandate of conflict management institutions as protecting and empowering the vulnerable in society such as children, women, and persons with disability.

Our mandate is not directly into conflict management but if you look at society in general, we have men and women. So, when there is vulnerability of women and children it calls for our attention. Also, when there is an issue of conflict, we as an institution are concerned in terms of the vulnerability of our women and children. (6th September 2019).

Well, if you talk about conflict management in relation to my department's mandate, which is to coordinate policies and programmes and projects with regards to children, we can talk about children at times coming in to contact or in conflict with the law. When it comes to that and the case is reported to us, we provide on the spot counselling and refer to the appropriate sector. This is because, issues around children cuts across all sectors so if the issues come and it doesn't fall directly under our mandate, we immediately call for an on-the-spot counselling session before we refer to the appropriate

quarters. We don't provide direct services to children but provide indirect services where we raise awareness on the issues affecting children and other child protection issues where we educate communities to provide an environment free of violence for children. So, with regard to conflict, as and when it's reported to us, we cannot tell the person to go, to provide the person with an on-the-spot counselling to calm the person down before any further action (7th September 2019).

Our mandate generally is to respond to the needs of women especially persons with disability in terms of their health need, education, and socio-economic needs i.e., to empower women economically. And so, different programmes are carried out in order to realize these outcomes. In relation to conflict management, we try to empower women through various types of activities such as projects that use more of the "right based approaches". An example of such projects is the COMBAT (Community Based Anti-violence Team) project, which uses the "rights-based approach" to educate women on their rights thus helping them to be abreast with their rights and so help avoid any type of violence against these women. It also helps the women to defend themselves in times of conflicts. The COMBAT Project which comprises of community volunteers trained by the police who serve as the watch dogs ensures that there is no type of violence in the community and that if even there is, stops it from escalating (4th September 2019).

The mandate of conflict management institutions in relation to facilitating conflict resolution drives, educating people on conflict avoidance, preventing crime, maintaining peace, and addressing the needs of the vulnerable are all acts that in one way or the other help in managing conflicts and ensuring peace in society. All these were the core issues raised in group discussions in relation to the

committees that were formed in the various conflicts hotspots to help in the process of conflict management in these hotspots. It therefore confirms the work of the conflict management institutions in relation to the management of conflicts.

These findings which indicate moves that are tailored towards ensuring an environment free of conflicts and which is generally peaceful, are in line with the findings of Bercovitch on the purpose of conflict management. Similarly, the findings are also in line with that of Marquis and Huston Mckibben (2017), who state that considerate management fosters an environment that minimizes precursory conditions for future conflicts and organizational stasis.

Gender Perspectives on Function (Approaches) to Conflict Management in Conflict Hotspots /Communities

The themes that emerged from respondents' perspectives on approaches to conflict management in conflict hotspots/communities endorsed the involvement of both men and women in the process of conflict management. The overwhelming majority of respondents expressed views that the involvement of both genders contributed to successful conflict management processes. Interestingly, males were the ones advocating and justifying the involvement of women in conflict management – this could possibly be attributed to their urge to bridge the gap of un-involvement of women or to echo the importance of involving women. Another prominent perspective was that each gender had a unique role to play in facilitating conflict resolution. Women by virtue of their suffering during conflicts are more

inclined to ensure conflicts are resolved peacefully. A view that was not as prominent was that gender was not necessarily relevant in conflict resolution.

Perceptions on Male and Female Involvement in Contributing to the Success of the Conflict Management Process

There was the perception that both genders have important qualities that come to bear when approaching conflict management, hence the need to have both males and females as part of the Conflict Management process always. These were evident in key informant interviews conducted in the communities of Peki, Hohoe and Nkwanta as stated below.

> Yes, it's important so I normally explain to them that men and women are all important in ensuring a peaceful community (10th December 2019).

Yes, we involve both men and women (10th December 2020).

> Yes, I consult both males and females in resolving conflicts because women always know about the real cause of conflict whereas men don't have the patience to listen to the main cause of the conflict before they jump in (21st October 2019).

In the Peki community as a conflict hotspot, group discussions suggested that conflict when it surfaces affects the community as a whole and does not factor in the fact whether one was a man or a woman. This they said was the basic philosophy of the people of Peki and Tsito to an extent that both men and women were all involved in issues that would help do away with conflict and ensure peace in the two communities. They also made it known that the communities did not restrain women in helping out in ensuring peace in the two communities. It was

also confirmed that even in times of journeying for peace programmes, their women were with them. They also went down memory lane remembering something that once happened in their town which warranted a 24-hour curfew. They reiterated there were some deaths during the occurrence and that it was women who went for the dead bodies, dug their graves, and buried them. They therefore concluded that since then, their financial issues in their Peace Committees were handled by women showing how well they revered them. These confirmed earlier statements from the key informant interviews above perceiving both genders as important in the process of conflict management.

In Tsito, it was evident that when you visited their churches, leaders who were male and female elders dealt with conflict cases and managed them. In the same way they went about the process of conflict management in the church, the communities also had male leaders, who were chiefs and the female leaders who were the Queen mothers who also dealt with conflict cases. If the case concerned the females, and the females know more about it, they sat and took a decision on it. On the other hand, if the males had the opportunity, they helped. Both men and women in Tsito therefore worked together to manage conflicts in their community. The findings above correlate with the findings of Birkhoff (1998), who stated that gender affects and indeed permeates, conflict dynamics at the societal and individual level. Kofi Annan, 2005 (as cited in Manchanda, 2012) also stated emphatically that "Sustainable peace will not be achieved without the full and equal participation of women and men." The involvement of both men and women in the process of conflict management which was perceived by both genders as important

for successful outcomes therefore falls in line with Kofi Annan's view. Almost all the commonly listed structural causes of conflict have a gender dimension that should be monitored (UN Women, 2012). The findings above therefore are highly congruent with this position by the United Nations.

Each Gender Had Unique Roles that Contributed Significantly to Facilitating the Conflict Resolution Process

As if to further justify the contribution of both genders, respondents shared their perspectives on the unique qualities of each gender and how these would contribute to resolving conflicts thus leading to peace in the community. These were outlined in statements from key informants from the Volta Regional Capital as indicated below.

> *Women should not be side-lined. In some communities you see that when it comes to conflict resolution, only men are called together. This should not be so. Women should be part of decision-making processes in solving conflicts, so that when the two sides (men and women) agree on something it will be lasting. However, when one party accepts peace and the other party does not accept it, it becomes a problem, I therefore think women and men should be involved in solving conflicts (5th November 2019).*

> *Gender roles play a significant role in the causes and resolution of the conflict. Mediation processes are also an opportunity to sensitize parties in the conflict about these roles. An understanding of these roles sometimes facilitates the conflict resolution processes in our communities (10th November 2019).*

> *When women are left to do their own thing and the men to go their way what will happen is that you will not have people with mindsets that take decisions. This will not help in community development, and it will not help to bring about peace and unity. So, women have to be involved, men should play their part, women should also play their part and through these things all will be fine (5th November 2019).*

> *In the process of involving both men and women, we look at the roles each play in starting conflicts and the roles each play in resolving it so we know the need of each other. We so much treasure the roles each of us play in resolving conflicts in our community (10th December 2019).*

From the responses of the key informants, we can conclude that, it is very important to involve both men and women in an all-societal activity.

Group discussions held in the communities indicated the involvement of both males and females in deliberations on what is to be done to ensure peace between members of the community. They also indicated the achievement of good results if males as well as females are factored into the equation of decision making. De Zwaan and Feenstra (2015) observed that men, boys, women, and girls have different capacities and strategies to deal with conflict, based on their gender roles and responsibilities. They believe that if these capacities are acknowledged correctly, they offer valuable starting points to engage both men and women in post-conflict reconstruction. The findings indicating the unique roles of both sexes therefore speak to the observation of De Zwaan and Feenstra.

Gender does not Necessarily Always Influence the Conflict Resolution Process

There was the perspective that, equal gender representation was not always necessary in the conflict resolution process. This was because in certain instances, those available would need to act and not necessarily wait for equal numbers to act in resolving some conflicts. The following key informants from Peki and Tsito indicated it in their statements.

> When dealing with conflict management, women are not always involved. We don't always think about gender equality. Men are at times called to come for us to deal with issues of conflict. Normally Catechists and Presbyters are called to help in times of conflict. Women are most often not seen. (5th November 2019).

Not in any way at all (10th December 2019).

The conclusion that, gender does not necessarily influence the conflict resolution process, is one finding that has not been in line with the numerous forms of conflict management literature of this study.

Women were Buoyed into Playing very Important Roles in Ensuring Peace in the Community not withstanding their Plight

Women generally do suffer during conflict situations, and this it is perceived, influences their quest to ensure that peace prevails in society, hence, their very important role in ensuring peaceful communities. This was espoused by a female community elder from Peki as follows.

> When there is conflict, we really suffer as women. That is why in issues of conflict management and peace, we are the first group of people to be at the forefront. As women therefore, we sacrifice our time, energy,

and money to ensure there is peace. We are always ready to do away with pain and ensure people are happy and living in peace (10th December 2019).

In relation to the findings above, a study by Gichuru (2014), in Somalia's capital as a case in point, saw women involved in peace building processes after the collapse of Siad Barre's regime in 1991. Similarly, another study by Chebet (2011) looked at how women were involved in the violence related to Kenya's post-election violence (2007/2008) and the subsequent roles they played in managing and resolving it.

Chapter Summary

The structure of conflict management institutions across the different study communities indicated the traditional leadership playing an essential role in conflict management. There were many more males than females on conflict management committees. The only exceptions to the rule of men being more were with organizations that had female heads such as GLOWA (an NGO) and in Alavanyo where a Queen Mother's influence was substantial. The concerns of conflict management institutions in conflict situations were maintaining or bringing peace, facilitating amicable management and settlement or resolution of conflicts in the community. The mandate of institutions in conflict management were mainly maintenance of peace, crime prevention, education on conflict avoidance and facilitating conflict resolution drives.

CHAPTER FIVE

GENDER DYNAMICS OF CONFLICT MANAGEMENT POLICIES AND

PROGRAMMES

Introduction

The previous chapter looked at gender perspectives in the structure and function of conflict management institutions. According to the European Institute for Gender Equality [EIGE], 2020, gender dynamics are informed by socio-cultural ideas about gender and the power relationships that define them. Depending on how they are reinforced, gender dynamics can reinforce or challenge existing norms. This chapter presents and discusses findings that emerged from the qualitative interviews on gender dynamics of conflict management policies and programmes. The gender dynamics focused on institutional gender perspectives on policies and practices of gender equality, mainstreaming, women's empowerment and the involvement of women in peace and security issues, consideration for gender balance in the creation of conflict management committees, formal or informal requirements of institutions mandating "equal gender representation" or otherwise of committee members in the process of conflict management and empowerment of women and their ability to participate in managing conflicts and building peace.

Institutional Gender Perspectives on Policies and Practices Relating to Women in Peace and Security Issues

Emerging themes here were: even though there's education on gender equality and gender mainstreaming, the involvement of women is generally low in all spheres; name calling by other women resulting in women shying away from

taking various positions in public; some institutions are still maintaining the status quo that women are below men and should therefore work under the authority of men; women being their own enemies and gender equality & mainstreaming should be applied only when women qualify for the positions they are applying to.

Key Policies were in Place to Enhance Gender Equality and Mainstreaming even Though their Implementation Fell Short of Expectation

Though most of the institutions have polices that are aimed at promoting gender equality and mainstreaming, the practice has setbacks. Some institutions such as the NCCE and the Army actively work at bridging the gap between men and women in their institutions, whereas others like the House of Chiefs have sectors where females are unable to assume functional roles traditionally.

> The Peace Council's take is that, in peace processes where both men and women participate, the outcomes are long-lasting. In other words, the institution believes once the population of Ghana is composed of both men and women and even with the fact that the population of women is higher than that of men, when it comes to conflict management women should be equally represented. But, as you already know, the women representation on the Council is woefully inadequate. The nomination of persons to be appointed on the Council is within the domain of the institutions that are mandated to do so and so, when they do nominate these individuals, the administrative arm of the institution has very little to do about it, but then we always urge the institutions to nominate women (3rd September 2019).

> Fortunately, NCCE for example from the top to the bottom of its structure tries very hard to ensure that the male-female balance is maintained. That is why, for example, when you look at the structure of

the commission, the head is a female. Out of the two deputies we have, one is a woman. Out of the commissioners, we have women constituting the majority of the commission members at the top. It is only when it trickles down to the district and regional levels that it is skewed towards the men. But the policy of the commission is that if there is a male and a female applicant, the female applicant is the one considered for managerial positions. That is why the commission is trying to encourage women to take advantage of the opportunities within the commission's offices at the regions, so they can also rise to the top. Quite recently during the last upgrading of our staff at least I can count about four women that have been promoted to managerial position at the district level. And even at the regional level, you see that our directors of finance, administration, communication, and corporate affairs are all women. You realize the commission is trying very hard to encourage women (5th September 2019).

In chieftaincy, there are women. Even though men dominate compared to women, we have a section of women in chieftaincy at the regional houses. We have the research unit; we have the judiciary and the accounts section. The research unit is dominated by women. It's more of registration of chiefs, filling forms - where women can be in that office for long. The account office as we know is dominated by both females and males. But the judicial aspect is the pivot, let me say the heart of the institution where a little error can bring so many problems in the traditional areas. As a result, ever since I've been in the institution, I haven't seen females dominating the judicial section. You only see court clerks who attend court, prepare for court. As to the judicial aspect of it, if you head the judicial section, you should know how to communicate with partners. If you are unable to communicate well, it creates so many problems in the traditional areas. There is this general assumption that women talk too much. If you talk too much,

you can't be in the judicial section of the house of chiefs, because there is this assumption that you will disclose secrets. If we have conferences with chiefs - you know before we have sittings, we have conferences. Due to this assumption that women talk too much it is difficult for women to play roles in the judicial section. But I don't know whether that has changed. And then the ministry, the head office is in charge of posting officers to undertake those offices (7th September 2019).

Based on the policy that is already there, and the UN resolution, the department at the national level actively gets involved in the activity of the committee and reports periodically. Now every ministry, department and agency are supposed to have a gender desk officers who ensure that gender equality issues are mainstreamed into the work of every ministry, every department and agency. And that is how come we are offering training to all these people. Training has been offered to the ministries' gender officers and the Municipal assembly's gender desk officers are being taken up. But I can say that almost every Municipal assembly has a gender desk officer – whether the person has the capacity or not, there is somebody who serves as the gender desk officer. And when it comes to empowerment, empowering women, we mostly organize a forum to create awareness because we believe that when a person is informed and knows what decision to take, that is enough empowerment for the person. The Department of Gender, at the headquarters and regional level, should have a unit which is specifically doing the empowerment issue because sometimes women empowerment issues get lost up in the mainstream agenda (6th September 2019).

Females should be encouraged to assume functional roles in all institutions. There should be an established mode of selection in all such institutions to map out a strategy that would ensure equal representation of both males and females to ensure

the participation of all the sexes in the process of conflict management. The essence of conflict management in conflict situations where there are developmental challenges is to help build on and sustain changes in gender roles that result from conflict (Bouta, Frerks & Bannon, 2005). In such a situation therefore, the conflict management should include economic assistance programmes that would build on women's and men's newly acquired skills, encourage women and men to continue to participate in new economic tasks and activities, and try to ensure more gender balance in accessing productive resources and labour markets (Bouta et al., 2005). Bouta et al. (2005) highlight the essence of gender equality which speaks so well to the findings above.

Programmes of some Institutions were Geared Towards Education on Gender Equality and Women's Rights

Based on the mandates establishing them, some institutions purposely educate citizens on gender issues. They educate them on gender equality, women's rights in society and other empowerment issues.

> *We do door to door sensitization that is, community to community sensitization for women to advocate for their rights. We men have cheated the women for long, so now we are asking the women to compete boot to boot with us. (4th September 2019).*

> *As the name of the organization (GLOWA) suggests, we try to generally ensure gender equality. For instance, under the POWER project, there is one activity that we are implementing, that is the unpaid care work, where we try to educate both men and women, traditional authorities, schoolboys and girls, by making sure that we re-distribute care roles in*

our homes so that the unpaid care work burden will not solely be on women, so that men can also assist their wives. We realized that because of the unpaid care work, most of the women are unable to engage in economic activities, as a result, the financial burden is always on the man which may lead to misunderstandings in the home which at times result to violence and conflict. So, we are trying to re-orient the minds of men so they get to know that care roles are not solely for women, and that it is a shared responsibility so that the women can also have the time to engage in economic activities to enable them also to support in the home in terms of finance. We also try to involve the Queen mothers in most of our activities, so that they are not left out since they are the mouthpiece of the communities, as well as the chiefs (4th September 2019).

"We are a department under the ministry of gender, so our views do not differ from the views of the ministry so in our work we also promote gender equality among boys and girls. We believe that when that level playing field is given to them, in the near future, most of the problems we are facing now will be solved because we believe girls have a lot of untapped resources that can open the prospects of the country (7th September 2019).

According to the European Union, equality between women and men is a fundamental value and vital to economic and social growth (EIGE, 2013). The findings above are congruent with the European Union's stance on gender equality and its socio-economic benefits. The conceptual framework of the study (Figure 4 on page 72) also projects the fact that gender sensitive policies and programmes would all help in ensuring gender equality and the empowerment of women in

conflict management. All these are further highlighted in the framework, indicating how gender equality results in sustainable peace and development.

Women Shy Away from Leadership Positions due to "Subtle Stigmatisation"

Women were demoralized through name callings by other women or not given the opportunity at all possibly due to traditional gender perspectives of women's role in society.

Traditional societal gender perspectives do influence women taking on leadership positions even when they stand a better chance of assuming them. Women at times demoralize their peers vying for leadership positions and on occasions go to the extent of actively working against their choice to such positions. Kiamba (2008) stated that historically, leadership had gone with the masculinity notion which doubles in the belief that men are better leaders than women, till today. Kiamba, in view of the earlier statement stated that even though female leaders had increased in numbers, they are normally picked as an afterthought. Societal conventions in relation to leadership according to Højgaard (2002), excludes women. Højgaard again states that the top leadership positions are also regarded as a male domain arguing that this has been the norm for ages and that cultural construction of leadership is the very source of this difference which is now being contested as more women get into leadership positions. This state of leadership pattern is confirmed by Ngcongo, 1993 (as cited in Grant, 2005).

Interestingly, there is enough evidence to suggest that women lead differently from men (Eagly & Johnson, 1990, as cited in De la Rey, 2005). For instance, women portray a more participatory approach, are more democratic, allow

for power and information sharing, are more sensitive, more nurturing than men, focus on relationships and enable others to make contributions through delegation (Tedrow & Rhoads, 1999; Growe & Montgomery, 2000; De la Rey, 2005). Tedrow and Rhoads (1999) also noted characteristics such as building coalitions and advancing individual and community development as constructs that women display in their relational styles. He added that women are also better at conflict management, have better listening skills and show more tolerance and empathy. The different gifts possessed by men and women, he said should not mean that one is dominant over the other. Possibly the cultural stance of a woman leader is what has culminated into women themselves using it as a weapon and more so as a societally accepted norm to stigmatize their fellow women who have made it to such leadership positions and thus resulting in these women being called names like "Iron Body", "Man-Woman" and a whole lot in the Ghanaian setting. Possibly these women are rather upholding the culture of the land, forgetting development is producing a fast-changing society where everybody matters and where every body's right is catered for.   Below are statements indicating acts of subtle stigmatization of women leaders by their fellow women in some institutions.

> *Most of the time this institution, NCCE, always gives us some sort of directions through quarterly guides. So, when these guides come, sometimes they schedule or occupy us with certain topics sometimes they even send some of these gender activists to us. I remember during my time in Ave-Dakpa area sometimes just as Municipal assembly election is coming, these women groups may come, they want more women to come into the system. So that is prior to the election. Then we go out, we meet the community, we announce to them sometimes we ask*

the community those people who are interested and we as an institution try to mould them very well so that they will be able to represent their people. Most of the time it is not an issue of men trying to prevent women from entering a lot of these women shy away from some of those things. Sometimes you encourage them, but they will not budge. You will see that this lady is very active, the way she asks questions, the way she articulates and all that she does is good. Sometimes they also complain that their fellow women try to demoralize them. They will start calling her names; a woman, a woman trying to do that, you should reserve your seat and all that. But as an institution, we are guided into this through some of these women activists, so we work for them; we try to encourage women to enter politics, but they won't. (5th September 2019).

On our take on this issue of equality, we want women to come up and be at par with men. I remember we were at a workshop where a chief mentioned that women were their own enemies, and they agreed. One assembly woman agreed and said when she stood as an assembly member; her colleague women were even seeking her downfall. Men were supporting her, but the women rather were seeking her downfall, but she stood strong. So, in our work, we try to let them know that we are all human beings. Gone are the days when it was said that the kitchen was the woman's place and also that women were baby making machines and they had to be at home to take care of children and all sorts of issues. But now, we've seen that we are all human beings. We all have human rights. So, we encourage them to come at par with men. And when we go round, we educate them to stop that their slogan: what men can do, women can do better. What men can do, women can do, is what they should rather say. We can put it in a more comfortable way that what men can do, women can also do not say better (4th September 2019).

Yes, you see chieftaincy is different from politics. The chieftaincy institution is purely traditional and cultural activities. Now, women are installed as Queen-mothers, and they are to serve as advisers to the paramount chiefs. The Queen-mother becomes the leader of all women in the traditional area, and so all issues affecting women in the traditional area becomes the responsibility of the Queen-mother. She must live by example; she must act as a role model to all women in the traditional area and society and the country as a whole. The women's duty as queen mother and the man's duty as the chief runs parallel. They don't have equal responsibilities. The Queen mothers are under the paramount chiefs and serve as their advisers. They work hand in hand with the chiefs. They are not marginalized, no. This is the difference between politics and chieftaincy (7th September 2019).

Gender Equality and Mainstreaming was Either on Merit or by Affirmative Action

Gender equality and mainstreaming was easily accomplished when the women qualify for the positions they are aspiring for in institutions, however, affirmative action is applied on some occasions to get more women up the institutional ladder or to encourage them to take on certain roles. Some people also are of the conviction that before women are given positions at places their qualification should be what would speak for them and not for the fact that they are pushed to such places. A key respondent from the Ghana Police stated this below.

For me, it is nice when the woman qualifies and is picked to be at any place that is institutional. In the Ghana Police Service, we don't give any priority to men. It is open to all. Of course, we at times give some level of priority to women especially when it comes to enlistment, the

height is reduced for women and at times, even the grades are reduced for women all because we want more women. At times it also creates problems. Even in some of the units headed by women, they come and tell you that we want people or personnel but that we should not bring them women. There was a time that one of our officers wanted to be IGP and I was with her whiles we were conversing, and I said madam, you know women are not supposed to hold arms specifically, AK47. She said, 'who told you women are not supposed to hold arms.? She was saying all these because at the time, she wanted to be IGP. It was institutional that women are put at some soft places, but it got to a point when a woman who wanted to ascend to a higher power position, she now said both males and females should be upgraded to that position because they are all equal. Now women are even saying what men can do women can do even better. We are trying to bring all of them on board because at times you realize a woman is having more urge than men. When I was in Accra, we were using women in the police a lot for combatting armed robbery and we were getting results. So, when you realize you can use women effectively for a particular task and they can do well, you put them there to do it (9th September 2019).

All the above statements are supporting Robinson and Cordaid (2016) who advocated that there was a growing body of evidence that peace building, and state building interventions may be more effective if they are gender-sensitive or linked to promoting gender equality. They also mentioned that gender-sensitivity, enhanced accountability, inclusion, and legitimacy, were key underlying principles of peace building and state building. This was also confirmed by group discussions later in the conflict hotspots. The conceptual framework also highlighted how gender sensitivity and other indicators would eventually result in sustainable development falling in line with Robinson's and Cordaid's view.

There was Consideration for Gender Balance in the Creation of Committees

The consideration for gender balance in the creation of committees that helped to manage conflicts was overwhelmingly affirmed by a majority of interviewees across board. They gave the various ways they were making this possible. However, only one interviewee was of the opinion that there should not be equal representation of women (This could possibly be because of cultural practices or customs that the interviewee was possibly used to). Another interviewee also mentioned that women love to dominate especially when they are involved. A last interviewee was also of the opinion that the numbers of male representatives could be more, likewise the females. Finally, an interviewee interestingly responded that the issue of gender equality should not be taken care of now, but in the future since their cultural setting was not very used to it. This could be used as a confirmation of the stance of the earlier respondent who stated there should not be an equal representation of women and men.

By their Nature and their Diverse Calming Roles during Conflicts, Women were to be Equally Included as Men on Conflict Management Committees

The findings here are still in line with findings of Robinson and Cordaid (2016) who again state that applying a gender perspective brings an important analytical dimension to peace building and state building processes. The findings correlate with the conceptual framework and the Thomas Kilmann theory. These statements emphasized the inclusion of women just as the men on the conflict

management committees. The statement by Gen. John Allen who argued that "No society has ever successfully transitioned from being a conflict-ridden society to a developing society unless women were a part of the mainstream" (Connell, 2016) also confirmed the findings of these key informants from Peki, Tsito and Nkwanta below.

> Yes. I know that they have to consider women. As I have already said men alone cannot do it and women alone cannot do it. They have to come together to form this committee. If women representation on this committee is not that adequate, then there is the need to add more women. (5th November 2019).

> Just as the Bible specifies that anybody who finds a woman finds a good thing, we as a peace group would always want to have both men and women to work with (10th December 2019).

> The women too are doing so well in modern times, so we are ready to involve them in whatever we do (12th December 2019).

A focus group discussion also endorsed gender balance. It established that, if the gender balance is ensured, it would be good because women naturally love sharing experiences and ideas that work. So, when women are on the committee in their numbers, they would help bring to bear short term ideas that will quickly help the group in taking decisions. It concluded that, if women cannot be represented equally, there can at least be 40% of female representation against 60% of male representation for a start.

Some Men were Perceived to not Exhibit the Qualities Required to be in such Committees and as such should be Replaced by Women.

Some bad habits like alcoholism tend to disqualify some category of men from being members of conflict management committees. This is indicated by a key female informant from Nkwanta below.

> *When I went home the last time, I indicated some of the men should be changed in our committee. Most of their meetings are basically in the evenings and they have noticed that before these meetings, most of the men were drunk and were therefore to be replaced by women. (12th December 2019).*

Women Perceived as Domineering were not to be on Committees

There was this perception especially among men about women with very strong character i.e., women being domineering and by virtue of that it was thought that they were not to be allowed onto conflict management committees. The reason for the suggestion was that such women had the penchant to foment trouble and would not help in achieving the objectives of such committees. Key informant statements that vividly point out the non-inclusion of women who were domineering is captured below.

> *I think the representation of women as it is now should be as it is. Gradually with time, the numbers would increase when the need arises. Women are the cause of most conflict situations. This is because what a man would see and ignore is what a woman would make an issue. And they are the types who can go every length to be heard even though they might even not have a case. The Alavanyo case of a fight over*

water for instance at a river side, was brought back to the community and that was the origin of the Alavanyo/ Nkonya Conflict. I think we don't need an equal representation of men and women on such committees now (21st October 2019).

You know our society has structured in such a way that females are limited to some areas because of their nature. We are thinking of how to change it. So, the male, female imbalance is the problem, but the elders have a way of tapping in very brilliant young ladies and men into our committees. They have been doing it everywhere, but one thing is that as a colleague has said, when you come, you feel you must dominate, that is the area we are worried about. So, we have been thinking about how to include them in the system but when they come this is the problem we have with them, but we are managing it (repeated), we are not going to send you out but we feel that you should stay in the committee and work and help to build the committee solidly so it will flourish and do the work, because the work outcome will favor all of us, no gender imbalance in there. So, we feel that women's opinion must prevail on some of the issues we need to discuss, but our custom limits women at some areas especially with our council of elders (14th October 2019).

The above views of key informants were confirmed by a group discussion in Alavanyo. It categorically stated that the involvement of women will pick up with time. An observation of meetings in the community also indicated the presence of more men compared to women.

The Numbers of Men or Women was not the Focus of their Representation on Committees

A respondent was also of the opinion that the numbers of men or women on the committees never mattered and so it made no difference whether one group was more or less.

> If a third of such a committee is reserved for women, it will be fine. Many times, we have fewer women on such committees. Even if we have 2/3 men and 1/3 women, it will be fine. Having more women than men is equally good (5th November 2019).

Formal and Informal Requirements of Institutions Mandating "Equal Gender Representation" or Otherwise of Committee Members in the Process of Conflict Management.

Requirements for equal gender representation on committees were formal or informal depending on statutes establishing the institutions. Some other institutions per their functions had formal or informal requirements for equal gender representations on committees.

Whereas some Institutions had Formal Constitutional Requirements, others had Informal Arrangements that Required Equal Gender Representation on Committees Managing Conflicts.

Institutions like the Peace Council had their Act spelling out how well to involve women to ensure a balanced gender representation at the national, regional and district levels. Others like the NCCE, House of Chiefs and the NGO (GLOWA)

did not have any formal document spelling out any modes of operation to ensure

gender equality.

> *So, I'll just go back to our Act. I think the Act is very conscious about the representation of women on the Council and that should mean the processes that the Council engages in should result in equal gender representation. So, the Act is very explicit. I think, there should be 50/50 representation. That is why the President is appointing the Governing Board. The President's representative in the Region, the Regional Minister, is appointing the two representations on the Council. They are mandated to have one woman, one man and if that is the leadership, then, even though the other institutions are not mandated, they are to take cue from what the government is doing – the President is doing, the Regional Minister is doing. And when we are making the requests to the institutions, we specifically indicate that male/female should be nominated. So, whatever comes up, I think at the end of the day, the spirit of the Act that set up the institution is to have 50/50 representation (3rd September 2019).*

> *It is informal in the sense that we were also brought into fore by WSR (Women Situation Room) which mandated us to make it as such. It is an embodiment of women leaders in West Africa coming together to stop political wars because of what happened in Sierra Leone and Liberia (4th September 2019).*

> *It's rather based on strategy. Sometimes you are asked to look at the whole issue and you have to strategize, that is using your own judgment, maybe this will be better for a woman to handle, or this will be better for a man to handle (5th September 2019).*

Some Institutions by their Nature have Formal or Informal Requirements of Unequal Gender Representation on their Committees

The GLOWA (an NGO) for instance had an informal structure not supported by any legal framework of theirs. They adopted a mechanism from an organization that allows more women representation on their committees. The House of Chiefs on the other hand has an act that supports the representation of men (Chiefs) in the house and not Queen mothers. This has been a bone of contention between the Chiefs and some Queen mothers who think this should not be the case. The issue has been contested by some Queen mothers for some years now, while the House has also taken no decision yet because they believe their institution is established based on the Ghanaian culture. Below are statements from GLOWA and the House of Chiefs to attest to the explanations.

> The African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM) that we're carrying out in that program, there is a clear-cut legislation which states that the female should outweigh the male on the oversight committee. They stated it clearly so that the committee, the women should outweigh the men so that one if you form a committee that the women are not more, they will not accept it. African Peer Review Mechanism does this to ensure the women participation in decision making is enhanced because if they say that they should be chosen on merit most of them will not get there. So, they make sure that if there are seven members, we are looking for four women and three men so that at least they'll be there (5th September 2019).

> They should allow five Queen mothers to join as some Queen mothers are suggesting, but it is not yet a practice. But for now, when it comes to resolving chieftaincy, land, and other conflict issues, it is solely the

Chiefs, even though the queen mothers serve as advisors to the chiefs behind the scenes (7ᵗʰ September 2019).

Empowerment of Women and their Ability to Participate in Managing Conflicts and Build Peace

The themes that evolved revealed that interviewees acknowledged that women needed to be or were empowered. Some pronouncements portrayed a level of empowerment of women whereas others did not.

Female Empowerment seemed to be a Concept yet to be Practicalized in some Settings

Some pronouncements of male opinion leaders though creating the impression of empowering women were vague and seem to lack elements of that. The statements below are some of the vague statements put up by some male interviewees.

Yes, women are empowered. Yes, they have the ability to do it well (5ᵗʰ November 2019).

It is so vital. Yes, the women are empowered because they learn from the men who have the experience (10ᵗʰ December 2019).

Women are doing well and must be encouraged to be part of the committees (21ˢᵗ October 2019).

Most women do not have the courage to speak on such platforms, so we sort out to get those who are vocal which accounts for their fewer numbers. We therefore ignore those who are passive (12ᵗʰ December 2019).

It will be useful if they receive some training in conflict resolution mechanisms to be empowered (10th November 2019).

The general attitude of females feeling comfortable at the background and not being empowered in any way was reiterated in group discussions.

Some Level of Women Empowerment seemed to be Occurring

Pronouncements of some male opinion leaders portray a sense of empowerment of women in their communities. The following statements, even though controversial ones were made by male opinion leaders from Peki and Nkwanta communities to indicate women were empowered in their communities.

Yes, women are empowered in such a way that in our meetings at church and community gatherings, they are allowed to bring their opinion and they are listened to (10th December 2019).

In the committees for example, nobody steps on the right of the other. Before somebody is chosen to be in the committee, it is because of the good conduct and abilities of the person. Our women are therefore empowered to do what they can do and do it better (12th December 2019).

The above key informant details were also confirmed in group discussions to reveal that women are empowered and are free to participate on their own volition. It was also noted that when there is an issue being dealt with and a woman is ready to express her views on the issue, she could raise her hand and when called would put across her issue.

If what she puts across is laudable, the decision would be taken and worked with. The Oxford Dictionary defines gender equality as a state in which access to rights and opportunities is unaffected by gender. The SDG Goal 5 also talks about achieving gender equality and empowering all women and girls. The Swedish International Development Agency (SIDA, 2015) states that gender equality is achieved when men and women, girls, and boys, have equal rights, life prospects and opportunities and the power to shape their own lives and contribute to society. Gender mainstreaming is a public policy concept of assessing the different implications for people of any planned policy action, including legislation and programmes in all areas and levels. Empowerment is a process, which can be long and complex. For women and men to be empowered, conditions have to be created to enable them to acquire the necessary resources, knowledge, political voice and organizational capacity (Prabhu, 2015). These concepts are however envisaged to act as strategies to enhance gender equality, which is an eventual goal that would make the conflict management processes in our institutions and communities a sustainable process because of the involvement of everybody in society.

Almost all the institutions interviewed were for the inclusivity of men and women in their conflict management processes citing various reasons for their assertion. Other institutions like the GLOWA and NCCE, which did not directly work with women pursued the education of people and members of the society on the essence of including both men and women in all conflict management processes, and women especially because they are always more than men when looking at population figures. Gender equality was one main concept embraced by

most of the institutions that had some designed activities to mainstream gender into their structure and activities. Other institutions such as the Gender Ministry empowered women by organizing fora to create awareness because, they believed that when somebody is informed and knows what decision to take that is enough empowerment for the person. It was noted that a few of the organizations that were not documented to have incorporated gender mainstreaming into their activities, were bent on ensuring a level of involvement of both men and women which eventually was an indirect act of mainstreaming gender into their activities. A few institutions like the Peace Council and the NCCE, had legislations/acts that spelt out how women would be involved in the process of conflict management. The Peace Council's Act for example categorically stated that the regional administration is required to nominate two persons with one being a woman.

Most of the community members in the conflict hotspots opined on ensuring gender equality through the involvement of both men and women, whereas others categorically stated the numbers of women on committees for managing conflicts should be beefed up. The majority of respondents buttressed their views with the fact that not only men can work in managing conflicts, but those women were also capable. A few respondents after acknowledging the fact that men and women should work together, indicated that women were not mostly involved in conflict management for various reasons. For instance, a key respondent at the House of Chiefs stated that women are only to advice the Chiefs. Another key respondent at the House of Chiefs also stated that their culture and customs allow women to work under men. In most of the other institutions such as the various conflict hotspots,

the Military, and the Police, it was confirmed that women were not involved, but then their involvement was a matter of time so it could pick up in the future. Members of conflict hotspots like Alavanyo and Nkonya however believed the non-participation of women in conflict management was a result of their cultural limitations but gave instances of reprisal attacks where women clad in red marched for peace at Nkonya-Tayi in 2010.

The above discussions in line with the conflict cycle, indicates that women play a critical role in the tension development stage of the conflict cycle. The fight by women at a well over water which was the genesis of the Alavanyo /Nkonya conflict is a typical example of how women can fuel tension. Also, women at the adjustment stage of the conflict cycle, locally serve as advisors to the chiefs even though the chiefs are mentioned as those who manage conflicts. Additionally, women play a major role in the confrontation and adjustment stage to help curtail the escalation of conflicts into violence. In Alavanyo and Nkonya communities for instance, it was again confirmed that women in the two communities organized a protest march through the communities after a series of reprisal attacks in the communities, which they sensed could jeopardize the peace that the communities were experiencing after the conflict. This clearly indicates the natural flair that women possess in maintaining peace in society and a reason why they should be part of all levels of conflict management. Indeed, they help manage the last stage of the conflict cycle (Confrontation and Adjustment Stage) which if not handled well, gets back to tension development.

Chapter Summary

The study examined the gender dynamics of conflict management policies and programmes. The gender dynamics focused on institutional gender perspectives on policies and practices of gender equality, mainstreaming, women's empowerment and the involvement of women in peace and security issues, consideration for gender balance in the creation of conflict management committees, formal or informal requirements of institutions mandating "equal gender representation" or otherwise of committee members in the process of conflict management and empowerment of women and their ability to participate in managing conflicts and building peace.

Institutional gender perspectives on policies and practices of gender equality, mainstreaming, women's empowerment, and the involvement of women in peace and security issues revealed that even though there's education on gender equality and gender mainstreaming, the involvement of women is generally low in all spheres. There was name calling by other women resulting in women shying away from taking various positions in public. This was confirmed by a female youth representative in Hohoe. Some institutions maintained the status quo that women were below the men and so should therefore work under the authority of men. Gender equality and mainstreaming was to be applied only when women qualify for the positions they were applying to. The consideration of gender balance in the creation of committees that helped to manage conflicts was overwhelmingly affirmed across board. However, only one interviewee was of the opinion that there should not be equal representation of women (this could possibly be because of

cultural practices or customs that the interviewee is used to). Another interviewee also mentioned that women love to dominate especially when they are involved. A last interviewee was also of the opinion that the numbers of male representatives could be more likewise the females. Finally, an interviewee interestingly responded that the issue of gender equality should not be taken care of now, but in the future. Requirements for equal gender representation on committees were either formal or informal depending on statutes establishing the institutions. Some other institutions, per their functions had formal or informal requirements for equal gender representations on committees. The need for women to be empowered was acknowledged with some pronouncements portraying a level of empowerment of women whereas other did not.
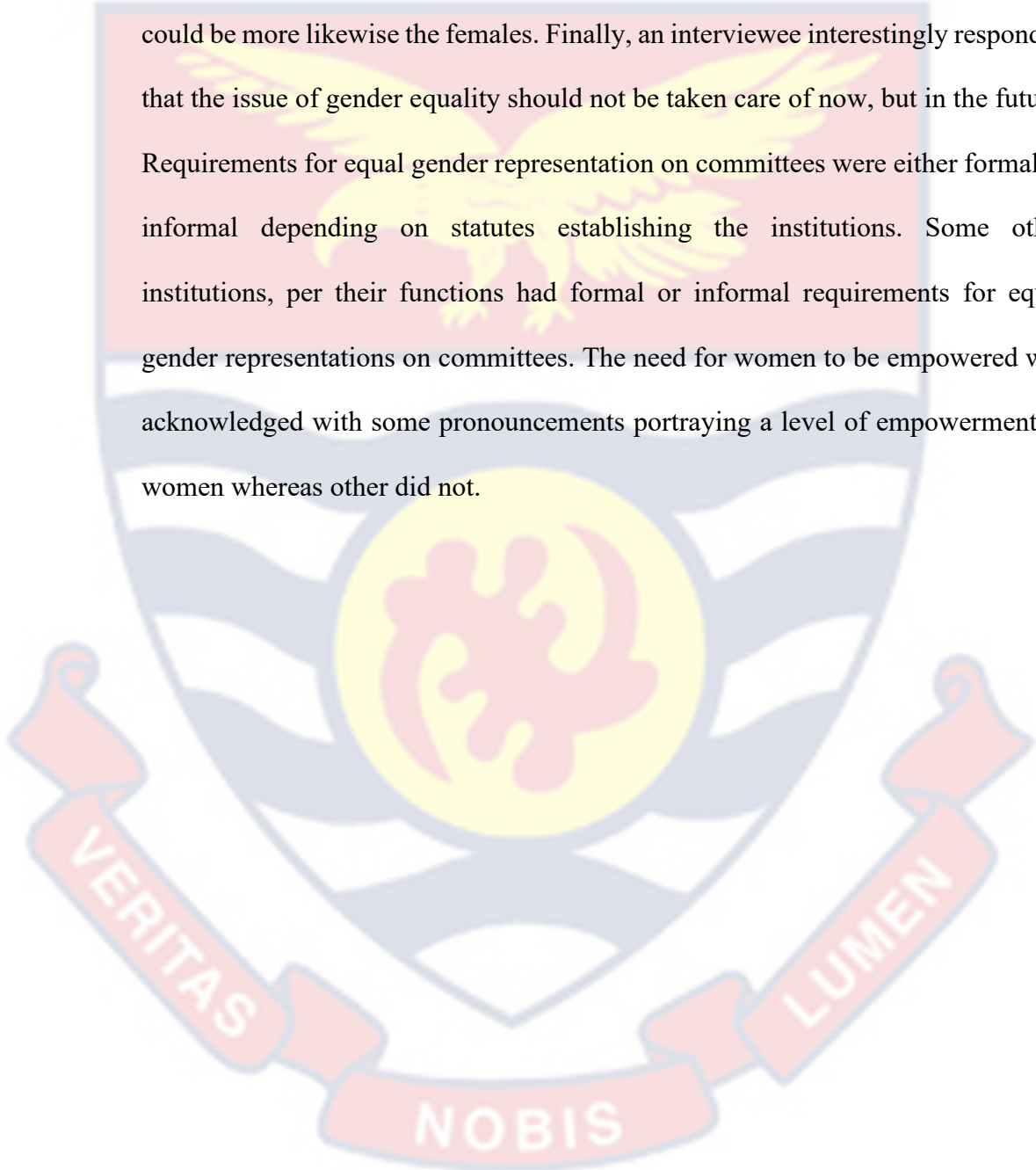
CHAPTER SIX

GENDER ROLES IN CONFLICT MANAGEMENT APPROACHES AND

TECHNIQUES

Introduction

This chapter examines gender roles in the conflict management approaches and techniques, which is the third specific objective of the study. It specifically looks at approaches used in conflict management by people in leading positions in the community, differences in gender roles, activities, needs and opportunities in communities, how gender roles feature in conflict management in the institutions and institutional mandate on the role of gender in conflict management.

Approaches used in Conflict Management by People in Leading Position in the Communities

It emerged that diverse approaches for conflict management especially from the religious perspective were used to educate the community on conflicts and their influence on peace. Christian religious organizations facilitated education and praying for peace at their meetings. Feuding parties were also brought together for deliberations with the support of the clergy to achieve amicable settlements. Adherence to judgments of the law courts was another approach and where misunderstandings came up, dialogues were used for settlements. Some statutory organizations involved in conflict management employed diplomacy and neutrality in facilitating negotiations between feuding parties. Training workshops on peace building and taking advantage of the influence of community elders facilitated conflict resolutions in some instances.

The Church Educated the Community on Conflicts and their Effects on Society

The church organized several fora that enabled them to meet members of various communities to educate them about peace and how to live together as people in peace. There were also provisions for a cross section of community members like women, the youth, and men to be engaged on peace issues and prayed with at different times. The role of the church/ religion in line with the findings of this study as exemplified by Best and Rakodi (2011) is stated below.

> Conflict and violence often have a religious dimension, whether they occur between adherents of different faith traditions or rivals within a faith tradition. Religion may play a role as a marker of identity, a mobilizing device, a basis for rationalizing violent behaviour or a source of values on which to base peace building and reconciliation. The relationships between religious and other key actors, especially in the state, are complex. Religious leaders may play important roles in instigating or preventing violence, and in either sustaining bad feeling or attempting to prevent a re-occurrence. The various organizational forms associated with religious traditions may provide a basis for mobilization, give humanitarian assistance during the emergency, assist longer term recovery, and build peaceful (or confrontational) relationships in the longer term (Best & Rakodi 2011, as cited in Silvestri & Mayall, 2015)

The various unique activities put up by religious entities in Peki and Tsito communities are indicated in the key informant statements below.

> As a minister of religion, I teach and preach peace. They (the community) need to know the outcome of conflict, how it will affect them, so we teach them. Something the Chief has been doing is that he has been inviting the pastors to come together to pray, so during these

sessions we teach people concerning the peace and unity that have to be maintained in this community (5th November 2019).

We move from house to house in groups to speak to people about peace in Tsame (10th December 2019).

To buttress the responses from the key informants, a discussion session in the Peki community disclosed that the youth of the community initially thought it was wise to resolve conflicts by being violent or disruptive to show their anger or dismay. However, the community realized that if things were left that way in favour of the youth, there would be no peace but bloodshed. In view of this the Christians in the community decided to be constantly praying over the issues after which they had to inform the Chiefs on steps they wanted to take. This gave them the impetus to educate the community as well as the youth on the essence of peaceful co-existence. Christ being so good, it worked and ensured peace among the youth and members of the community till date. This specifies how well the church can help through education, in managing conflicts and restoring peace in our communities.

Christian Religious Groupings used their Meetings as Catalyst for Educating and Praying for Peace

Various religious groups in the communities used their meeting periods to pray for peace as well as to preach peace to the members of their congregation. This was due to the realization that without peace nothing could progress in the community. The responses below speak to the issue. This finding is in line with that of Asamoah (2017) who stated in his work that delivering peaceful messages and modelling peace; engaging in spiritual warfare through painstaking prayers;

providing education to church members; and advising politicians in the Church were all tasks undertaken by the church (Asamoah, 2017). This is enforced in a statement of an opinion leader and key informant below.

> *Because we have seven towns, when there is conflict in any of the communities, the committee members go to help out. They go all out to the communities to find out what has caused the state of affair and therefore help to solve problems. At times too, they use prayer meetings to convey the issue of peace and how to stay away from conflicts. (12th December 2019).*

Discussions held with the community established that in life conflicts are bound to happen and people are bound to be on the edge and more so harbour pain. It was however established that in all these, pastors in the community have a vital role to play in that, when the church bell rings every community member knows they are to heed to the call of the church bell. It is in view of this type of relationship existing between the church and the members of the community that automatically results in members of the community honouring calls from the churches. Meetings of the peace committees of the communities involve the "Asafo members" who come as representatives of the Chiefs. At the end of such meetings, everything discussed is conveyed back to the Chiefs and the rest of the community.

Also, the peace committees go to the churches to talk to people about peace and why it is good they all live in peace. They also meet with sister communities and talk to them about the need for peaceful coexistence among the communities. The Peace Committees therefore can leave Peki to Tsito to talk to them about peace.

Peki's could come to Tsito for a similar purpose, all with the intention of helping each other to live in peace.

Community Leaders Supported by the Clergy Actively Intervened to Settle Conflicts

Cognizant of the influence they had on the population; the clergy lent their support to conflict resolution measures in the community. They on occasions supported community leaders to help to bring conflicting parties together to negotiate their differences and arrive at settlements. Clergy men from Peki and Tsito who were at the same time opinion leaders in their communities had this to say.

Ohhhhhhh, in fact we sermon the parties involved, and we get involved in the issue and make sure we have an outcome of a peaceful settlement (10th December 2019).

> *When conflicts emerge, the Chiefs and elders of the community call the two parties together to hear of the matter and sometimes also make enquiries on their own and through that seek to solve the matter. It could be one or two people quarrelling with support from the community. In such an instance where there are supporters of people with opposing views, the Chiefs and Elders also talk to the supporters by calling them to the Chief's palace so that the matter is solved once and for all because the supporters are part of the solution. The availability of those supporting Party A and Party B helps the supporters to also be present and agree on the issues before they are settled. At times when you call the various parties alone to settle the matter for them to go back and their supporters say no, it brings back the conflict again. In addition to that, if the people involved in the conflict are church goers, they invite the parties to the church for*

pastors to handle the issue. The parties invited bring along their members to be witnesses to what is going to happen there. So, it is not always that the cases will go to the Chief's palace if parties belong to a church. (5th November 2019).

A group discussion in Tsito established that the separate invitations of the conflicting parties for the chiefs, elders and pastors helped to bring the two parties together to resolve the conflict amicably.

In indigenous conflict management by elders in Ethiopia for instance; Mohammed (2018) stated in his work that indigenous conflict management has been applied both in formal courts and traditional justice processes and in relation to interpersonal and community-based conflicts. He further stated that, its application is however restricted under the constitution to matters of personal law and therefore its application in other matters relating to conflict does not have any legal recognition and enforcement as it is subordinate to the formal court.

Interestingly, Ghana has a similar structure where community elders like Chiefs act extra judicially as arbitrators to conflicting parties that voluntarily appear before them in the community as a result of the Chieftaincy Act maintaining some restrictions on their judicial powers. The legal recognition of these elders in Ghana to solve disputes is thus also subordinate to the formal courts even though these elders are recognized within their social settings (Adjei & Adebayo, 2014 as cited in Ibrahim, 2018). Kariuki (2015) observes that elders therefore provide one of the most important conflict resolution institutions in African societies. He further stressed that even in countries with no formal state recognition of the institution of elders; it has remained resilient and in existence.

Community Elders Ensure Adherence to Judicial Settlements on Dispute Cases

Elders of the community work hard to abide by adjudications made by the law courts on disputes. When such judgments are threatened, dialogue and negotiations are entered into with opposing parties to ensure that clarity emerges, and peace prevails. They do this because as raised earlier by Adjei & Adebayo, the formal courts are superior to the traditional courts. This was strongly demonstrated in key informant interviews as well as focus group discussions. A key informant reiterated the use of the traditional as well as the formal courts in a statement below.

> Sometimes it is fact-finding. They listen to both sides and come out with their findings and then based on that, the fact-finding team will take a decision. Another one is where it is like the court system which is being used and is usually the main way of operation (7th September 2019).

In a group discussion, a male community elder from Nkonya expressed his strong stance for the rule of law and the use of the courts in managing conflicts. His position was acclaimed by the members of the group. He stated that he was interested in their peace committee working with the judgments from the courts (the court verdict) rather than some other modalities that their committee had. He stated categorically that if the peace committee uses the court judgments on the Alavanyo/ Nkonya case in its deliberations, the Alavanyo community would eventually accept and recognize and respect the judgment which would automatically end the Alavanyo and Nkonya conflict. He was therefore of the view that the Alavanyo's should rather be advised to concede defeat rather than they the Nkonya's being asked to cede a portion of their land to the Alavanyo's, who were not ready to do as Nkonya's. He emphatically stated that they the Nkonya's were

the victors in the conflict while the Alavanyo's were the vanquished and wondered why the government, churches, NGOs, and all other stakeholders would not talk to the Alavanyo's to make them aware of that. He concluded the Nkonya's strongly felt the rule of law must work to ensure peace.

A youth leader had an alternative view. He felt that it was preferable if the court rulings were not accepted by their neighbours. He reiterated the fact that dialogue was a very important tool as the rule of law had already established the Nkonya's as victors. He said they had so far used dialogue for their neighbours to help them accept the court verdict. His statement was also collaborated by a cross-section of the group.

The Court system in essence has over the years played a paramount role in dealing with all types of conflicts ranging from land conflicts, chieftaincy conflicts and resource conflicts associated with most of these conflict hotspot communities. With reference to the conflict hotspots of the study for instance, it was observed by interviewees that the Alavanyo/ Nkonya, Peki/ Tsito, Hohoe/ Nkwanta conflicts were all conflict cases that had actually been handled by the courts even though a conclusive judgment had not been reached. For most of these conflicts, some communities, as can be elicited from the statements/ findings above, believed they were the victors whereas others were the losers. This is the simmering level of discontent that has engulfed most of these conflict hotspots after so many years of having their cases in the courts. It was therefore not surprising that with my interview sessions with these communities, one message "rhymed" through all the

communities which was basically the fact that they were ready to withdraw their cases from the courts for a fruitful settlement through mediation and negotiation. On 5th November 2019 for instance, when I was having a focus group discussion in Tsito, the Peki/ Tsito case was again judged but without any conclusive statements from the courts. Again, in Nkwanta, I was reliably informed by one community leader that the Chiefs were going to court the next day in relation to their chronic land dispute which had spanned decades. This brings to bear the challenges that these communities must contend with in relation to the court system. Ibrahim (2018) confirmed this when he stated that his study found that many land disputes were not resolved or settled because of over-reliance on formal mechanisms; rather, they evolved into other types of conflicts. Besides, Ibrahim's study revealed that disputants preferred using informal justice systems to establish "best practice" systems because of their flexibility for negotiations. However, disputants were somehow coerced to use the formal systems because their preferred systems were not recognized by law. This could possibly be linked to the type of age-old conflicts we still must contend with in our communities or conflict hotspots even though our traditional elders are adhering to court rulings.

Influential Community Members are Involved in Conflict Resolution Drives

Persons of repute who hold leadership positions, wield some sort of power and influence, and can mobilize relevant sections of the community are called to help in negotiations between conflicting parties as their views and voices do hold sway in such instances. Some statutory organizations involved in conflict

management employed diplomacy and neutrality in facilitating negotiations between feuding parties. Some key informants interviewed in Hohoe, and the Volta Regional Police Command highlighted the issues below.

> *We {opinion Leaders/community elders} normally meet as elders looking at conflict issues and how we can relate the issue to the community in the mosque {settle differences among conflicting parties in the mosque} (21st October 2019).*

> *What we are trying to do is the involvement of the opinion leaders in the communities. When you involve the opinion leaders in the community, it works. (9th September 2019).*

> *We recently were looking for accommodation (for our forces) and we did not have, but when the chiefs came in it was secured.*

To add to the above, discussions came up with details that, when there is conflict, every community has a group of warriors (known as Asafo groups) who normally beat war drums and dance in the community to express their displeasure on happenings. Any time the community realizes the Asafo groups are in a "reactive mood" or a mood of responding to conflict, their leaders and members are involved in discussions which enhances the institutionalization of peace in the community.

All the statements above defining the category of leaders used in the process of managing conflicts in our societies affirms the statement of Kariuki (2015) which states that in some communities in Africa, an elder has a position of authority such as Chieftainship or kingship to resolve disputes among the members of the

communities, clans, ethnic groups, or tribes. These are the categories of people that the above findings are endorsing.

Workshops to Educate the Populace on Peace Building Enlightened them on the Benefits of Peaceful Coexistence

Training workshops on peace building also help a great deal to keep the members of the community reminded on the devastating effects of conflicts. They also help them to constantly link up with each other as communities to negotiate for peace in instances of conflict. The findings of the study are in line with research findings of Mwanzia (2015) which observes that peace education is very important and has a positive impact to transform conflicts. The interviewees upon being further probed indicated the Peace Council and some NGOs as responsible for such training workshops. A statement that elucidated peace education as a powerful tool for conflict management was by the NCCE as stated below by a key informant.

> *We carry out two aspects, we normally do outreach program where we meet the community one on one and sometimes, we carry out durbar and that is one on one. We do durbar, we do workshops and focus group discussion depending on the situation at hand (5th September 2019).*

In addition to the above, there was a popular acclamation in a focus group discussion in Nkonya also capturing education as a powerful tool in the management of conflicts. It highlighted the fact that the community has so far used that as one of their popular tools in managing conflicts. It was also stated that people who attend these workshops are selected by the communities, and this has so far enhanced the receipt of messages of hope for our people thus helping to calm the

general atmosphere in our communities. It was concluded that the peace education and Peace-building workshops had really helped restore calm in the communities.

Organizations took a Neutral Stance and Diplomacy in Negotiating with Feuding Parties

Some statutory organizations involved in conflict management employed diplomacy and neutrality in facilitating negotiations between feuding parties. According to the UN (2011), preventive diplomacy is an integral part of broader conflict prevention efforts and refers specifically to diplomatic action taken, at the earliest possible stage. This diplomatic action is to help a great deal in preventing rising disputes between conflicting parties and therefore preventing existing disputes from degenerating into violence. The United Nations as an International Organization into peace and security issues therefore sees diplomacy as one very key ingredient in the entire conflict spectrum. Some statements from key interviewees of the Peace Council, Ho and the Tsito community buttressing preventive diplomacy are indicated below.

> When it comes to conflict, we use diplomacy. In conflict situations everybody is right, so you need to approach it carefully not look as if you are giving verdict on an issue.t (3rd September 2019).

> When stakeholders become aware of a conflict situation, we call the parties involved, find out the causes of the conflict and explore ways of resolving the conflict through meetings (5th November 2019).

Treating Women Respectfully made them to Feel Good to Ensure Peace.

A key respondent from Nkwanta maintained that a good treatment meted out to their women was a sure way of keeping and maintaining peace in their community because women were a hub of peace. This is in line with the Dual Concern theory which has a philosophy of concern for self and others. Women should also be treated well by the men in society, so they feel they are part of society thus making them feel good and ensuring peace always.

Additionally, another key respondent from Alavanyo was of the view that women are naturally peaceful in nature, so therefore when they are handled well in society and treated so well it helps to bring out the best part of them which naturally resonates with peace as indicated by an opinion leader from Nkwanta and Alavanyo below.

> *This community is dominated by farmers and gari processing is one of the major economic activities engaged in by people in the community. After processing the Gari, the husbands (male farmers) share the Gari proceeds it into three (one portion for the husband, another for the wife and the rest for the home). This gives women a share of the farm proceeds. Women bring peace, so when they are naturally treated very well, there is peace (12th December 2019).*

> *Women are naturally very peaceful. Our Queen mothers and our women in general are strong in pushing for peace in our community. When they rise to speak their minds on eschewing violence, they are unstoppable. Let's learn to copy the peaceful character god has imbibed in our women.*

Differences in Gender Roles in the Community

The historical narrative of women playing supportive and housekeeping roles emerged and that perceivably influenced their inclusion in conflict management. There were those who were of the view that both women and men could take on the same roles as there was no delineation in the kinds of things both genders could do. This pointed to the changing narrative that women would contribute as much as men in managing conflicts like they do in other aspects of life. Women were perceived to be placed in leadership positions when it had to do with managing other females.

Historical Perspectives of Women's Roles Facilitated their Non-Engagement in Conflict Management

The perception that women historically have been playing supporting and housekeeping roles does influence the men in their decisions to not engage them in conflict management issues. The narrative though is changing with the acknowledgment by some that women have much more to offer in conflict management than is perceived by the male gender. An opinion leader from Alavanyo had this to say.

> Household chores are usually the preserve of females while protecting and providing for the household is the responsibility of males (10th November 2019).

Focus group discussions in Tsito revealed that when it came to housework and other domestic tasks, women were more involved. This was noticed to sometimes affect other task forms they perform thus making them to always give

excuses. Women were therefore involved except for the fact that they rather are time constrained. It was also noted by the Zongo community representatives in Hohoe that, women were formally relegated to the background in their communities. A cursory observation of the composition of the focus group of eight members, which had an adult, and a youth (two females) was a confirmation of this. They however emphatically stated that, in contemporary times and in line with development, they deem it necessary to involve women in issues of development. They stated that the issue of women not being involved in conflict management was one very critical issue that was evinced in their way of life and their way of doing things and suggested they involve them in all they did as men. They expressed the fact that women were very important and so their voices must be heard. They also pointed out that for those of them that were Muslim men, they misconstrued women as people who never kept secrets. As a group they concluded that in modern times men were gossipers than women and therefore recommended that the trend of development in modern times should therefore allow a 50/50 representation of men and women in conflict management and development.

It was however established by the groups that women could help to manage conflicts and must therefore be involved. Also, a good observation throughout the interview sessions across most of the communities and institutions all showed a gross underrepresentation of women.

Gender Roles in the Community were not so Clearly Delineated

In line with the study of Bouta et al (2005), gender roles in conflict management and development were not clearly defined among members of the

conflict hotspots (communities) as both males and females could do any task of their choice – they all contributed to undertaking the same kinds of tasks in the community. The only roles that were defined in the community in line with gender were the roles of the Chiefs and Queen mothers. This philosophy of involving both males and females in formal peace processes during and after conflict without any discrimination is consistent with the conceptual framework of the study as well as with the findings and statements of key informants/ interviewees across the conflict hotspots of Tsito, Peki, Alavanyo, Hohoe, Nkonya and Nkwanta below.

> *In the past, gender roles were very evident, but now the understanding is that we are all equal (10th December 2019).*

> *What men can do, can equally be done by women. There are some things from which we exclude women, thinking only men can do them. Women are becoming engineers, good drivers, they can drive our State Transport, and they can do carpentry work and any other kind of work. So please let's involve them (5th November 2019).*

> *Apart from the Chiefs who are in charge and the Queen mothers and their Tsiame's who also play their rightful roles, there are no such gender role differences in the community (12th December 2019).*

> *Our women are very active in mobilizing for managing conflict and ensuring peace in our communities just like the men do (10th November 2019).*

> *As a youth leader in Hohoe, I can reliably say our women especially the Queen mothers are all involved in managing conflict (21st October 2019).*

> *In Nkonya, women including the queen mothers all assume roles in conflict management (4th October ,2019).*

Women were Rarely Placed in Leadership Positions Unless when they were Perceived to be Managing those of their own Gender

The ensuing narratives were from the background that these respondents had realized over time that women generally do not assume very paramount leadership positions in society unless it deals with a position related to handling a group of women or girls. The Queen mothers in the communities for example, take care of basically issues that centre around women and girls even though traditionally they are to serve as advisors to the Chiefs. Bigio and Vogelstein (2016), opine higher levels of gender equality are associated with a lower propensity for conflict, both between and within states. This to a greater extent would also enhance development in such a state. Key respondents from Alavanyo, Peki and Hohoe in their statements, identify a societal leadership role structure as a monopoly of societal roles for men. It is interesting to note how women in leadership positions are adored but are not easily given such opportunities possibly because they are women. The statements of the key respondents are thus indicated below.

> *We work so well as women in the various peace committees to ensure our community is peaceful. However, the topmost position in these committees is just reserved for the men and not the women (10th November 2019).*

What I have seen is that we have women among us who play their roles as members but what I have noticed is that they are hardly given top positions like that of the chairperson (10th December 2019).

When it comes to the issue of education of the females, then we use the women as role models and even in employment, we use the women because they know what is good for the women as far as their employment and education issues are concerned yet we are reluctant to put them in leadership positions (21st October 2019).

Gender Roles in Conflict Management Institutions

Specifically, within institutions, the following themes emerged from the interviews: that women were playing pivotal roles. The involvement of men and women was to curb conflicts and ensure peace. Key interviews also brought out the following themes: gender roles limited women from playing their roles in the public sphere, the perception that women cannot do certain tasks and that those tasks are solely for men and helping women to speak out about their problems.

There is a Heightened Acknowledgement that Women play such Pivotal Roles in Diverse Areas of Crime Control and Conflict Management

The background to this is that some respondents had noticed some very key roles that women were playing in conflict management and even crime control that were tasks men found difficult to do. This project describes the resilience of women to work at any responsibility of their choice or that is assigned to them. The NCCE and the Peace Council statements reveal this.

Women play a great role in our homes and in society. They are our mothers and of cause the ones who take good care of us. When our

mothers talk to our men, it's always very effective. As mothers, women normally speak to the conscience of the people (5th September 2019).

During our rounds, especially our experience with Nkonya-Alavanyo, the contribution of our women, especially the few women among us was wonderful. The women were engaged in building relationships with other women and having a chat with them on what to do and what not to do. They educated them on how they could talk to their husbands about peace especially when they sensed trouble looming. On our peace missions, our interaction with them was very encouraging. Their presence on the Councils was very phenomenal. Most importantly, people listened to women. Their presence over there and their expressions to the people gave them some feeling that there is hope and that all is not lost. (3rd September 2019).

The women are our Queens. Sometimes when you go into the communities you see some of these Queens trying to articulate even more than the men. I have met some women during my work at NCCE and I could trust that they are far better, they are braver, and they articulate and sometimes suggest ways we could deal with some of these issues. So, women's role in some of these conflicts is quite pronounced. When you go to the communities you see that the men are at the forefront. I talked about these women just because sometimes you see some exceptional women doing very well but most of the time it is the men taking the lead and you see the women also following (5th September 2019).

Men and Women had their Gender Specific Strengths that they Brought to Bear in Managing Conflicts

The calming influence of women for example in times of heightened pressure and anger cannot be underestimated, justifying the need to have both genders at the table. This finding is directly in line with Cultural feminists who always call for an infusion of women's culture into the society they believe is male dominated. They believe a change in the male dominated world would presumably result in less violence and fewer wars. This position of the Cultural Feminist theory, for instance places emphasis on the essence of including women into the process of conflict management basically because they are naturally positioned to do so by their very natural instincts, which is peaceful. The various statements from key respondents from the Peace Council, GLOWA and the House of Chiefs which hit the nail on the head are as follows.

> Yeah, on the ground you meet both men and women having their own way of doing things and most at times different experiences of the conflict that they face. And these experiences must be part of the management mechanisms. And so, when you go to the ground, it is expected that we deploy resources, the human resources appropriately so that women issues are properly handled by the institution in a way that take on board the experience of how the women experience the conflict.
>
> We try as much as possible to give opportunity to the few women on the Council to take the lead in engaging specific groups. In this case, women's groups and children's groups so that they can better appreciate their experience of the conflict and then assist us as much as possible (3rd September 2019)

It is our belief that when you suppress someone, he doesn't listen when you are talking to him when his anger is high, but when men talk and women talk and there is equal understanding, when it is wealth, we share it, we don't shift blame to the men (discriminatory gender roles result in anger/ rage and an environment devoid of peace). So, gender roles are important, and everybody should have a role because it suppresses anger, manages conflicts, and brings peace and development (4th September 2019).

The example I want to give you is that, in this house and in the traditional councils', cases or conflicts arise against only the males. In this house, you don't see or have any case against a paramount Queen-mother. It's not common. So, the Queen-mothers make sure that issues affecting women are settled and curtailed in their various traditional areas, they do not erupt as that of the male counterparts. That is the difference (7th September 2019).

Some Institutions Worked Hard to Empower, Create Awareness, and Ensure that the Role of Women was Equally Appreciated in the Community

Some institutions in conflict management are doing their very best to sensitize the mass of the people in our communities through their educational programs on gender roles especially the role of women being as relevant as that of the men. The United Nations, as an institution working for global peace, defined women's participation as the "role of women in the prevention and resolution of conflicts and in peacebuilding, and their equal participation and full involvement in all efforts for the maintenance and promotion of peace and security, and the need to increase their role in decision-making with regard to conflict prevention and resolution." Additionally, a former Secretary General of the United Nations, Kofi

Annan also demonstrated the invaluable role of women when he stated that, "In war torn societies, women often keep societies going. We must ensure that women are enabled to play a full part in peace negotiations, in peace processes, in peace missions" (Schirch, 2004, p.5). Indeed, all these statements profoundly stress the invaluable role of women in conflict management.

Moving on, a peace activist from the Philippines once stated that, both men and women have the responsibility to build peace. However, women seem more creative and effective in waging peace. Perhaps, it is the women's emotional strength to transcend pain and suffering. The statement by Schirch (2004), indicates that women, perhaps by their very make up, have a role to play in conflict management and should be given all the opportunity they deserve to carry out this task. The statements below from the Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection NCCE and GLOWA attest/speak to the fact that women/girls play useful roles in society and in conflict management.

> There is a toolkit in the policy document of the Department of Children under the Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection, titled 'the gender roles. The toolkit is used to facilitate community forums where illustrations are made on roles to especially show how girls are burdened with most domestic chores and the need to move from that (7th September 2019).

> We ensure that the women are involved in every aspect of decision making in the various communities. That is why when you go to most of the communities you see that the development organizations or the development association of the communities have women featuring on those committees. Formerly it was not so, but because we are talking about gender that is why all the sexes have a role to play to ensure that

there is equal opportunity in decision making. We hammer on gender because it is serious, mostly you see it is only one sided. It is only the men that are playing pivotal role in development but because of the day-to-day education that we carry out in the communities they got to know that every human being has a role to play so far as development is concerned. We encourage the women themselves to also participate in decision making; they should not sit on a fence (5th September 2019).

Currently, as mentioned earlier under the POWER project, women are being empowered for roles that were reserved for men in the past. We are trying to break that barrier, so women are trying to aspire to contest for Municipal assembly level elections. When it comes to decision making in the community, women are now given the chance. In all the project activities we engaged in at the community level, the Chiefs were consulted to involve women at the initial stages of the projects to acquaint them with the mission and objectives of the projects. The chiefs have accepted such projects and have also accepted the concept of involving women. (4th September 2019).

Bridging the Divide on Role Stereotypes that Adversely Impact Women Through Nudging the Boy Child into Traditionally Perceived Female Gender Areas

This, it is perceived would also make boys and girls as well as women and men perform tasks freely without any preoccupation in mind that the task is for one category of gender. It would totally nip gender stereotyping in the bud and not result in the burdening of any gender with a particular task. This would go a long way to breed a category of men and women who all believe in conflict management and development as a field not solely for one gender, but an option for all genders. The

statement below by a key informant from the Department of Gender under the Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection, reveals this.

It is one of the issues that have been identified as making it impossible for women to play their full roles in the public sector or in the public space. Because the gender roles are laid down through the way we have been brought up and irrespective of what attainment you have made as an individual woman, you are still expected to play those gender roles. We acknowledge that these gender roles do interfere and that is why as part of the gender mainstreaming, we also offer the training for both men and women or both girls and boys to take up challenging roles. In the homes, that is where mostly you see the differences between the gender roles coming. So, we are advocating that, boys should also be encouraged to take up those roles that are perceived to be for girls. At the larger level, I want to talk about training of men and boys in cookery. You know, if you can cast your mind back, formerly in our schools, we had home science that taught both boys and girls how to cook, thus making cooking not just a preserve for girls. This has made cooking that was left only for girls now opened up for both boys and girls. That is why now you see a lot of men all over the street selling cooked food. Sometimes they carry it. So, it shows that the message is getting there. I come across some young men who will also smoke or process fish, carry it on the head and sell it. I had a cousin who was selling okro. And some men are also helping in household chores, in helping their wives to care for the children. I think now we also have the paternity leave for two weeks and some institutions are practicing it especially the telecoms. I had a good report of MTN, that gave a two-week paternity Leave. My nephew works in a bank; he took paternity leave off for one week. And then another suggestion for the gender roles, maybe the care for babies, if we can have institutional crèches, it can help. This has been advocated for a long, long time ago. We also

advocate for implements that reduces the stress in food preparation. Now we have fufu pounding machine. All these are coming up but then the issue is affordability. But you can even send yours to be done and it takes some time off you. And then we also advocate for long life learning. I think that also can help in bridging the gap between men and women as far as literacy is concerned. And we have institutions established to also help. They have their long distances department, and they are working well. Many nursing mothers are going to such institutions (6th September 2019).

The Security Forces and the Traditional System Had Difficulties in Deploying Women Due to the Perception that Women are Incapable of Performing Certain Tasks

The perception that women are not used to difficult tasks perhaps is what is resulting in women not being deployed to peace missions for the military as well as not being involved in the judicial section of the house of Chiefs. Key respondents from the 66 Artillery Regiment of the Ghana Armed Forces and the Volta Regional House of Chiefs confirmed this.

We have not done that over a long period. It's always been the male, the men, yes, in managing conflict. Yes, unlike places like those internal security places I mentioned. It's unfortunate that we don't have females deployed with the men. So, it's always been the men at the forefront, yes. Unless specialized operations, yes, where the need be, but hardly does it go on (10th September 2019).

It's not their role per say, but most females are found in the research side. They dominate in that office. That side is not challenging as compared to the judicial section where men are found. The women are also found in the secretarial department too (7th September 2019).

Institutional Mandate on the Role of Gender in Conflict Management

An interesting observation made was that though questions posed to interviewees were about gender, most of them in their responses focused on "women". To gain an understanding of the level at which institutions in charge of conflict management have mainstreamed issues of gender into their work, the following themes emerged. Institutions responsible for conflict management such as the National Peace Council of Ghana and its Regional Councils have mandatory quotas for women as part of their conflict management teams. The security sector even though has an international mandate under the UNSCR 1325, does not implement it. Most of the other organizations such as GLOWA (an NGO), NCCE and the Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection, do not deal specifically with conflict resolution, but focus on empowering both men and women or generating a higher level of recognition for women's contribution to societal development.

Institutions Directly Charged with Conflict Resolution Had Mandatory Quota Systems that Ensured Women Participate in Conflict Management

The National Peace Council and its Regional Councils, have it enshrined in their Act, measures to ensure the participation of women in conflict management. The Peace Council recounts how their institution ensures women participation in the process of conflict management.

> *You will not see in the Act that set up the institution or policies explicitly talking about gender roles but you can infer from even the Act, the appointment of the Council members; there is a section that gives two*

quotas to the government – the President or the Regional Coordinating Council (because we are talking about the Regional Peace Council), the Regional Coordinating Council which specifically says; the two nominees one of them shall be a woman. (3ʳᵈ September 2019).

Birkhoff (1998) stated that an understanding of the role of gender in conflict is best accomplished through an analysis of individual, interactional and the societal levels. "We can no longer afford to minimize or ignore the contributions of women and girls in all stages of conflict resolution, peace-making, peacebuilding, peacekeeping, and reconstruction processes. Sustainable peace will not be achieved without the full and equal participation of women and men". The statements by Birkhoff and Kofi Annan speak to the statements and findings above.

The Security Institutions were not Mandated to Consider Gender Issues in Protecting the Community

Interestingly, the statements from the security services, specifically the 66 Artillery Regiment and the Ghana Police did not bring up gender issues on societal protection.

We play the role of defence of the state or maintaining the territorial integrity, peace, and security of the state, not gender issues (10ᵗʰ September 2019).

Our mandate does not deal in gender issues (9ᵗʰ September 2019).

Some Institutions' Mandate was on Gender Equality and Seeking Equal Recognition for the Contribution of Women to Societal Development – not Necessarily in Conflict Management

While some institutions hardly consider issues of gender equality and recognize the contribution of women to development, others like the Department of Gender, GLOWA and the Department of Children make it a vital part of their mandate.

> *The gender policy talks about gender roles. Ideally it is the gender policy that comes up clearly and identifies gender roles and the socialization process that we have all passed through as inimical to the progress of women. And, before we go on, we are advocating for women's care work to be recognized and computed so that they can add value to it. So that even if I don't get paid, I know that if I do the care work for this period, it must have cost this much money and it is contributing to development of the nation (6th September 2019).*

> *For the COMBAT group that we formed for instance, we have both men and women that were trained. So, it's not just one set of the sexes that was trained, but both men and women were empowered (4th September 2019).*

> *The mandate of the department is to do the advocacy to demystify the minds of the people that what you are doing undermines the integrity of the girl child and does not promote development (7th September 2019).*

Some Organizations had a focus of Empowering Women to Assume their

Rightful Roles in Society – not Necessarily for Conflict Management alone.

Investing in gender equality and women's empowerment according to the World Bank can unlock human potential on a transformational scale. Women

account for one-half of the potential human capital in any economy. The World Bank therefore believes that countries with greater gender equality are more prosperous and competitive (World Bank, 2015). When women participate in civil society and politics, governments are more open, democratic, and responsive to citizens. When women are at the negotiating table, peace agreements are more inclusive and durable. Simply by empowering women farmers with the same access to land, new technologies and capital as men, we can increase crop yields by as much as 30 percent helping to feed a growing population (UN, 2015). The findings and the statements below by GLOWA and the NCCE are all congruent with the World Bank and United Nations statements.

> *Women should be empowered just like men. We have flagship programs that we normally carry out. So, we use the constitution to back it, Article 41 of the constitution makes it a responsibility for every citizen to: Foster national unity and live-in harmony with others; To respect the right, freedoms, and legitimate interest of others; Generally, refrain from indulging in acts detrimental to the welfare of other persons. That's Article 41 (4th September 2019).*

> *I'm working on a program now which we shall be having next week, and they mentioned that participants should include women groups, youth groups, assembly members and then persons with disabilities, faith-based organizations, traditional authorities, political parties. And when you come you realize there are a lot of women there. First, we will take the women groups then when you come to the youth we normally deal with tailors and dressmakers, and then we have these beauticians and hairdressers. So, you see that there are more females. So, in fact we are asked to bring in more women (5th September 2019).*

The Traditional Institutions were Perceived not to Promote Gender Equality

Most traditional structures do not provide for gender equality in terms of the roles and rewards of women relative to that of men – hence there are palpable differences in the treatment of women as compared to men. This is not necessarily reflected in their conflict management roles. The National House of Chiefs as a cultural institution, for example, is not in any way ready to provide for gender equality in the House of Chiefs basically because they believe whatever they do borders on our traditional norms and values which puts the man above the woman in all circumstances. This was confirmed by a statement from a key informant as shown below.

> The institution is such that, customs differ from traditional area to traditional area. And so, our institution has no law formulated upon Queen-mothers all over the country though. We have laws governing the institution, the activities but there are no laws regulating the movement of the Queen-mothers. The only problem between their male counterparts and them is because they want equality; they want to join their male counterparts at the regional and national houses of Chiefs. But by custom and tradition some traditional areas do not allow it. That is the only difference otherwise the law would allow women to be members of Regional and National Houses of Chiefs but because tradition does not allow it that is the problem between them and men. But not withstanding that, government pays the women just as it pays the men. The men take 1000 Cedis every month and Queen-mothers take 800 Cedis every month, the difference is only 200 Cedis. And so, I cannot sit down here and say that women are so marginalized in the institution, no, I don't see it that way. In practice and in theory they are not (7th September 2019).

Chapter Summary

Approaches used in conflict management by people in leading positions in the communities depict varieties. The religious perspective is to educate the community on conflicts and their influence on peace. Differences in gender roles, activities, needs and opportunities in the community saw a historical narrative of women playing supportive and housekeeping roles which all emerged and perceivably influenced their inclusion in conflict management. Women were perceived to be placed in leadership positions when it has to do with managing other females.

Gender roles in conflict management institutions indicated that women were playing pivotal roles even though they were not there in their numbers. The involvement of men and women was to curb conflicts and ensure peace. It was observed that domestic gender roles of women, limited them from playing their official roles in the public sphere. Institutions responsible for conflict resolution had mandatory quotas for women as part of their conflict management teams. Even though the security sector had some mandatory international quotas related to gender, they did not implement them. Most of the other institutions did not deal specifically with conflict management but focused on empowering both men and women to generate a higher level of recognition for women's contribution to societal development.

CHAPTER SEVEN

GENDER PERSPECTIVES IN SOCIAL PROTECTION MEASURES

Introduction

This chapter addresses the fourth study objective by focusing on gender perspectives on social protection measures. It specifically touches on social protection measures such as food aid to improve nutrition, seeds to improve the cultivation of food, medical care, cash donations, building materials, supplies available for communities in instances of conflict management and their gender dimensions. These social protection measures came from GLOWA, government officials, religious groups and benevolent individuals, governmental institutions such as NADMO and the National Peace Council and International donors.

Social Protection Measures Available for Communities in Instances of Conflict Management

Social Protection has evolved essentially as a policy framework geared towards addressing the canker of poverty and the various forms of vulnerability associated with developing countries. Also, very recent developments in social protection have basically focused on risk and vulnerability which all contribute to poverty either directly or indirectly and exposing poor households to risk (Barrientos & Hulme, 2016).

Additionally, Idris (2016) also raises social support concerns of communities being supported in times of conflict through funding to support victims of conflict.

Perspectives on social protection measures available to communities revealed several forms of support in the communities. Social Protection from Governmental /Non-Governmental Institutions was followed closely by those from religious groups and leaders. Key respondents were also of the opinion that social protection came from the pockets of benevolent government workers, appropriate social protection agencies (Such as the Department of Social Welfare under the Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Welfare), the Peace Council, community, and international donors.

Social Protection Support by Institutions to the Community

Though not always directly related to conflicts, some governmental and non-governmental organizations have been very supportive in terms of social protection during some disasters that occurred in the communities. The statements of these key informant interviews from Hohoe, GLOWA and NCCE attest to this.

> GLOWA gives out seeds to members of the communities who are farmers. We also help community members to advocate for their rights through meetings that help community members to respectfully interact with the traditional leaders. We created a team called COMBAT, which is like a local police force with support from the police, the Chiefs, and traditional leaders to complement the efforts of the police against crime in those communities. This was done because we noticed there was only one police station in the whole of Adaklu. This organized group, which is the COMBAT, is doing so much and the people are very happy and even want us to extend it to other communities (4th September 2019).

In fact, with social protection, we embarked on such an activity recently. A rainstorm recently hit Sokode and ripped off a lot of buildings. We therefore went to the community with NADMO (National Disaster Management Organization) to educate most of the community members to assist each other in rebuilding their houses. We told them to be united, because if everybody wants to do it individually, it will not get them anywhere. Fortunately for us, we were supported with some roofing sheets by the Member of Parliament. We therefore encouraged them to ensure that they get their houses back. So that was the most recent thing that we did for Sokode Ando (5th September 2019).

In a statement to cover the Hohoe community during a group discussion, a youth leader who was also a worker at NADMO, mentioned that his organization helped the community in very difficult times when the Muslim youth clashed with the people of the Hohoe (Gbi) traditional area. He indicated that since property and lives were lost in the conflict, affected people were supplied with foodstuffs and mattresses by NADMO. He again mentioned the community receiving some form of help from the Central Government who supported businessmen and women who had their shops destroyed with some start-up capital to enable them get back to the businesses which were their source of livelihood. Moslem communities, which also called for help during the conflict, were supplied with food items. This, at least, pointed to a level of social protection available for the community in difficult times.

Religious Organizations and Social Protection

Some religious groupings and their leaders, both locally and from the diaspora, have been very instrumental in enhancing social protection mechanisms

for our communities. A key informant from Nkwanta and a pastor of the local council of churches indicated this in the statement below.

> *There are times that the church contributes food items in times of conflict as a social protection measure to the community (12th December 2019).*

Discussions in Tsito indicated that pastors of the local council of churches came together to help in line with social protection issues in times of conflict. In the Peki/ Tsito conflict for instance, the discussions revealed that all churches came together to help. The church was the main factor in calming the situation after the conflict. They formed peace committees that visited communities with presents like food and soap. They also provided money for fuelling vehicles for meetings that helped to preach peace in the communities. The vehicles of pastors were also used for transporting peace committee members to meetings.

Additionally, discussions in Hohoe among the Muslim community members indicated there were assistance forms ranging from food items to clothing and beddings from their Muslim brothers across the regions of the country. It was indicated that the Muslim communities from Kumasi, Accra and the other regions sent foodstuffs and, clothing to help out after conflict situation. Finally, they also stated that they had some relief items from government.

Unfulfilled Social Protection Promises

Government organizations/institutions have been disappointing to the community as they never followed up on promises they made in response to social protection requests from the communities.

In Peki it was disclosed in a focus group discussion that leaders from Peki and Tsito went to the Castle (the seat of government) in the 1990s to seek for help after the Peki/Tsito conflict, but it did not yield any fruits. The Peki/Tsito conflict is a land dispute involving a large stretch of fertile land between the people of Tsito and Dededo, on the Ho-Accra highway, which has been lying fallow for decades. A portion of the disputed land known as Kporvi, was a thriving market centre before the conflict. It was also indicated in Alavanyo that the pleas of women for help after conflict situations yielded a better response than that of men. Additionally, it was also stated that the Alavanyo community for instance had never benefited from any external support. They added that even though organizations would most of the time come to write their names, they as a community hear nothing from them.

During a discussion session in Nkonya, it was established that since the disputed land was their original farmland where most of their foodstuff were cultivated, people were unable to have a means of livelihood as they could no longer go to their farms. Organizing financial support from the community to support victims of such conflicts was therefore a difficult thing to do. There was therefore virtually no support in terms of health, injuries, and the like under such situations. Interestingly, the organizations that also come to support always come and promise and then if anything at all, give something little. The police, the military and the Peace Council were some institutions that were noted to have provided a level of social protection services to the community. The police and military were noted to have always been deployed to the communities when there is an emergency or some reprisal attacks. The National Peace Council (specifically, the Volta Regional Peace

Council) had always organized peace sessions, established insider peace building committees in the various communities to ensure peace. The council also organized trauma healing sessions for victims of the conflict who were still living with deformities of the conflict and who lost their close families and friends who were bread winners.

The Security Forces Focused More on Vulnerable Populations During Most Conflicts

Though the Security Forces take their overall social protection responsibilities to the community seriously and in a non-discriminatory fashion, there are instances that they focus more on vulnerable women and children as these bear the brunt of most conflict situations. This was what key informants from the Military, the police, and the National Peace Council had to say.

> There are instances when conflict is ongoing, and we conduct an evacuation measure where we evacuate women and children to a particular safe place – be it a school or a football field. Because attacks sometimes come directly at people in their houses, we have to get them out of their community. And in most cases, majority of them end up running towards our camp to seek refuge in our detachment locations. So, those are some of the social protection measures that we put in place to help out (10th September 2019).

> When we are moving to any conflict prone area, like the day that we were going to Alavanyo, we first informed the two divisional commanders in Kpando and Hohoe, for them to go in there. Though the Chiefs were here and invited us, we still sent people in advance to the place to go and see them. And when we were going, we made sure that

we were prepared. It will not be a story if any civilian goes to Alavanyo and is ambushed, but if the Police are ambushed, it will be a story (9th September 2019).

It's not my institution that established that, but the government of Ghana has given them that security by establishing a military zone in both communities. So, there is a military zone at both Nkonya and Alavanyo. This is to help them go about their livelihood activities with ease (3rd September 2019)

Institutions that were not Mandated on Social Protection Served as Referral Portals

Some institutions such as the Ministry of Gender and the National Commission on Civic Education (NCCE) admit that social protection is not their mandate and where necessary, they refer communities to the appropriate agencies and institutions.

That is government – government has to go in. The government is having social welfare schemes and they have a unit called social welfare unit that deals with such issues. We cannot apply for a budget with this. Government will say that they've given it to social welfare unit. The government will not give it to us. Can't think about a gender dimension (9th September 2019).

We rather refer them to the department of social welfare. When there is an issue of social protection. So, in fact, the NCCE as an entity does not provide social protection but appeals to institutions such as social welfare to help them out (5th September 2019).

A focus group discussion disclosed that the social protection the community had enjoyed so far was the presence of the security personnel in the community to stop the escalation of the Nkonya-Alavanyo conflict. Asides that, it was also stated that the National Peace Council comes round to talk to people in the community.

Local Communities and Individuals did Provide Social Protection

There were instances when the community and individuals rallied round in providing some form of social protection to those in need. A key respondent from the Department of children, Ho, had this to say.

> There is no budgetary allocation for social protection measures, so we sometimes, in rare cases, do that from our own pockets (7th September 2019).

In a focus group discussion in Nkonya, a youth leader observed that when someone is injured, the community is able to help in financial terms so that the person gets sent to the hospital.

Donor Agencies occasionally Provided Social Protection Contrary to their Mandate

International donor agencies usually do not direct their resources into social protection, however, based on community needs there are occasions such provisions are made. A typical example of such a situation is evident in the statement of a key respondent for the NCCE.

> We educate, but sometimes the sponsors give us the resources to go out there and educate people. Sponsors like the European Union have been doing that for some time now. So, I will say that is the only thing they

do for us. But sometimes in certain areas like Nkonya I remember we gave them something small (money) (5th September 2019).

Social Protection Measures and their Gender Dimensions

Social Protection measures with a gender focus or without a gender focus were the two main themes that evolved under this section. The measures with the gender focus either paid attention to women or men in the execution of programmes in the communities, but the measures without a gender focus had no person in mind in the execution of programmes, and these were from the majority of respondents. The Conceptual framework of the study unfolds the essence of gender perspectives in all processes of conflict management right from the structure and function of institutions to social protection measures offered by the institutions. Additionally, the conceptual framework highlights how peace and sustainable development are realized through a closer look at gender perspectives in conflict management.

Some Social Protection Measures by Some Organizations were Targeted at the Female Gender or can be said to be Gender Focused

This is very relevant to helping manage conflicts successfully. In any case, the gender focus whether on males or females should be a means of bridging an inequality gap in society. Luttrell and Moser (2004) state that conflicts by nature have their impacts of shocks affecting men and women differently. It is useful therefore to think of men and women (as well as boys and girls) as different constituents in any analysis. They were therefore of the opinion that social protection needs be tailored accordingly in the process of conflict management.

They noted that erosion of social capital is one of the legacies of violent and prolonged intrastate conflict. They suggested that if other forms of capital (human, financial, or physical) can be replenished even after conflict situations, sustainable development will be constrained unless positive social capital can also be rebuilt (Luttrell & Moser, 2004). The statements below indicate/show social protection measures targeted at gender to help solve a social problem.

> *Our focus is mainly on the women, not on the men (4th September 2019).*

> *They do have a gender focus. LEAP is an example of that though it does not directly fall under our jurisdiction. (7th September 2019).*

> *Because the house is a purely male affair, we can say "NO' to the female gender (8th September 2019).*

Some Social Protection Measures did not have a Specific Gender Focus and could be said to be for all

There are instances where some social protection measures do not come with any gender in mind, but they are expected to solve a problem that benefits everybody in the community. The aim here is to basically solve a problem without reference to any group of people but for society's benefit. These can be evinced through the ensuing key informant statements.

> *Under the anti-corruption project, there is an aspect of project which seeks to find out how other socially excluded groups can be captured, how we will be able to make sure that they also benefit from the project whether male or female. Therefore, an eligible person benefits without using any gender dimensions (4th September 2019).*

I have once met a war situation that was somewhere in the Eastern region, where there were two factions that were having that problem. Before the police came in, they very well knew I was a third party to the war situation. What I did was to bring in the necessary people, but then I was even asked to come and make statements over some of the things I witnessed. At the end of the day when I engaged in these activities, I just felt it was a social protection act I was engaged in and never thought about it in terms of gender. (5ᵗʰ September 2019).

So far, I have not seen any such dimension in our social protection measures. (3ʳᵈ September 2019).

To some respondents, it would be a bit difficult to start thinking about gender rather than solve an existing problem that would make life comfortable for members of a community. However, institutions like GLOWA in Ho and the Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection identifying certain problems could come in with specially designed programmes to tackle poverty levels among the various communities and conflict hotspots in society possibly bringing in some gender dimensions, so nobody is left out in times of need. In Alavanyo and Nkonya, Peki/Tsito, Nkwanta /Hohoe conflicts, for instance, there are a number of victims of the age-old conflicts who have totally been deprived of their means of livelihood but have not benefitted from any form of social protection. This has made life difficult for the females who lost their husbands who were breadwinners to the conflicts.

Due to gender differences within the household as well as in society, women and men experience poverty differently. A gender equality approach to social

protection policies, strategies and programs is therefore paramount to enable equal access to protection from extreme poverty, vulnerability, and social exclusion. Social protection contributes to challenging gender roles through increased income for women, decreased intimate partner violence and increased school attendance for girls. In spite of the positives of social protection programs, social protection has still been criticized for not being gendered enough in its approach (SIDA, 2019).

Similarities in Features Observed in the Oti and Volta Regions

The conflicts in the Oti and Volta Region have all spanned several decades. That of the Alavanyo and Nkonya communities will be exactly 100 years in January 2023. Likewise, the Peki and Tsito communities. All communities in one way or the other, over the period of conflict established peace clubs and groups to help restore peace to the communities.

Land disputes seem to be a dominating cause of the conflicts in both Regions. All the land disputes depict a family or a lineage conflict other than a community one. From Peki to Tsito to Nkonya to Alavanyo to Hohoe and to Nkwanta the disputed lands are more of family lands.

In the management of conflicts in both the Oti and Volta Regions, the law courts were options explored by all communities in the two regions. A cross section of the communities keep revisiting the courts time after time to be heard. Even though the courts had been working on these land disputes for decades, there were no final judgements to specify the actual owners of parcels of lands involved in the

numerous land disputes across the regions. The Tsito and Peki, and Alavanyo and Nkonya communities have the very fertile stretches of disputed farmland still lying fallow as a "no man's lands". Asides the courts, both Oti and Volta Regions have involved the National Peace Council and the Government on steps to help restore peace to their communities using preventive diplomacy.

The processes of conflict management among communities of the two regions, does not give priority to the participation of women. This was indicated in the low numbers of women on most Peace Committees at the community level. The practice was also evinced in the community focused group discussions and key respondent interview sessions. In Peki for instance the researcher had to insist on the inclusion of a female in the team of eight participants before starting the discussions.

Differences in Features Observed in the Oti and Volta Regions

The Volta Region mostly resorted to a blend of religious leaders and Traditional leaders in their conflict management strides, whereas the Oti region was seen to use basically traditional leaders devoid of religious leaders.

Apart from Peki, in the Volta Region, all other communities indicated relatively higher involvement of women in their discussions and interviews.

The Oti region's community of Nkonya and the Volta Region's community of Alavanyo are two notable communities that have seen some reprisal attacks time after time. Other communities in the two regions have not shown this trend.

Chapter Summary

Perspectives on social protection measures available to communities revealed a variety in the current study. Social Protection from Governmental /Non-Governmental Institutions was followed closely by those from religious groups and leaders. Social protection came from the pockets of benevolent government workers, appropriate agencies, Peace Council, community, and international donors. Some external organizations/institutions have been disappointing to the communities as they never followed up on promises they made in response to social protection requests from the communities. Similarities and differences in features observed in the Oti and Volta regions were outlined.
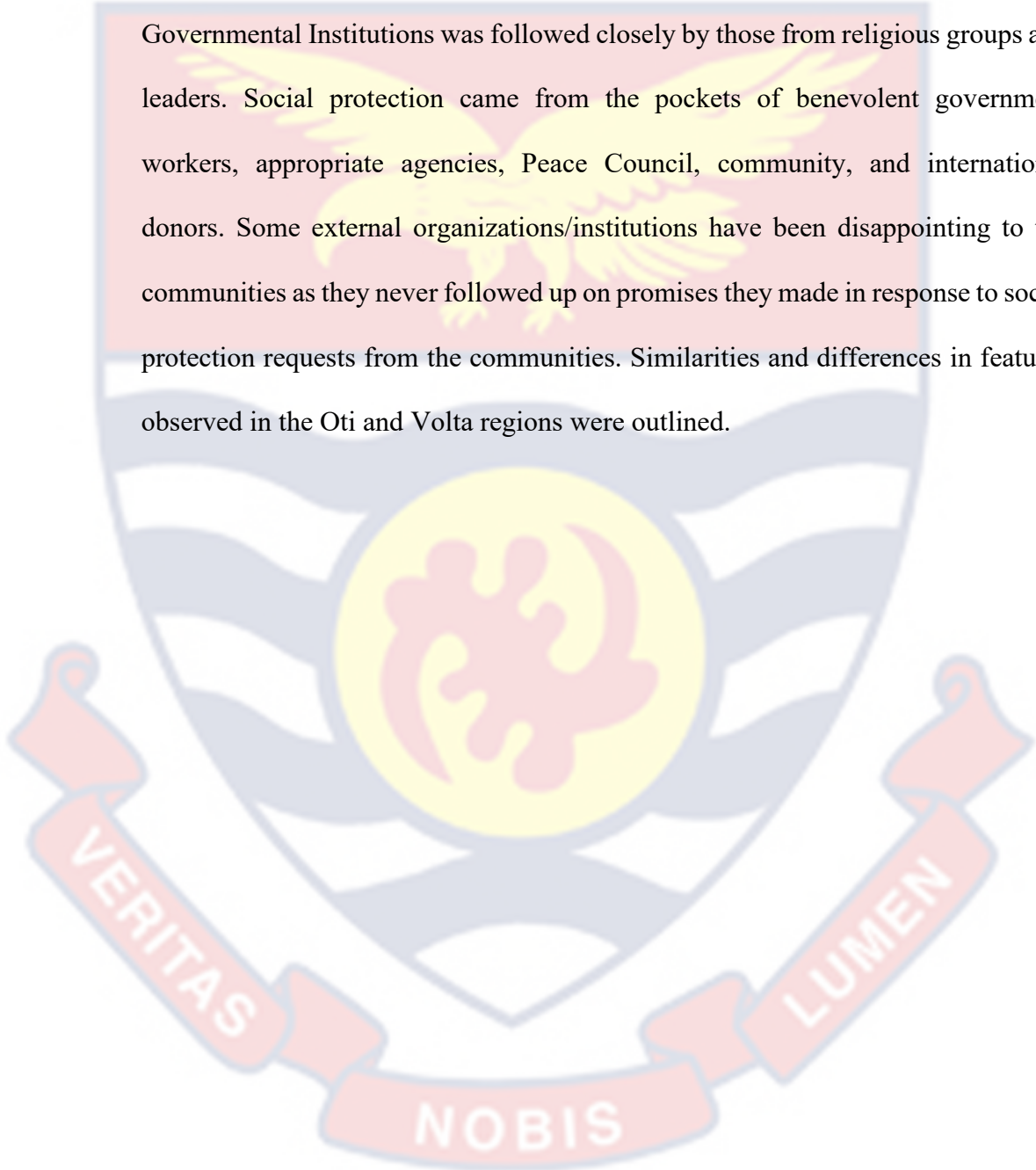
CHAPTER EIGHT

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Introduction

This chapter presents the summary, conclusions, and recommendations of all the findings from the study on gender perspectives in conflict management in the Oti and Volta Regions of Ghana. It also captures the contributions which the study makes to knowledge and brings out suggestions for further research.

The study sought to investigate conflict management from a gender perspective and its influence on the overall development of communities in the Oti and Volta Regions of Ghana. It sought to explore gender perspectives in the structure and function of conflict management institutions; examine the gender dynamics in conflict management policies and programmes; assess gender roles in conflict management approaches and techniques; explore gender perspectives in social protection measures in conflict management; explore the influence of conflict management on community development. A case study design was adopted to make way for an analysis of data from various conflict hotspots and institutions in charge of conflict management. Fourteen conflict management institutions, and six conflict hotspots/ communities formed the sampling frame of the study. Purposive sampling, a non-probability sampling procedure, was used in the selection of key informants for the study. The key informants were the heads of the conflict management institutions who in addition to themselves selected two more key informants totalling three (3) for each conflict management institution

(the communities inclusive) making a total of 36 for all 14 conflict management institutions.

Also, purposive sampling was used for the selection of chiefs, Queen mothers, opinion leaders, community elders, leaders of mediation committees and peace clubs, men, women, and the youth for focus group discussions. The focus group comprised of eight people for each community/ conflict hotspot making a total of 48. The selection of members of the focus group was to aid the attainment of a study population whose members or composition cut across the community's population. In all, the sample for data collection was 84. The interview guide, focus group discussion guide, and observation checklist were the data collection instruments while data was analysed using the thematic analysis.

Summary of Major Findings

The specific objectives of the study were used as a yardstick for the summary of major findings of the study.

Gender Perspectives on the Structure and Function of Conflict Management Institutions

(i) The traditional leadership of the community predominantly made up of Chiefs, their elders, and clan/Asafo leaders were overwhelmingly found to lead deliberations when conflicts were being managed. The traditional leadership also worked in tandem with religious leaders. They also, with oversight responsibilities, collaborated with religious leaders of diverse denominations in leading the management of some conflicts in the communities. There were

instances when the traditional leadership took on leadership roles with the religious leadership playing a supportive role. However, majority of these traditional and religious leaders were men, thus downplaying the implementation of UNSCR 1325 and Feminism. The Dual concern theory was at play as there was concern for self and others in the process of conflict management. The traditional leaders did not just think about working alone but were interested in working with the religious leaders.

(ii) Religious leaders, in some instances, took the initiative and led in conflict management or in collaboration with other stakeholders such as traditional, political and youth leadership. This was justified by the fact that, traditional leaders at a point in time were perceived to be themselves fomenting conflicts as a result of which there was loss of trust in them thus resulting in religious leadership playing a key role in managing conflicts. Other persons overseeing the management of conflicts included leadership of youth groups, elderly women, and members of formal peace committees. Political leadership did not seem to have a prominent role in leading conflict management drives. This main finding confirmed the role of the Dual Concern Theory in the process of conflict management.

(iii) Gender representation on committees in charge of conflict management, indicated there were much more males than females on committees in the conflict management process. This was a key finding cutting across all the study communities. The only instances where women tended to be more occurred in organizations that had female heads such as GLOWA, an NGO and the

Alavanyo community which had its leader as a Queen mother. In the Hohoe and Alavanyo communities, gender representation was skewed towards females, when such committees were focused on issues related to females. This was a clear indication of the fact that UNSCR 1325 as a policy instrument, was yet to be realized in the process of conflict management among conflict hotspots as well as conflict management institutions.

(iv) Perspectives on the functions (objectives or concerns) of conflict management institutions in conflict situations were maintaining or bringing peace, facilitating amicable management, settlement, or resolution of conflicts in the community.

(v) Perspectives on the functions (mandate) of institutions in relation to conflict management confirmed that conflict management institutions were mandated to maintain peace in the community, prevent crime, educate on conflict avoidance, address the needs of the vulnerable and facilitate conflict resolution drives.

(vi) On the gender perspectives on function (approaches) to conflict management in conflict hotspots /communities, the involvement of both men and women in the process of conflict management was endorsed. This was perceived by both genders as important for successful outcomes. Respondents expressed views that the involvement of both genders contributed to successful conflict management processes. Interestingly, males were the ones advocating and justifying the involvement of women in conflict management – this could possibly be attributed to their urge to bridge the gap of un-involvement of

women or to echo the importance of involving women. Another prominent perspective was that each gender had a unique role to play in facilitating conflict resolution. Women by virtue of their suffering during conflicts were more inclined to ensure conflicts were resolved peacefully. A view that was not as prominent was that gender was not necessarily relevant in conflict resolution. This was a strong confirmation of the Dual Concern Theory as well as the UNSCR 1325 and the Feminism.

Gender Dynamics of Conflict Management Policies and Programmes in the Volta Region of Ghana

(i)   Institutional gender perspectives on policies and practices of gender equality, mainstreaming, women's empowerment, and the involvement of women in peace and security, established that even though there was education on gender equality and gender mainstreaming, the involvement of women was generally low in all the communities. Key policies to enhance gender equality and mainstreaming were in place in the institutions but their implementation fell short of expectation. Some institutions such as the NCCE and the Army actively worked at bridging the gap between men and women, whereas others like the House of Chiefs had sectors where females were unable to assume functional roles traditionally. It was also observed that name calling by other women resulted in women shying away from taking various positions in public as they got demoralized. The feminist theory was confirmed here through the

underrepresentation of women. This of cause would keep women underrepresented in instances of conflict management.

(ii) It was established that gender equality and mainstreaming should be applied only when women qualify for the positions they are applying to. It was therefore observed that gender equality and mainstreaming were easily accomplished when women qualified for the positions they were aspiring for in the institutions. However, affirmative action was applied on occasions to get more women up the institutional ladder or to take on certain roles. Some people also were of the conviction that before women were given positions, their qualification should be what would speak for them and not for the fact that they are pushed to such positions. The UNSCR 1325 was confirmed in this finding and some efforts put in place to get it realized, whiles making sure the women involved are not square pegs in round holes. The Dual concern theory was also confirmed in as much as gender equality and mainstreaming was a goal.

(iii) Based on the mandates establishing them, some institutions purposely educated citizens on gender issues such as gender equality, women's rights in society and other empowerment issues.

(iv) The consideration of gender balance in the creation of committees that helped to manage conflicts was overwhelmingly affirmed by interviewees across board. Their statements emphasized the inclusion of women just as the men on the conflict management committees. The Dual concern theory and the UNSCR 1325 can easily be implemented here.

(v) Requirements for equal gender representation on committees were formal or informal depending on the statutes establishing the institutions. Institutions like the Peace Council had their Act spelling out how well to involve women to ensure a balanced gender representation at the national, regional and district levels. Others like the NCCE, House of Chiefs and the NGO did not have any formal document spelling out any modes of operation to ensure gender equality. This to a greater extent would enhance the implementation of UNSCR 1325 as well as the Dual Concern theory.

(vi) Female empowerment seems to be a concept yet to be practicalized in some settings. Some pronouncements of male opinion leaders were vague and seemed to lack elements of empowering women. The working of the UNSCR 1325 policy would therefore be very difficult to realize under such an instance.

Gender Roles in the Conflict Management Approaches and Techniques.

(i) Diverse approaches were used to educate the community on conflicts and their influence on peace. The Christian religious organisations facilitated education and prayed for peace at their meetings. Feuding parties were also brought together for negotiations with the support of the clergy to achieve amicable settlements of conflicts.

(ii) Adherence to judgments of the law courts was another approach and where misunderstandings came up, dialogue was used for settlement. Some statutory organizations involved in conflict management employed diplomacy and neutrality in facilitating negotiations between feuding parties. Training

workshops on peace building and taking advantage of the influence of community elders facilitated conflict resolutions in some instances.

(iii) Differences in gender roles, activities, needs and opportunities in a community indicated historical perspectives of women's roles facilitating their non-engagement in conflict management. There were those who were of the view that both women and men could take on the same roles as there was no delineation in the kinds of things both genders could do. This pointed to the changing narrative that women would contribute as much as men in managing conflicts like they do in other aspects of life. Women were known to be placed in leadership positions when it had to do with managing other females.

(iv) Women were rarely placed in leadership positions unless they were managing issues of their own gender. There was a heightened acknowledgement that women play such pivotal roles in diverse areas of crime control and conflict management.

(v) Men and women had their gender specific strengths that they brought to bear in managing conflicts. Some institutions like the Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection and National Commission on Civic Education were working hard to empower, create awareness and ensure that the role of women was equally appreciated in the community.

(vi) Nudging the boychild into traditionally perceived female gender areas such as cooking could facilitate bridging the divide on role stereotypes that adversely impacted women.

(vii) The security forces and the traditional system had difficulties in deploying women into some conflict situations, due to the perception that women are incapable of performing certain tasks.

(viii) In eliciting the institutional mandate on the role of gender in conflict management, an interesting observation made was that though questions posed to interviewees were about gender, most of them in their responses focused on "women".

(ix) Although many of the institutions surveyed had mandatory quotas of women as part of their conflict management teams, the security sector did not have mandatory quotas related to gender. Most of the organizations which do not deal specifically with conflict resolution, focused on empowering both men and women and generating a higher level of recognition for women's contribution to societal development.

Most of the above findings confirmed the Dual Concern Theory, The UNSCR 1325 and the Feminist Theory.

Gender Perspectives on Social Protection as a Measure in Conflict Management

(i) Social protection from Governmental/ Non-Governmental Institutions was followed closely by those from religious groups and leaders. Key respondent interviews confirmed social protection coming from the pockets of benevolent government workers (individuals who helped communities with various items/needs after conflict), appropriate agencies such as the National Disaster Management Organization (NADMO) and religious relief institutions who

helped provide food and relief items), the Peace Council (helped with peace building sessions to bring communities back to their previous state), community and international donors (groups and people who give out items to victims normally after conflict).

(ii) Social protection measures and their gender dimensions indicated measures with a gender focus (focusing on the male or female gender) or without a gender focus (no focus on the males or female gender) were the two main themes that evolved under this section. The measures with the gender focus such as the empowerment programmes of GLOWA, and the LEAP (livelihood Empowerment Against Poverty Programme) paid attention to women or men in the execution of programmes in the communities. Other institutions had no gender in mind in the execution of programmes, and these were from majority of respondents.

The dual concern Theory and the UNSCR 1325 are confirmed here.

Conclusions

Five main conclusions were drawn based on the study findings. These are stated below.

Existence of an Effective Traditional Framework for Conflict Management and Low Female Gender Representation on Conflict Management Committees

The traditional leadership structure of the communities, made up predominantly of the Chiefs, their elders, and clan/Asafo leaders, religious leaders as well as public institutions and NGOs were overwhelmingly perceived to lead

deliberations when conflicts were being managed. This detailed and highly inclusive framework which has been used over the years in these communities has been very effective in handling conflicts whenever they came up in the communities/conflict hotspots. However, the resource "strain" of going through all the processes of conflict management in the various communities is what must be looked at by the various institutions and some level of help given to these communities to keep them on track to help sustain the current peace that is being enjoyed in these communities. Below is a hierarchical presentation of the key stakeholders engaged in conflict management as per findings of the study mentioned earlier.
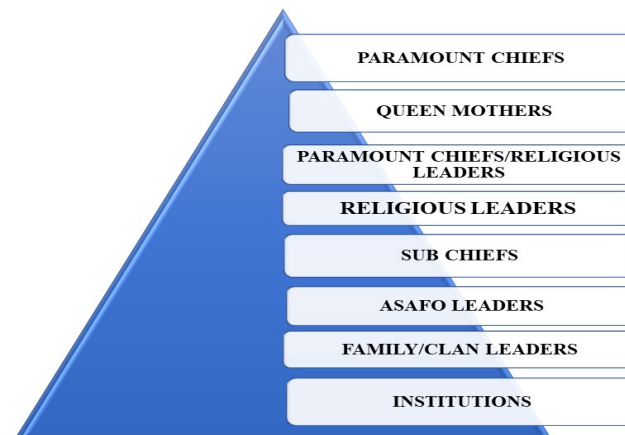
Figure 6: Hierarchical Structure of Conflict Management in the Studied Communities

Source: Author's Construct(2020)

The gender representation on committees in charge of conflict management, however indicated that there were much more males than females on such committees in all the communities. This could be a source of conflict in the future

if a group of empowered women decide to challenge male dominance in the communities.

Conflict Management Institutions had very Strategic Mechanisms for Sustaining Peace

The study findings confirmed maintaining peace, facilitating amicable management, settlement, or resolution of conflicts in the community as the function of conflict management institutions. These institutions were also perceived to have a mandate of maintaining peace in the community, preventing crime, providing education on conflict avoidance, addressing the needs of the vulnerable and facilitating conflict resolution drives. Gender perspectives in the function (approaches) to conflict management in conflict hotspots /communities revealed the involvement of both men and women in the process of conflict management, with males advocating and justifying the involvement of women. This kind of atmosphere is essential for any society aiming towards achieving sustainable peace and development.

Low Involvement of Women in Peace and Security Issues which Dealt with only Qualified Women

Even though there was education on gender equality and gender mainstreaming, the involvement of women was generally low in all the communities studied. Key policies to enhance gender equality and mainstreaming were in place in the institutions but had their implementation falling short of expectation. The respondents generally agreed that gender equality and

mainstreaming should be applied only when women qualify for the positions they are applying to.

Diverse Approaches in Conflict Management and Varied Views on the Role of Gender in Conflict Management

Approaches to conflict management from the religious perspective were used to educate the community on conflicts and their influence on peace. Feuding parties were brought together for negotiations with the support of the clergy. Adherence to judgments of the law courts was another approach and where misunderstandings came up, dialogue was used for settlement. Some statutory organizations involved in conflict management employed diplomacy and neutrality in facilitating negotiations between feuding parties. Training workshops on peace building and taking advantage of the influence of community elders facilitated conflict resolutions in some instances. For differences, in gender roles, activities, needs and opportunities the communities indicated historical perspectives of women's roles facilitating their non-engagement in conflict management. There were those who were of the view that both women and men could take on the same roles as there was no delineation in the kinds of things both genders could do. This pointed to the changing narrative that women should contribute as much as men in managing conflicts like they do in other aspects of life. Women were rarely placed in leadership positions unless when they were perceived to be managing those of their own gender. There was a heightened acknowledgement that women play such pivotal roles in diverse areas of crime control and conflict management. Men and

women have their gender specific strengths that they bring to bear in managing conflicts. Some institutions are working hard to empower, create awareness and ensure that the role of women is equally appreciated in the community.

Social Protection Benefits Available in Conflict Situations and the Influence of Conflict Management on Community Development

Even though a few institutions and individuals were helping, communities like Alavanyo/ Nkonya still had injured victims from the reprisal attacks and the conflict itself years back. Some people were still living with bullet wounds, maimed parts of the body, and lost economic livelihoods. This was a stab in the face of community development. However, conflict management has to a greater extent altered and paved a way for improved communities that are peaceful and developed.

Contribution to Knowledge

There have been several research works on the conflict hotspots and institutions in the Volta Region. Interestingly, most of these works over the years have tended to focus on the causes of the conflicts, the actors involved, and the effects of the conflicts on the communities and how these conflicts have been managed over time, without recourse to gender issues or gender perspectives in the management of these conflicts. The current study was therefore tactically designed to map out the gap in the conflict management process in relation to gender perspectives. The identification of existing gaps in research is what informs academic research.

The study has therefore consistently diagnosed the various conflict management processes in conflict hotspots and institutions bringing out the gender perspectives, gender dynamics and gender roles whose neglect might have contributed to the protracted nature of conflicts as well as the changing (complex) nature of conflicts in the Volta and Oti regions. The study found out that a look at gender perspectives in the management of conflicts may help manage the conflicts effectively thus restoring the needed peace and development required in the conflict hotspots and the regions in general.

The study therefore came up with a conceptual framework on gender perspectives in conflict management spelling out ways in which it can be accomplished and how sustainable conflict management, peace and development can be arrived at.

This is one major study which was uniquely focused on all the major conflict hotspots in the Oti and Volta Regions of Ghana with a gender lens. The study was able to strike a unique acquaintance between members of the various communities on very practical ways of ensuring the participation of both men and women in conflict management and decision making in general. Most of the communities I visited as a researcher were ready to meet me after my work to use the various groups as a starting point to sensitize their communities on ensuring inclusiveness in conflict management and general decision making.

In other communities such as Nkonya to be specific, the women who came for the discussions requested that the researcher uses the group of women who were respondents as a group of motivators. They asserted, they would motivate and

encourage Girls in the Nkonya Senior High School to be ready to engage in issues involving the pursuance of peace in their various communities. This they believed would help change the narrative of women not being involved over time.

The study was also able to mobilize a group of men who were ready to kick against outmoded traditional practices and to see their lovely daughters' sisters and wives engaged in managing conflicts at several levels in society.

The above stance of members of the study communities committed the researcher into pledging to collaborate with the leaders of the various communities to pursue an agenda to include all 'genders' in community conflict management processes to ensure sustainable peace in all communities.

Recommendations

Implications for Practice and Policy

Formal/State institutions (National Peace Council, NCCE etc.) and NGOs (GLOWA) should liaise with traditional institutions in their bid to manage conflicts.

From the study findings, the conflict hotspots/communities have very specialized conflict management structures traditionally (encompassing Chiefs, Queen mothers, religious leaders, the youth, and community elders) which should be explored by conflict management institutions so as to feed into their conflict management processes traditionally to help meet their local needs in relation to conflicts and conflict management.

Institutions tasked with managing conflicts (National Peace Council, Military etc..) should ensure enhanced participation of women in their teams, cognizant of their unique conflict management qualities.

The Peace Council, the Military and the Police as conflict management institutions should be able to liaise with the various conflict hotspots, to deal with the issue of the non-involvement of women. The Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Welfare and GLOWA can all rightfully sensitize their members and the members of the Zongo and Christian communities on the UNSR 1325 to help change their perceptions towards women in conflict management. The institutions should make it a point to visit mosques and churches to sensitize their members on the UNSCR 1325 and the need for women to be engaged in conflict management.

The Military, the Police and all other security services should work painstakingly at the implementation of the UNSCR 1325.

This could be done through training and educational sessions on women's protection, rights and needs as well as the recruitment of women as community police, community soldiers and conflict managers. The capacity and effectiveness of women in conflict management would greatly be enhanced helping to develop a stronger and a more efficient effort in conflict management and peace-making.

Also, advocacy on improving the general educational level of women in conflict hotspots and conflict managing institutions would significantly help in influencing their participation in conflict management. An educated woman is an empowered woman who would be confident and ready at all costs to engage in the

process of conflict management. This would also aid in overcoming cultural barriers to conflict management.

The Peace Council and all institutions engaged in conflict management should have social protection measures as mandatory in their conflict management processes to ameliorate the distress of populations in conflict settings and to ensure peace.

Perspectives on the function of conflict management institutions indicated that communities had very strategic mechanisms for ensuring sustainable peace through a procedural conflict management process. These mechanisms should be brought into operation by the various institutions in charge of conflict management so they can better support the elaborate plan of action in ensuring peace in the communities as well as providing them mandatory social protection. Such conflict management support mechanisms (e.g., ensuring mandatory social protection for communities) could become very legitimate ones that could be used by any of the institutions having a similar agenda countrywide. This would ensure the sustainable management of conflicts across all hotspots in the country.

Enhance training and technical assistance programmes that would build the capacity of the members of the Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection in implementing their gender equality and mainstreaming policies to involve women.

The institutional gender perspectives on policies and practices of gender equality, mainstreaming, women's empowerment, and the involvement of women in peace and security from the study indicated that, though there was education on

gender equality and gender mainstreaming, the involvement of women was generally low in all spheres. Key policies to enhance gender equality and mainstreaming were in place in the institutions but their implementation fell short of expectation. This is a very worrying issue and so formal organizations like the Department of Gender, Children and Social Welfare, NCCE, and GLOWA can liaise with the district and the regional coordinating councils to help bridge that gap through training and some technical assistance programmes.

Additionally, the Directors of these institutions mentioned above, should be charged with the enforcement of issues of gender mainstreaming, gender equality and social protection.

The Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection, NCCE and GLOWA, should all work hard in providing social protection measures to communities as well as ensure community development.

Social protection even though said to be coming from governmental bodies, NGOs as well as from individuals, was still not enough. Attention must be drawn to the hundreds of victims of the Alavanyo/Nkonya clashes which happened over 90 years ago as well as the families and relations of those who suffered reprisal attacks recently and are still harbouring bullet wounds, deformed parts of the body and have lost their forms of livelihoods.

Traditional Authorities and Religious authorities should work in tandem with each other in peace.

In managing conflicts, traditional leaders must not be inward-looking. They must think about the community holistically in all they do so as not to create any form of division among the members of the communities. Their inclusive methods of involving a cross section of members of the community on their conflict management committees should be the norm.

The approach adopted by religious leaders in helping to manage conflicts in the communities, especially with reference to the Peki/ Tsito communities, must be applauded. However, it is recommended that the religious leaders keep very good links with the traditional authorities to maintain a very strong body that is respected by all in society as a strong mouthpiece of the community that superintends over all issues of conflict. The religious leaders should also be ready to teach their congregation on the involvement of women in conflict management.

Traditional leaders should make it their responsibility to develop a good network between the community and the various institutions such as the Peace Council to help them in improving their knowledge and skills in conflict management. Even though a level of peace and development was evident in the findings, a lot more must be done to bring these communities to a level that would really make them very peaceful and developed societies. The traditional leaders should be ready to liaise with institutions such as the National Peace Council and NGOs in charge of conflict management to get a donor to support them.

The House of chiefs should be renamed/rebranded the house of chiefs and queen mothers.

This initiative would go a long way to incorporate the queen mothers into the patriarchal type of chieftaincy system we have in Ghana. Also, it would further buttress a concern expressed by former first lady of Ghana, Nana Konadu Agyemang-Rawlings about the discriminatory nature of the House of Chiefs set up which should be looked at.

Suggestions for Further Research

Based on the key findings of the study, the following thematic areas were selected for further studies in other regions of Ghana apart from the Oti and Volta regions.

(i)   Gender Perspectives in Social Protection Measures in Conflict Hotspots in Ghana.

(ii)   Gender Dynamics in the Policies and Programmes of Conflict Management Organizations in Ghana.

(iii)   Gender Perspectives in Conflict Management: A Comparative Analysis of the Oti Regions and Volta Regions of Ghana.

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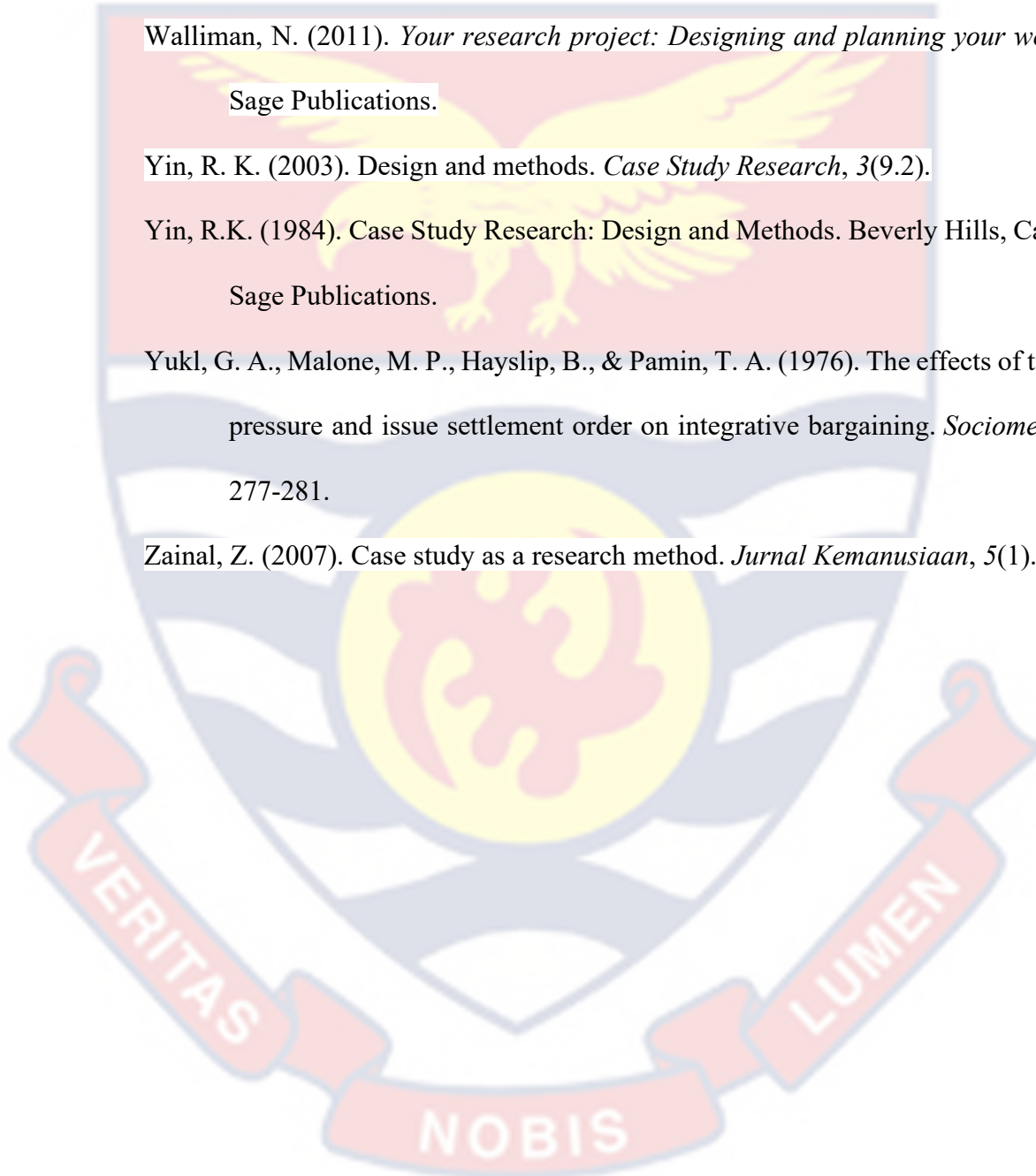
APPENDICES

APPENDIX A: INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR INSTITUTIONS IN CHARGE

OF CONFLICT MANAGEMENT

Dear Sir/Madam,

I am a PhD student at the Institute of Development Studies of the University of Cape Coast. As part of requirements of my doctoral program with the University, I am undertaking a study entitled: Gender Perspectives on Conflict Management In the Oti and Volta Regions of Ghana. Based on your expertise with great knowledge in the subject area, you have been selected to respond to some questions that will help in addressing the objectives of my study. Your participation in this study is voluntary. Your identity will be kept anonymous when reporting on findings of this study. Thanks in advance for accepting to be part of this research work.

SECTION 1: CONFLICT MANAGEMENT POLICIES/PROGRAMS AND THEIR GENDER DYNAMICS

1. Could you please state/describe the mandate of your institution in relation to conflict management?
2. What are the policies, goals, and achievements of your institution?
3. Which legislative instrument spells out your mandate in conflict management as an institution? Please explain.
4. Using some practical examples, please describe how appropriately your organization is able to carry out its mandate.
5. What is your institution's take on the following gender perspectives: gender equality, gender mainstreaming, women's empowerment and the involvement of women in peace and security issues?
6. Describe how gender roles feature in conflict management in your institution.
7. How explicit is your institutional mandate on the role of gender in conflict management?
8. Have you ever heard of the United Nations Security Council Resolution (UN SCR) 1352?

9. If you are that familiar with the UN SCR 1325, then what is your understanding of its contents?

10. Do you consider this UN document important in your work? If so, why?

11. Explain why you consider the implementation of SCR 1325 important?

12. Has the introduction of the UN SCR 1325 brought any changes to the work of the institution?

SECTION 2: CONFLICT AND CONFLICT MANAGEMENT

1. Over the course of your work in the institution, what types of conflicts have you thus far encountered in the various communities in the Volta Region?

2. For each conflict situation, please mention the community involved: persons or groups of persons involved in the conflict; the cause of the conflict; the contribution of gender roles to the conflict.

3. Asides gender roles, what other things feed the conflicts you mentioned? (Tick)
   a) historical events,
   b) myths
   c) social
   d) political
   e) economic
   f) religious
   g) Systematic conditions, etc.

4. In the instances of conflicts mentioned above, how involved was your institution in managing the resolution of these conflicts?

5. In what roles did you function; what actions were taken by your organization; what other agencies were involved; etc.

SECTION 3: GENDER PERSPECTIVES IN THE STRUCTURE AND FUNCTION OF CONFLICT MANAGEMENT INSTITUTIONS.

1. What was the gender composition of the teams involved in the conflict management processes mentioned above?

2. Please describe any formal or informal requirements of your institution mandating "equal gender representation" in the process of conflict management.

3. Based on your experiences, please describe the vital role 'males' play in conflict management process involving your institution in the communities in which you work

4. Based on your experiences, please describe the vital role 'females' play in conflict management processes involving your institution in the communities in which you work.

5. Inferring from your experiences, what would you recommend as a guide to male and female representation in the structure and function of a conflict management process?

6. What is your opinion on women's ability to participate in managing conflicts and peace building? Are they empowered?

7. Are women's rights regarded in the Volta Region? Why/ why not?

8. What are the obstacles to gender equality in the management of conflicts in the Volta region?

9. What are the specific experiences of women after conflict situations in the Volta Region of Ghana?

SECTION 4: GENDER ROLES IN CONFLICT MANAGEMENT APPROACHES AND TECHNIQUES

1. In a few words describe the style or approach that your institution uses in its processes of managing conflicts within communities.

2. Briefly describe the conflict management style or approach that your institution uses in its processes of managing conflicts in the various communities of the Volta region.

3. From your experiences, can you recount any situation where gender representation in the structure and function of your institution influenced the outcome of a conflict management process – positively or negatively?

4. Please describe how your team leveraged on these experiences in that conflict management process and in others.

SECTION 5: GENDER PERSPECTIVES IN SOCIAL PROTECTION MEASURES IN CONFLICT MANAGEMENT

1. What "social protection" measures are available in your institution for members, in instances of conflict management? Please specify them.
2. What "social protection" measures does your institution provide for communities in instances of conflict management? Please specify them.
3. Do the social protection measures have a gender dimension in their execution?

SECTION 6: IMPACT OF CONFLICT MANAGEMENT ACTIVITIES ON THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE COMMUNITIES

1. Mention any four impacts of conflict management activities on the development of the communities.
   a) …………………………………………………………………………………
   b) …………………………………………………………………………………
   c) …………………………………………………………………………………
   d) …………………………………………………………………………………
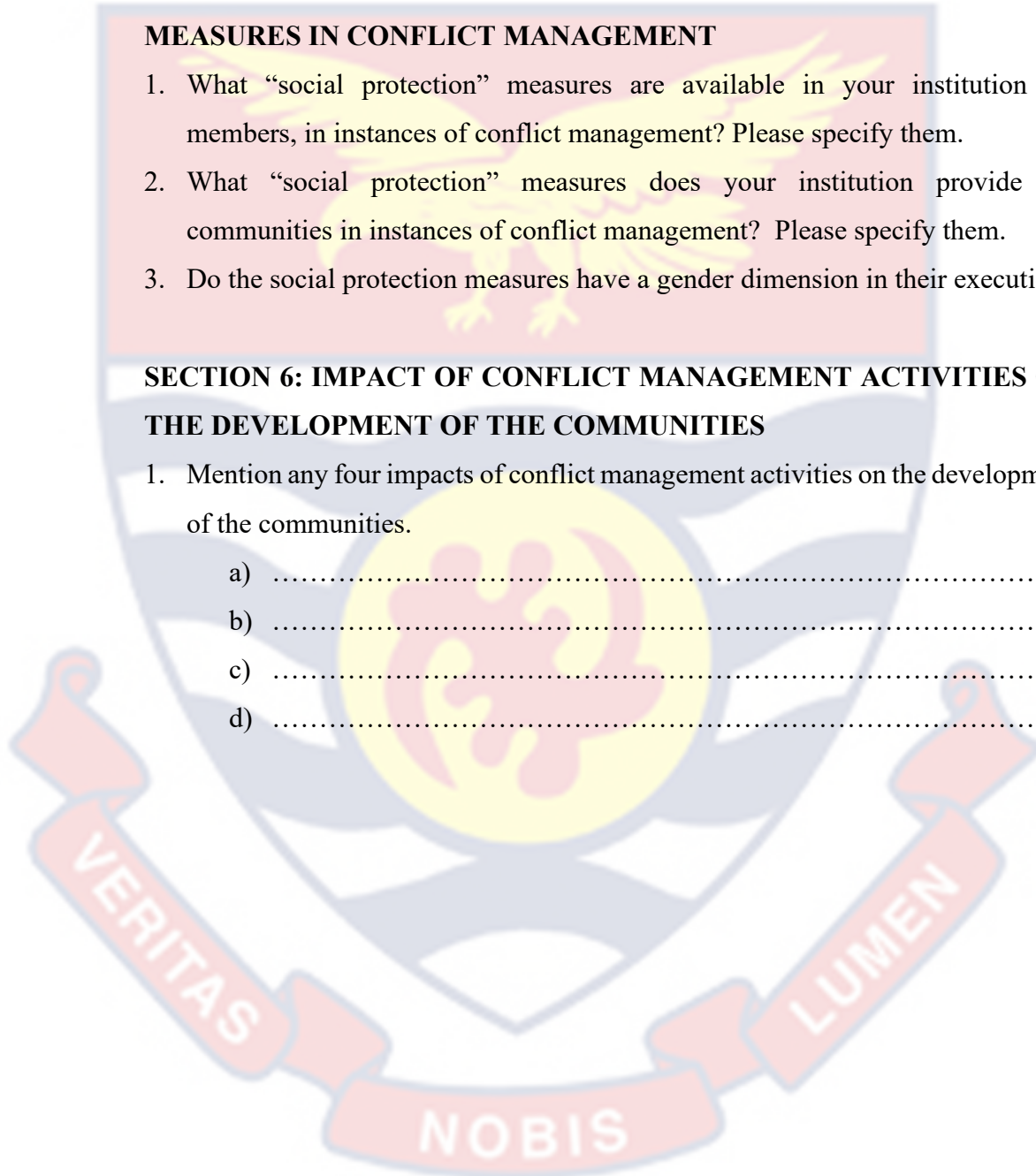
APPENDIX B

INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR OPINION LEADERS (KEY INFORMANTS) IN

THE COMMUNITIES (CONFLICT HOT SPOTS)

I am a PhD student at the Institute of Development Studies of the University of Cape Coast. As part of requirements of my doctoral program with the University, I am undertaking a study entitled: Gender Perspectives on Conflict Management in the Oti and Volta Regions of Ghana. Based on your expertise with great knowledge in the subject area, you have been selected to respond to some questions that will help in addressing the objectives of my study. Your participation in this study is voluntary. Your identity will be kept anonymous when reporting on findings of this study. Thanks in advance for accepting to be part of this research work.

SECTION 1: CONFLICT AND CONFLICT MANAGEMENT

1. Who is charge of managing conflicts in the community when they come up?
2. In conflict situations, what is usually your objective or concerns?
3. How do you deal with conflict [what approach do you use] as someone in a leading position in the community?

SECTION 2: GENDER PERSPECTIVES/DYNAMICS IN CONFLICT MANAGEMENT

1. Do you have any concerns for gender in dealing with your approach to manage conflicts in the community?
2. How has gender affected your behaviour in managing conflicts?
3. In using gender as a yardstick in managing conflicts, what is the most important for you? Will you ensure a fair gender representation or not? Give reasons.
4. Do you have committees responsible for managing conflicts in the community? Yes / No?
5. If yes to question 5, then mention the names of these committees and the work they have done so far in managing conflicts in the community.

6. What is the gender representation of such committees?

7. Is there anything about these committees and their structure that you would want to change? Yes / No

8. If yes to question 7, please specify.

9. Is there a consideration for gender balance in the creation of such a committee? Yes / No?

10. If yes to question 9, could you give details on how this is carried out.

11. Have you ever been involved in a conflict process in the community? Yes/ No?

12. What is your opinion on women's ability to participate in managing conflicts and peace building? Are they empowered?

13. Are women's rights regarded in the Volta Region? Why/ why not?

14. What are the obstacles to gender equality in the management of conflicts in the Volta region?

15. What are the specific experiences of women after conflict situations in the Volta Region of Ghana?

SECTION 3: APPROACHES TO CONFLICT MANAGEMENT AND SOCIAL PROTECTION

1. If your answer to question 11 in section 3 was yes, what were the approaches used in the management of the conflict?

2. Is there any aspect of the conflict management process/approach/styles you would like to improve?

3. What are the potential strengths and weaknesses of the style/approach/processes used in managing conflicts in the community?

4. Suggest some societal structures that promote gender equality in conflict management in the community?

5. Suggest some state structures that promote gender equality in conflict management in the community.

6. Can you outline some differences in gender roles, activities, needs and opportunities in your community?

7. Do you experience any problems in managing conflicts in your community when they arise? Please explain.

8. Do men and women experience the problems stated in question 7, differently? Please explain.

9. How do men and women relate to each other in the community to manage conflicts?

10. Are there any societal forces that shape power relating to conflict management?

SECTION 4: SOCIAL PROTECTION MEASURES IN CONFLICT MANAGEMENT

11. What "social protection" measures are available in your institution for members, in instances of conflict management? Please specify them.

12. What "social protection" measures does your institution provide for communities in instances of conflict management? Please specify them.

13. Do the social protection measures have a gender dimension in their execution?

SECTION 5: STATE OF CONFLICT IN COMMUNITY

1. What is the current state of the conflict in your community?

2. Any suggestions from you on what should be done to totally nib this age-old conflict in the bud? Please specify.

SECTION 6: IMPACT OF CONFLICT MANAGEMENT ACTIVITIES ON THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE COMMUNITIES

1. Mention any four impacts of conflict management activities on the development of the communities.

    a) ………………………………………………………………………
    b) ………………………………………………………………………
    c) ………………………………………………………………………
    d) ………………………………………………………………………

APPENDIX C

FOCUS GROUP GUIDE FOR MEMBERS IN THE COMMUNITIES

(CONFLICT HOT SPOTS)

I am a PhD student at the Institute of Development Studies of the University of Cape Coast. As part of requirements of my doctoral program with the University, I am undertaking a study entitled: Gender Perspectives in Conflict Management in the Oti and Volta Regions of Ghana. Based on your expertise with great knowledge in the subject area, you have been selected to respond to some questions that will help in addressing the objectives of my study. Your participation in this study is voluntary. Your identity will be kept anonymous when reporting on findings of this study. Thanks in advance for accepting to be part of this research work.

SECTION 1: CONFLICT AND CONFLICT MANAGEMENT

1. Who is in charge of managing conflicts in the community when they come up?
2. Identify existing conflict management processes in your community.
3. How can you link conflict management processes in the community with global ones (Such as the governmental organizations and the civil society organizations)
4. In conflict situations, what is usually your objective or concerns as a community?
5. How do you deal with conflict [what approach do you use] as a community to manage conflicts when they arise?
6. What new processes, institutions, resources, projects, or efforts could stop the conflicts in the communities and the region?

SECTION 2: GENDER PERSPECTIVES IN CONFLICT MANAGEMENT

1. Do you have any concerns for gender in dealing with your community approach to managing conflicts?

2. How has gender affected your behaviour/ approach in managing conflicts?

3. In using gender as a yardstick in managing conflicts, what is the most important for you as a community? Will you ensure a fair gender representation or not? Give reasons.

4. Do you have committees responsible for managing conflicts in the community? Comment on these committees and the work they do.

5. What is the gender representation of such committees?

6. State anything about these committees and their structure that you would want to change.

7. Is there a consideration for gender balance in the creation of such a committee? Please state your opinion and details on the issue.

SECTION 3: GENDER DYNAMICS, APPROACHES TO CONFLICT MANAGEMENT AND SOCIAL PROTECTION

1. Have you ever been involved in a conflict management process in the community? When and where did it happen and what transpired?

2. What were the approaches used in the management of the conflict?

3. Is there any aspect of the conflict management process/approach/styles you would like to improve?

4. What are the potential strengths and weaknesses of the style/approach/processes used in managing conflicts in the community?

5. Suggest some societal structures that promote gender equality in conflict management in the community?

6. Suggest some state structures that promote gender equality in the community.

7. Can you outline some differences in gender roles, activities, needs and opportunities in relation to conflict management your community?

8. Do you experience any problem in the process of managing conflicts in your community when they arise? Please identify these problems.

9. If yes, please state some of the problems you experience in the process.

10. Do men and women experience the problems stated above differently?

11. If yes, please state how differently men experience these problems from women.

12. How do women experience the problems differently from men?

13. How do men and women relate to each other in the community in managing conflicts?

14. Are there any societal forces that shape power relations to conflict management taking due cognizance of men and women?

15. Do you as a community enjoy some social protection measures in the processes of conflict management? Briefly outline this.

16. Give the names of the institutions involved in giving your community the needed social protection during the period of the conflict. Please give details of what they do.

17. Do you get paid as a member of the community when you engage in sessions to help manage conflicts in the community?

18. What part of the day do you spend on conflict management?

19. Can you recognize and value of the unpaid domestic work you do in relation to conflict management?

20. What proportion of time do you spend on unpaid domestic work in relation to conflict management?

SECTION 4: WOMEN AND CONFLICT MANAGEMENT

1. Does your institution or your community ensure women's full and effective participation in conflict management and equal opportunities for leadership at all levels of decision-making in political, economic, and public life?

2. Does your institution or community promote and enforce non-discriminatory gender laws and policies in relation to conflict management?

3. What is the proportion of women in your conflict management sessions? (Is it low or high?). Please comment.

4. What does it mean to be a woman in your community?

5. Do you Experience any form of violence as a woman in your community?

6. Do you experience any form of violence as a woman when there is conflict?

7. What is being done to manage conflicts and build peace in your community?

8. What do women do in times of violent conflicts in the community?

9. How are women's needs different from that of men and children in conflict situations?

10. How are women building peace in your community/ family/ nation through conflict management?

11. What type of roles do you expect to see women playing in conflict management in 2030?

12. What factors in your opinion would allow women to participate in conflict management processes?

13. What interventions have been taken by governments, women organizations, and civil society in general to ensure gender equality in the gender representations in the process of conflict management?

SECTION 5: GENDER ROLES IN CONFLICT MANAGEMENT

1. In violent conflicts which of the effects concerns women or becomes the work of women/ girls?

2. Which of the effects concerns men / boys?

3. How do gender roles affect the process of conflict management?

4. How does age (children and the Elderly) affect the process of conflict management?

SECTION 6: IMPACT OF CONFLICT MANAGEMENT ACTIVITIES ON THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE COMMUNITIES

2. Mention any four impacts of conflict management activities on the development of the communities.

    a) ……………………………………………………………………

    b) ……………………………………………………………………

    c) ……………………………………………………………………

    d) ……………………………………………………………………

APPENDIX D

OBSERVATION GUIDE/CHECKLIST

Observation Guide for Study Communities			
Date/Time	Community	Items to be observed	Observation
		Community Outlook	
		Abandoned buildings	
		Holes in buildings	
		Security Presence	
		Curfew	
		Commerce	
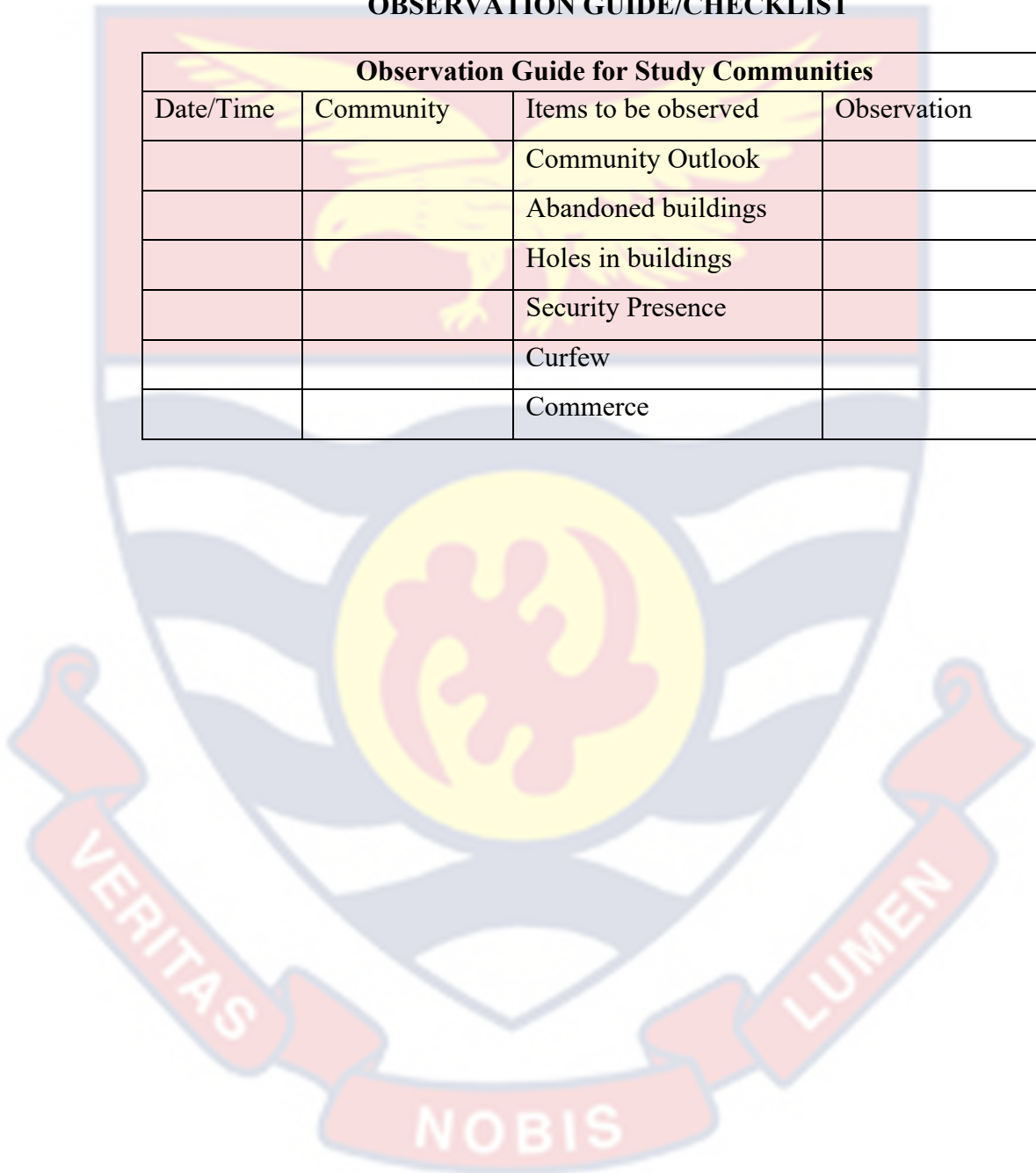
APPENDIX E

LETTER OF INTRODUCTION

UNIVERSITY OF CAPE COAST
COLLEGE OF HUMANITIES & LEGAL STUDIES
SCHOOL FOR DEVELOPMENT STUDIES
DEPARTMENT OF INTEGRATED DEVELOPMENT STUDIES

Direct Phone: +233-332096392 / 0241825850 / 0204083364 / 0277899273

Website: http://ucc.edu.gh
Email: doids@ucc.edu.gh

POST OFFICE BOX 01
UNIVERSITY OF CAPE COAST
CAPE COAST

Our Ref: DIDS/IL/ Vol.1/0017   14th March, 2019

Your Ref:

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

LETTER OF INTRODUCTION

We write to introduce to you **Mrs. Ayaakor Dela Enuameh-Agbolosoo,** a student pursuing **Doctor of Philosophy (Development Studies)** programme with Registration Number SS/DSD/15/0005 at the Department of Integrated Development Studies, University of Cape Coast.

Mrs. Enuameh-Agbolosoo is writing her thesis on the topic: **"Gender Perspectives in Conflict Management: Experiences from the Volta Region of Ghana".** We shall be grateful if you could accord her all the necessary assistance she requires for her thesis.

Please note that the information she requires is strictly for academic purposes.

Thank you.

Yours faithfully,

Frederick Koomson (PhD)
HEAD

APPENDIX F

IRB CLEARANCE

UNIVERSITY OF CAPE COAST

INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD SECRETARIAT

TEL: 03321-33172/3 / 0207355653/ 0244207814   C/O Directorate of Research, Innovation and Consultancy
E-MAIL: irb@ucc.edu.gh
OUR REF: UCC/IRB/A/2016/409
YOUR REF:
OMB NO: 0990-0279
IORG #: IORG0009096   30TH JULY, 2019

Mrs. Dela Ayaakor Enuameh-Agbolosoo
Department of Integrated Development Studies
University of Cape Coast

Dear Mrs. Enuameh-Agbolosoo
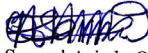
ETHICAL CLEARANCE –ID: (UCCIRB/CHLS/2019/13)

The University of Cape Coast Institutional Review Board (UCCIRB) has granted **Provisional Approval** for the implementation of your research protocol titled **Gender perspectives in conflict management: experiences from the Volta Region of Ghana.** This approval requires that you submit periodic review of the protocol to the Board and a final full review to the UCCIRB on completion of the research. The UCCIRB may observe or cause to be observed procedures and records of the research during and after implementation.

Please note that any modification of the project must be submitted to the UCCIRB for review and approval before its implementation.

You are also required to report all serious adverse events related to this study to the UCCIRB within seven days verbally and fourteen days in writing.

Always quote the protocol identification number in all future correspondence with us in relation to this protocol.

Yours faithfully,

Samuel Asiedu Owusu, PhD
UCCIRB Administrator
ADMINISTRATOR
ITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD
JNIVERSITY OF CAPE COAST
Date: 31.7.19

VITA

AYAAKOR DELA ENUAMEH-AGBOLOSOO

AIM

To contribute to the development of a knowledgeable and well-trained up-and-coming generation through good administrative policies, teaching and relevant research activities, whilst working with a team of dedicated and purposeful educational professionals of diverse specialties in a friendly, peaceful, and respectful environment.

PERSONAL INFORMATION

Name	Ayaakor Dela Enuameh-Agbolosoo
Date of Birth	December 20, 1974
Hometown	Vane-Avatime, Ghana
Nationality	Ghanaian
Permanent Address	Evangelical Presbyterian University College, Box HP 678, Ho - Volta Region.
Telephone	+ 233 20 7738462 / +233 556561856
E-mail	shikaafua@gmail.com
Languages Spoken	Ewe, Fanti / Twi and English

EDUCATIONAL BACKGROUND

2015 to Date	**Doctoral Candidate in Development Studies** at the University of Cape Coast (Completed my **Viva Voce in March 2022** and awaiting graduation).
2005 – 2008	**MPhil. (Geography & Resource Development)**, University of Ghana, Legon, Ghana
1998 – 2001	**BA (Geography & Sociology) - Second Class (Upper Division) Honours**, University of Cape Coast, Cape Coast, Ghana
1995 - 1997	**G.C.E. Advanced Level**, (Private Studies) at the Mfantsipim School, Cape Coast.

1993 - 1996	**Teachers' Certificate "A"**, OLA Training College, Cape Coast, Ghana
1991-1993	**G.C.E. Ordinary Level**, University Practice Secondary School, Cape Coast, Ghana

INTERNATIONAL LANGUAGES PROFICIENCY

English: Excellent

French: Basic

MEMBERSHIP OF PROFESSIONAL ORGANIZATIONS

1. Member of the Working Group on Women, Youth, Peace, and Security (WGWYPSGH), of the West Africa Network for Peace Building (WANEP) Ghana -   2019 - Date

2. Member of the International Trauma Healing Institute: 2020 - date

3. Ghana Bible Society Member: 2019- Date

4. Volta Regional Peace Council Board Member: 2014 - Date

5. National Association of Graduate Teachers of Ghana: 2001-2008

6. Ghana National Association for Teachers: 1996-1998

AWARDS AND FELLOWSHIPS

2003 Best Department Award (Department of Geography of the Wesley Girls' High School, Cape Coast) - Was one of the team of two teachers at the department.

The 2001 Book Fair held in Cape Coast saw my Dissertation, *"Public Perception of Forest Lands on the University of Cape Coast Campus: A Case Study of the University Community*," among the best ten (10) dissertations selected from the University of Cape Coast for Exhibition at the Fair.

Was one of the nominees for the Volta Regional Peace Council in October 2013. I was nominated by the Evangelical Presbyterian University College, Ho, where I teach and was successfully sworn into office in April 2014, after successfully going through an interview session organized by the National Peace Council.

WORK EXPERIENCE AND SOME RELEVANT POSITIONS HELD

2022-Date	**Ag. Head of Department** (Department of Education and Modern languages).
2022-Date	**Course Tutor** in Geography and Sociology at the University of Cape Coast Centre for Distance Education (Mawuli School Centre), Ho-Volta Region.
2021-Date	**Ag. Dean** (School of Arts and Social Sciences), Evangelical Presbyterian University College, Ho-Volta Region.
2020	**An Observer** for the **2020 Ghanaian Elections**
2018 – Date	Re - nominated member of the **reconstituted Volta Regional Peace Council.**
2014 - Date	**Member** (Representing Institutions of Higher Learning), Volta Regional Peace Council.
2012- Date	Academic Counsellor
2012- Date	**Lecturer** Integrated Development Studies Department, Evangelical Presbyterian University College, Ho - Volta Region.
2012 – 2016	**Ag. Head of Department** Integrated Development Studies Department, Evangelical Presbyterian University, Ho - Volta Region.
2008-2012	**Secretary** for National Association for Graduate Teacher's (Accra Central).
2008 - 2012	**Head and Tutor**, Department of Social Studies, Accra Technical Training Centre, Kokomlemle
2010- 2012	**Assistant Director**, Ghana Education Service
2001 –2010	**Principal Superintendent**, Ghana Education Service
2001 – 2004	**House Mistress, Form Mistress, Patron (Girl's Guide Association)**, Wesley Girls' High School, Cape Coast
1999 – 2001	**Treasurer,** International Association for the Exchange of Students' Technological Experience (IAESTE), University of Cape Coast, Ghana

1999 – 2001	**Treasurer**, Geographical Society (GEOSOC), University of Cape Coast, Ghana
1999 – 2001	**Treasurer**, Avatime Students' Union, University of Cape Coast, Ghana
1997- 2000	**Team Leader**, National Polio Eradication Campaign, Ministry of Health, Cape Coast, Ghana.

RESEARCH EXPERIENCE

1. Gender Perspectives on Conflict Management: A Focus on Women in the Oti and Volta Regions of Ghana. (**Ph.D. thesis submitted after VIVA-VOCE)**

2. Senna, R., Enuameh-Agbolosoo, A.D. (2021). Socio-Cultural Factors Affecting the Performance of Women Entrepreneurs in Adaklu Waya in the Volta Region of Ghana. *Technium Soc. Sci. J.*, *23*, 490.

3. Okorley, N. A. E., & Enuameh-Agbolosoo, A. D. (2022). Gender Perspectives on Social Protection Measures in Conflict Management from the Oti and Volta Regions of Ghana. *KnowEx Social Sciences*, *2*(01), 73-83

4. Aikins, K., Enuameh-Agbolosoo, A. D., & Agbesinyale, P. (2022). Gender Dynamics in Conflict Management Policies and Programs in Ghana's Oti and Volta Regions *KnowEx Social Sciences*, *2*(01), 45-58.

5. Aikins, K., Enuameh-Agbolosoo, A. D., & Agbesinyale, P. (2022). Gender Perspectives on the Structure and Function of Conflict Management Institutions and their Influence on Development in the Oti and Volta Regions of Ghana. *KnowEx Social Sciences*, *2*(01), 1-19.

6. Teenage Pregnancy Drop-out and Re-entry: A Case Study of the Adaklu District of the Volta Region of Ghana. (This was a UNICEF research project in 2017 on which I was a research assistant). This research was conducted by the Department of Development Studies, UCC and led by Prof. Ama Britwum and Prof. Agbesinyale.

7. Enuameh-Agbolosoo, A. D. (2016). Community Participation and Sustainable Forest Resource Management in Ghana: A Case of the Kakum National Park in

the Central Region of Ghana, *Journal of Resources Development and Management,* Vol.19,49-63.

8. Enuameh-Agbolosoo, A. D., Enuameh, A. S. K., Kotoka, J. J, Ziggah–Aborta, F., & Dabi, M. (2015). Community participation in forest resource management as a tool in reducing the effects of climate change and enhancing sustainable development. Int J Human Soc Stud, 3(8), 285-293.

9. **Master of Philosophy (MPhil) Degree Thesis (2007)**: Community Participation and Forest Resource Management: A Case of the Kakum National Park, Ghana.

10. **Bachelor of Arts (BA) Degree Thesis (2001)**: Public Perception of Forest Lands on the University of Cape Coast Campus: A Case Study of the University Community.

11. **Teacher's Certificate Course Work (1996)**: Tourism and its Problems in the Avatime Traditional Area: A Case Study.

CONFERENCES, COURSES AND WORKSHOPS

November 2021   Pathways to achieving SDG goal 5 in the post-Covid 19 era: Challenges and Prospects. Organized by WANEP (West African Network for Peace Building), at the Coconut Groove Hotel in Accra, from November 23rd, 2021, to November 24th, 2021.

November 2021   Women in Peace and Security Leadership and Mentoring Course, organized by the Kofi Annan International Peace Keeping Training Centre (KAIPTC), an Accredited Tertiary Institution, from the 15th – 20th of November 2021 at the SEEN Hotel in Abidjan, Cote D'Ivoire.

October 2021   The 8th International Conference on Social Sciences, 2021. New Normal to a New Beginning: Formation of a Sustainable Society (An online conference). Organized by the International Institute of Knowledge Management, Sri

	Lanka. I presented three (3) papers from my PhD thesis at this Conference.
September 2021	Took a Strategic Context of Defense Management Course at The Kofi Annan International Peace Keeping Training Centre (KAIPTC), an accredited Tertiary Institution, from the 20th of September to the 1st of October 2021.
November 2020	A day's Training Session of Election Observers. Organized by the Electoral Commission of Ghana at the Commission's Premises in the Volta Regional Capital, Ho.
March 2020	Trauma Healing Advanced Training Session at Ho, Volta Region. Organized by the Bible Society of Ghana, from the 2nd to 9th of March 2019, at the Freedom Hotel in Ho, Volta Region.
December 2019A	Workshop on Gender, Conflict, and Peace. A UNDP Training Program for Peace Council (Board Members and Staff), from the 11th -12th of December at the Miklin Hotel, Kumasi.
June 2019	An International Symposium on Global Community Engaged Learning. Organized by the ADANU and Michigan State University's Office for Education Abroad, from June 24-29, 2019, at the Volta Serene Hotel, Ho, Ghana.
March 2019	Trauma Healing Classic Training Session at Ho, Volta Region. Organized by the Bible Society of Ghana, from the 15th to 19th of March 2019, at the GNAT Conference Hall in Ho, Volta Region.
October 2017	A Stakeholders Conference of the Regional Peace Councils in Kumasi at the Golden Tulip Hotel for two days.
August 2017	Strengthening the Capacity of Members of the Regional Peace Councils in Conflict Mediation. Organized by the National Peace Council from the 8th of August to the 10th of August at the Capital View Hotel in Koforidua.

June 2016	A three-day International Conference on Reflections in Development Studies. Organized by the Institute of Development Studies, UCC, and Cape Coast.
March 2016	A Two Week 2016 International Ph.D. Harmattan School "Re-activating Gender-Sensitive Research on land". Organized by the Centre for Gender Research, Advocacy and Documentation (CEGRAD), College of Humanities and Legal Studies, Faculty of Social Sciences, UCC, Cape Coast.
December 2015	A Workshop on Research Philosophy and Research Methods: Qualitative Methodology at the Faculty of Social Sciences Conference Room. Organized by the University of Bradford Faculty of Social Sciences and University of Cape Coast Faculty of Social Sciences.
November 2015	One-week Doctoral Summer School organized by the College of Humanities and Legal Studies, University of Cape Coast.
July 2015	A Two-Day Workshop on Conflict Management organized by the Volta Regional Peace Council for its members. Organized at the Chances Hotel, Ho, Volta Region.
April 2015	A Two-Day International Conference on Business Management and Entrepreneurial Development. **Theme: "Management of SMEs: Issues Challenges and Opportunities"**, organized by the Faculty of Management, University of Professional Studies, Accra. **Paper Presented**: Community Participation and Sustainable Forest Resource Management: A Case of the Kakum National Park.
February 2014	A Two-Day Professional Development Workshop on Teaching and Assessment, organized by Dr. Albert Dare and Prof. Kafui Etsey of the University of Cape Coast.

November 2013	A Two-Day Workshop on Enhancing Women's Participation in Ghana's Peace Architecture by African Women's Active Nonviolence Initiatives for Social change (AWANICh).
March 2013	A Two-Day Seminar on Procurement, organized by the Evangelical Presbyterian University College, Ho.
March 2013	A Five-Day Strategic Management Seminar to design a Strategic Plan for the Evangelical Presbyterian University College, Ho - Volta Region, Organized by CORAT AFRICA, an International NGO.
Dec. 2012	A Two-Day workshop on effective teaching and learning methods, organized by the Evangelical Presbyterian University College - Ho.
April 2010	A Five-Day workshop on the Effective Teaching of Social Studies. Organized by the Social Studies Department of the University of Education, Winneba in Collaboration with the Government of Ghana. Workshop organized at the School of Languages, Ajumako in the Central Region of Ghana
April 2007	A Five-Day International Conference on the Management of National Parks and Biodiversity Conservation in Africa. Organized by the International Centre for Enterprises Sustainable Development (ICED) in Collaboration with the University of Ghana and the Vrije University of Brussels.
November 2004	A One-Week Workshop on the Effective Teaching of Geography in Ghana. Organized by the Geographical Association of Ghana. Organized at the Wesley Girls' High School Assembly Hall.
January 2004	A Three-Day Workshop on the Basic Principles of Counselling Adolescents. Organized by The Counselling and Placement Centre, University of Ghana.

TECHNICAL SKILLS AND COMPETENCIES

Comfortable with Microsoft Word, Excel, PowerPoint (Presentations & Posters) and SPSS.

PERSONAL INTERESTS

Singing, dancing, sightseeing, counselling, and learning.

COMMUNITY WORK/SERVICE/PARTNERSHIPS

1. There is an ongoing partnership with an NGO (Pencils of Promise) in Ho, the Volta Regional Capital, to engage students of my department in carrying out literacy and numeracy tests in Basic Schools in the communities of the Volta Region to ascertain the levels of numeracy and literacy. This project commenced in 2014 and is a means of determining gaps within the educational system in relation to literacy and numeracy for the NGO to work. Every year the test results are analysed, and measures are taken to address the observed existing challenges.

2. Pencils of Promise again helped my department to secure the Hodzo Ve Rural Community, a mobile Library facility from primary one to primary six. The library facility also includes electronic readers which would expose the pupils in the community to stories across the globe. This was an expressed need of the community in our last visit to the community as a rural sociology class, wanting to know much about their forms of livelihood.

3. Through a departmental collaboration with Pencils of Promise, when I was HoD, an award for the 'Best final year student' in Development Studies and other awards for students with 'First Class' were instituted. This award scheme commenced in 2015 and is always presented to the deserving students during congregations.

REFEREES

Dr. Kenneth Aikins

Department of Peace Studies, University of Cape Coast, Cape Coast, Cell Phone: +233 244403577

Prof. Mariama Awumbila

Department of Geography & Resource Development, University of Ghana Legon, Cell Phone: +233 20 6744316

Prof. E. M. Attua

Department of Geography & Resource Development, University of Ghana, Legon, Cell Phone: +233 244 664913

COPIES OF PAPERS PUBLISHED FROM THE THESIS

Three papers were published from the thesis, and these are attached.

1. Okorley, N. A. E., & Enuameh-Agbolosoo, A. D. (2022). Gender Perspectives on Social Protection Measures in Conflict Management from the Oti and Volta Regions of Ghana. *KnowEx Social Sciences*, *2*(01), 73-83

2. Aikins, K., Enuameh-Agbolosoo, A. D., & Agbesinyale, P. (2022). Gender Dynamics in Conflict Management Policies and Programs in Ghana's Oti and Volta Regions *KnowEx Social Sciences*, *2*(01), 45-58.

3. Aikins, K., Enuameh-Agbolosoo, A. D., & Agbesinyale, P. (2022). Gender Perspectives on the Structure and Function of Conflict Management Institutions and their Influence on Development in the Oti and Volta Regions of Ghana. *KnowEx Social Sciences*, *2*(01), 1-19.
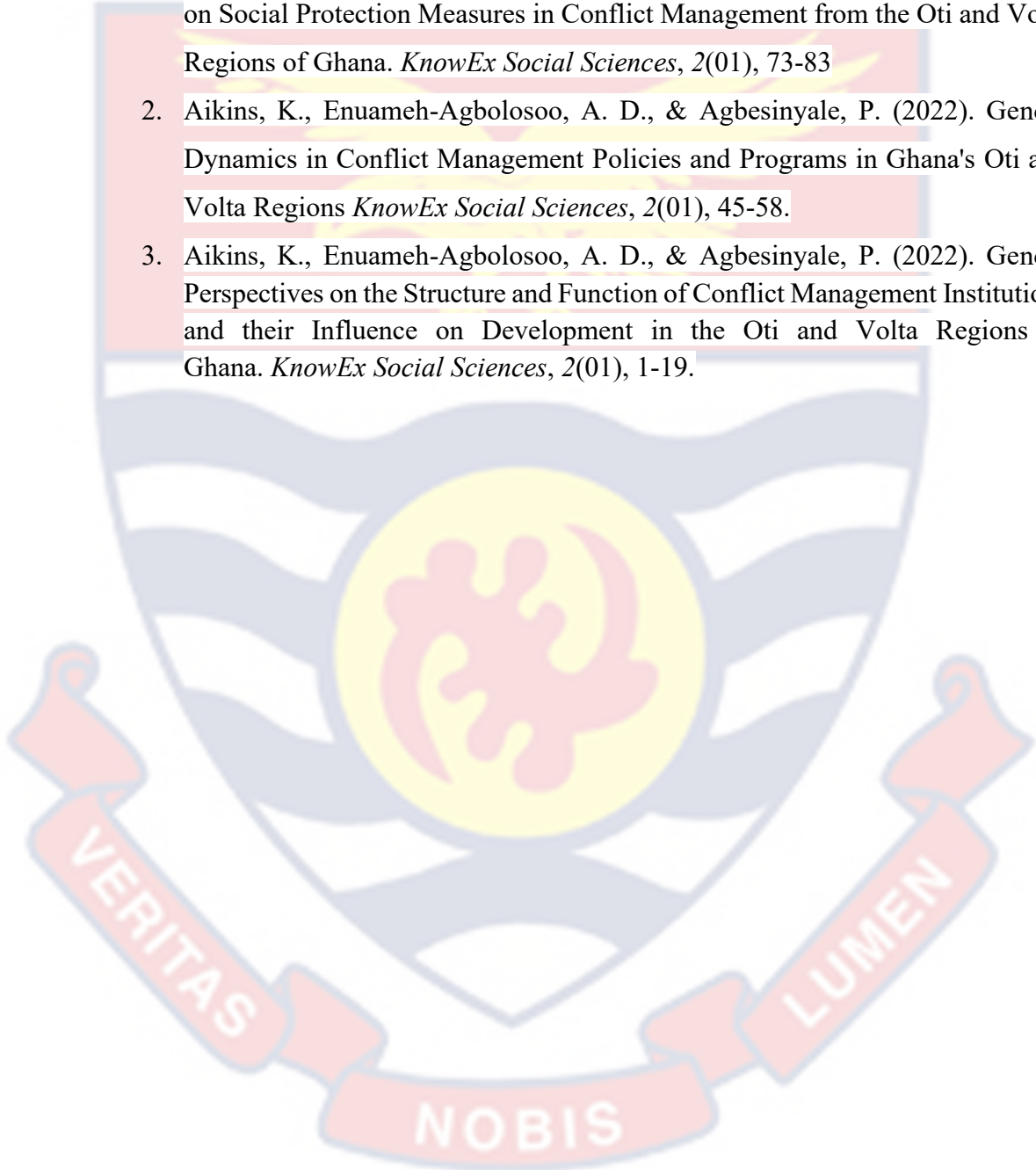
GENDER PERSPECTIVES ON SOCIAL PROTECTION MEASURES IN CONFLICT MANAGEMENT FROM THE OTI AND VOLTA REGIONS OF GHANA

Okorley NAE[1] and Enuameh-Agbolosoo AD[2*]

[1]*Department of Human Resource Management, School of Business, College of Humanities and Legal Studies, University of Cape Coast, Ghana*

[2] *Department of Integrated Development Studies, School of Social Sciences Evangelical Presbyterian University College, Ho-Volta Region, Ghana*

Abstract: A number of conflict hotspots as old as the ages of the communities themselves, can be associated with the communities of the Oti and Volta Regions of Ghana respectively. These hotspots have conflicts that need to be sustainably managed so they do not lead to frequent violent situations. The term conflict management according to this study encompasses all activities that prevent and manage conflicts in a non-violent way. The study examined the gender perspectives of social protection measures available to these communities in times of conflict management. Data was collected through interviews, focus group discussions, and observation. Narrative thematic analysis was used in bringing out key issues related to the study. Perspectives on social protection measures available to communities revealed several forms in the current study. The results revealed that there has been high support for social protection received from some governmental and Non-Governmental Institutions as well as religious groups and leaders. The social protection forms came from the pockets of benevolent government workers, appropriate agencies, the Peace Council, individuals in the conflict hotspots, and international donors. Gendered perspectives of social protection revealed social protection measures with a gender focus and social protection measures without a gender focus. The study also indicated that some external organizations or institutions have disappointed the communities as they never followed up on promises they made in response to social protection requests from the communities in times of conflict.

Keywords: social protection, measures, gender perspectives, conflict management, conflict hotspots

Introduction

The current paper focuses on gender perspectives of social protection measures, specifically exploring social protection measures available for communities in instances of conflict management and their gender dimensions. Conflict management refers to various processes of resolving conflict, peacemaking, conflict transformation, and other measures that ensure individuals, families, and social groups in a given environment coexist peacefully (Bercovitch, 1983; Miall, 2004; Mckibben, 2017). The conflict management process facilitates development through the reduction of violence and hostilities (Kremenyuk, 2002; CCR, 2012; Bayer & Schernick, 2015; Folger, Poole & Stutman, 2017).

Social Protection has evolved essentially as a policy framework geared toward addressing the canker of poverty and the various forms of vulnerability associated with developing countries (Barrientos,

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2010). It is a human right that is enshrined in several UN conventions including the Convention for the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Also, very recent developments in social protection have basically focused on risk and vulnerability which all contribute to poverty directly and indirectly exposing poor households to risk (Barrientos & Hulme, 2016; Rosche, 2016).

Additionally, Idres (2016) also raises social support concerns about communities being supported in times of conflict through some kind of funding to support victims of conflict. Social protection contributed significantly to enhancing the quality of life of individuals and societies by developing and unleashing human potential, facilitating structural change, increasing stability, advancing social justice and cohesion, and promoting economic dynamism (Garcia & Gruat, 2003; FAO, 2016; Babajanian, 2012 in Idres, 2016; The United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UNDESA), 2018). Both Baafi (2018) and Jones and Doh (2009) all point out the essence of social protection to human development, especially in Ghana where about 6.8 million people are categorized as poor. Social protection is also central to human security (Darcy, 2004).

The study explored the various types of social protection measures available to communities, the gendered nature of these social protection measures, and the contribution of the social protection measures to the development of Conflict hotspots. Perspectives on social protection measures available to the communities revealed some forms in the current study. Social protection was primarily given by governmental and non-governmental institutions and was followed closely by religious groups and leaders. Individual interviewees were also of the opinion that social protection came from the pockets of benevolent government workers, appropriate agencies, the Peace Council, individuals in the conflict hotspots, and international donors. In spite of the positives of social protection programs, social protection has still been criticized for not being gendered enough in its approach (Alik-Lagrange, Dreier, Lake, and Porisky (2021). Researchers such as Luttrell and Moser (2004); Bouta, Frerks, and Bannon (2005); Babajanian (2012) in Idris (2016), all point to the non-gendered nature of social protection and the need for bridging the gap.

The prioritization of women as beneficiaries of social protection programmes is in part due to their being seen as disproportionately in need than men, or much more vulnerable to poverty from a lack of capital or discriminatory gender norms. This makes it necessary for social protection policies and programmes to be looked at through gender lenses as a matter of necessity for them to impart change and be sustainable in the long term (Newton, 2016).

A focus on social protection through a gender lens has the potential of accounting for the different risks women and men experience across their lifecycle in a systemic manner and ultimately transform their unequal social and economic circumstances. Evidence generated by a gendered approach would feed into well-equipped implementation activities that have been adequately resourced to address observed differences. Without a gender lens, social protection has the potential of reinforcing traditional gender stereotypes, increase the poverty of women, and even lead to gender-based violence (Newton, 2016).

Study Areas

The study covered two districts in the Oti region with the Nkonya community located in the Biakoye district and the Nkwanta community located in the Nkwanta South district. In the Volta region, however, the study covered three districts, namely: the Peki community in the South Dayi district, the Tsito community in the Ho West district and the Alavanyo and Hohoe communities in the Hohoe municipality as shown in Figure 1. The study therefore generally covered two regions in Ghana and five districts in the Oti and Volta regions altogether.
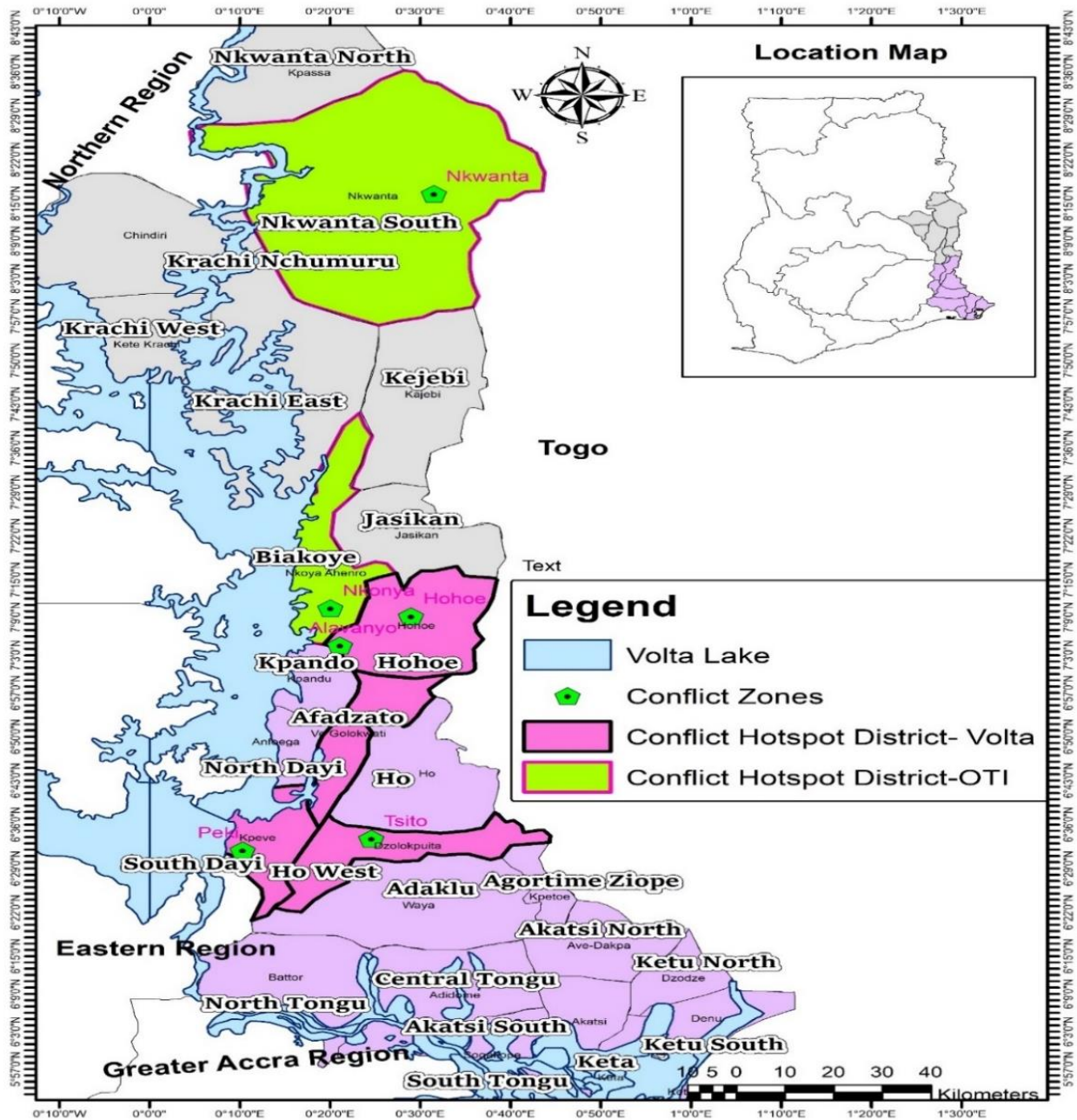
Figure 1: Map showing the location of conflict hotspots and their districts of location in the Oti and Volta Regions of Ghana.

Source: HypaSpatial (2019)

Materials and Methods

The qualitative research paradigm with a focus on interpretivism as a philosophy was used for the study. From the perspective of Chowdhury (2014), interpretivism seeks to understand the contemporary social world. Thus, it looks for culturally derived and historically situated interpretations of the social world. With the help of a case study design, data were collected through interviews, focus group discussions, and observations. In all, a total of 84 respondents from institutions and conflict hotspots were used as key informants in the study (Table 1). This was made up of thirty-six respondents who were interviewed from 14 institutions and forty-eight participants from six conflict hotspots who were involved in the focus group discussion of the study.

Table 1: Distribution of Study Sample – Made up of Interview and Focus Group Participants Key Informant Interview Participants

Institutions	Sample	Institutions	Sample
National Commission for Civic Education (NCCE)	3	Alavanyo Traditional Authority	3
Peace Council	3	Nkonya Traditional Authority	3
Department of Gender	1	Peki Traditional Authority	3
Department of Children	1	Tsito Traditional Authority	3
Department of Social Welfare	1	Hohoe Traditional Authority	3
House of Chiefs	3	Nkwanta Traditional Authority	3
NGO (GLOWA)	3	Security Services (Police	3
Sub-total of key informants			36
Focus Group Discussion			
Alavanyo	8	Nkwanta	8
Tsito	8	Hohoe	8
Peki	8	Nkonya	8
Sub-total of key informants			48
Total Respondents for the Study			84

Table 2 presents information on data types, population, data collection methods, and instruments used for the study. The source of data was mainly primary. Primary data was used because it is regarded as more authentic and reliable as well as objective since it has not been published yet. In addition, primary data was used because of its higher validity and unadulterated nature. Among the numerous advantages of primary data also include greater control of data and addressing the specific issues of conflict in the hotspots.

Using interviews, focus groups, and observation guides, field data was generated from key informants for the study. The in-depth interview method was employed for data collection from heads of institutions whilst the focus group discussion and observation methods collected data from gatekeepers, opinion leaders as well as infrastructure and human activities within the conflict hotspots of Oti and Volta Regions respectively (Table 2). Narrative thematic analysis was used to examine key issues in relation to the specific objectives of the study.

Table 2: Data Types, Population, Data Collection Methods, and Instruments

Type of Data/Source of Data	Study Population	Data Collection Method	Data Collection Instrument
Qualitative/Primary	Key Informants from Institutions and conflict hotspots (Mainly heads of institutions and top ranks as well as traditional authorities)	In-depth interview	Interview Guide
Qualitative/Primary	Gatekeepers and opinion leaders from conflict hotspots/ Communities (mainly Queen mothers, traditional representatives, opinion leaders, the youth, women, and men)	Focus Group Discussion	Focus Group Guide
Qualitative/Primary	Infrastructure and human activities within Conflict hotspots/ communities	Observation	Observation Guide

Results and Discussions

Social protection measures available for communities in instances of conflict management

Though not always directly related to conflicts, some governmental and non-governmental organizations have been very supportive in terms of social protection during some disasters that occurred in the communities. The statements of these key informant interviewees from Hohoe, GLOWA, and NCCE attest to this.

> We give them seeds, we make them advocate for their rights which they were not doing before, which is an addition to their livelihoods, and something they were never hoping for was that they could easily engage the assembly or the traditional leaders respectfully. We created a team called COMBAT, which is like a local police force with support from the police, the Chiefs, and traditional leaders to complement the efforts of the police against crime in those communities. This was done because we noticed there was only one police station in the whole of Adaklu. This organized group, which is the COMBAT, is doing so much and the people are very happy and even want us to extend it to other communities (4th September 2019).

> In fact, with social protection, we embarked on such activity recently. A rainstorm recently hit Sokode and ripped off a lot of buildings. We, therefore, went to the community with NADMO to educate most of the community members to assist each other in rebuilding their houses. We told them to be united because if everybody wants to do it individually, it will not get them anywhere. Fortunately for us, we were supported with some roofing sheets by the Member of Parliament. We, therefore, encouraged them to ensure that they get back to their houses. So that was the most recent thing that we did for Sokode Ando (5th September 2019).

In a statement about the Hohoe community at a group discussion, a youth leader who was also a worker at the National Disaster Management Organization (NADMO) mentioned that his organization helped the community in difficult times. He again mentioned the community receiving some form of help from the Central Government which supports them in times of need. Muslim communities, who also called for help during the past conflict, were supplied with food items. This at least pointed to a level of social protection available for the community in difficult times and which could create some leverage for development.

Religious organizations also offered social protection

Some religious groupings and their leaders both locally and from the diaspora have been very instrumental in enhancing social protection mechanisms for our communities. A key informant from Nkwanta and a pastor of the local council of churches indicated this in the statement below.

> There are times that the church contributes something in times of conflict to provide some social protection measures to the community (12th December 2019).

Discussions in Tsito indicated that pastors of the local council of churches came together to help in line with social protection issues in times of conflict. In the Peki/ Tsito conflict, for instance, the discussions revealed that all churches came together to help. The church was the main factor in calming the situation after the conflict. The church basically had been at the forefront of calming the situation throughout the conflict and after by providing money for fueling vehicles for meetings as well as giving out the vehicles of pastors for transporting committee members to meetings.

Additionally, discussions in Hohoe among the Muslim community members indicated there were forms of assistance from their Muslim brothers across the regions of the country. It was indicated that the Muslim communities from Kumasi, Accra, and the other regions were all said to have sent foodstuffs and clothing to help out after conflict situations. Finally, they also stated that they had some relief from the government.

Unfulfilled Social Protection promises by some institutions

Some external organizations/institutions have been disappointing to the community as they never followed up on promises they made in response to social protection requests from the communities. In Peki it was disclosed in a focus group discussion that they went to the castle sometime back to seek help after the conflict, but it did not yield any fruits. It was also indicated in Alavanyo that the pleas of women for help after conflict situations yielded a better response than that of the men. Additionally, it was also stated that the Alavanyo community, for instance, had never benefited from any external support. Interestingly, they added that even though organizations would most of the time come to write their names and promised to get in touch, they as a community heard nothing from them afterward.

During a discussion session in Nkonya, it was established that since the disputed land was their original farmland where they had most of their foodstuff came from, people were unable to have a means of livelihood as they could no longer go to their farms. Organizing financial support from the community to support such conflicts is, therefore, a difficult thing to do. There was therefore virtually no support in terms of health, injuries, and the like under such situations. Interestingly, the organizations that also come to support always come and promise and then if anything at all, give something little. The police, the military, and the Peace Council were part of the institutions that were noted to have provided a level of social protection services to the community.

The security forces focused more on vulnerable populations during most conflicts

Though the Security Forces take their overall social protection responsibilities to the community seriously and in a non-discriminatory fashion, there are instances that they focus more on vulnerable women and children as these bear the brunt of most conflict situations. This was what key informants from the police and military had to say.

> Yes, there are instances where the conflict is going on, we can conduct maybe an evacuation measure where we may evacuate maybe the women and children to a particularly safe place – be it a school, a school compound, or a football field. Because attacks sometimes come directly at people in their houses, we have to get them out of their community. And in most cases, the majority of them end up running towards our camp to seek refuge in our detachment locations. So, those are some of the social protection measures that we put in place to help out (10th September 2019).

> When I am moving to any conflict-prone area, like the day that we were going to Alavanyo, we first informed the two divisional commanders in Kpando and Hohoe, for them to go in there. Though the Chiefs were here and invited us, we still sent people in advance to the place to go and see them. And when we were going, we made sure that we were prepared. It will not be a story if maybe any civilian goes to Alavanyo and is ambushed but if the Police are ambushed, it will be a story (9th September 2019).

> It's not my institution that established that, but the government of Ghana has given them that security by establishing a military zone in both communities. So, there is a military

zone at both Nkonya and Alavanyo. This is to help them go about their livelihood activities with ease (3rd September 2019)

Institutions that were not mandated on social protection served as referral portals

Some institutions such as the Department of Social Welfare and the National Commission for Civic Education admitted that social protection is not their mandate and where necessary, they refer communities to the appropriate agencies and institutions.

> That is government – the government has to go in. The government is having social welfare schemes and they have a unit, social welfare unit that deals with such issues. We cannot apply for a budget with this. They will say that they've given it to the social welfare unit. They will not give it to us. Can't think about a gender dimension (9th September 2019).

> No, we rather refer them. When there is an issue of that nature, we rather refer them to the appropriate areas, or we even call those agencies or departments for their help. So, in fact, the commission as an entity giving social protection of that nature, no, but what we do is we rather refer or bring those people in for them to take over (5th September 2019).

A focus group discussion disclosed that the social protection the community had enjoyed so far was the presence of the security personnel in the community to stop the escalation of the Nkonya-Alavanyo conflict. Asides from that, it was also stated that the National Peace Council comes around to talk to people in the community.

Local communities and individuals did provide social protection

There are instances when the community and individuals rally around providing some form of social protection to those in need. A key respondent from the Department of children, Ho, had this to say as an attestation to their help.

> There is no budgetary allocation for that so we sometimes in rare cases do that from our own pockets (7th September 2019).

In a focus group discussion in Nkonya, a youth leader observed that when someone is injured, the community is able to help in financial terms so that the person gets sent to the hospital.

Donor agencies occasionally provided social protection contrary to their mandate

International donor agencies usually do not direct their resources into social protection, however, based on community needs there are occasions such provisions are made. A typical example of such a situation is evident in the statement of a key respondent for the NCCE.

> We educate, but sometimes the sponsors give us the resources to go out there and educate people. Sponsors like the European Union have been doing that for some time now. So, I will say that is the only thing they do for us. But sometimes in certain areas like Nkonya, I remember we gave them something small (money) (5th September 2019).

Social protection measures and their gender dimensions

Social Protection measures with a gender focus or without a gender focus were the two main themes that evolved under this section. The measures with a gender focus either paid attention to women or men in the execution of programmes in the communities, whereas the measures without a gender focus had no person in mind in the execution of programmes, and these were from the majority of respondents.

Some social protection measures by some organizations were targeted at the female gender or can be said to be gender-focused

This is very relevant to helping manage conflicts successfully. In any case, the gender focus whether on males or females should be a means of bridging an inequality gap in society. Luttrell and Moser (2004) state that conflicts by nature has their impacts on shocks affecting men and women differently. It is useful therefore to think of men and women (as well as boys and girls) as different constituents in any analysis. They were therefore of the opinion that social protection needs to be tailored accordingly in the process of conflict management. They noted that erosion of social capital is one of the legacies of violent and prolonged intrastate conflict. They suggested that if other forms of capital (human, financial, or physical) can be replenished even after conflict situations, sustainable development will be constrained unless positive social capital can also be rebuilt (Luttrell and Moser, 2004). The statements below from the NCCE, GLOWA and the house of chiefs were indicative of social protection measures targeted at gender to help solve a social problem.

> Our focus is mainly on women, not on men (4th September 2019).

> They do have a gender focus. LEAP is an example of that though it does not directly fall under our jurisdiction though (7th September 2019).

> Because the house is a purely male affair, we can say "NO' to the female gender (8th September 2019).

Some social protection measures did not have a specific gender focus and could be said to be for all

There are instances where some social protection measures do not come with any gender in mind but are however expected to solve a problem that benefits everybody in the community. The aim here is to basically solve a problem without reference to any group of people but for society's benefit. These can be evinced through the ensuing key informant statements from GLOWA, Ghana police, and the department of children.

> Under the anti-corruption project, there is an aspect known as the JESI project which seeks to find out how other socially excluded groups can be captured, and how we will be able to make sure that they also benefit from the project, whether they are men, women, boys, and girls, etc. Therefore, an eligible person, benefits, without using any gender dimensions (4th September 2019).

> I once met a war situation that was somewhere in the Eastern region, where there were two factions that were having that problem. What I did was to bring in the necessary people, but then I was even asked to come and make a statement over some of the things I witnessed. At the end of the day when I engaged in these activities, I just felt it was a social protection act I was engaged in and never thought about it in terms of gender. We go to solve problems in society, so the solution to the problem is our basic aim (5th September 2019).

> So far, I have not seen any such dimension (3rd September 2019).

To some respondents, it would be a bit difficult to start thinking about gender rather than solve an existing problem that would make life comfortable for members of a community. However, institutions like Ho NGO name GLOWA, the Department of Women and Children, and the Department of Social Welfare identifying certain problems could come in with specially designed programmes to tackle poverty levels among the various communities and conflict hotspots in society possibly bringing in some gender dimensions, so nobody is left out in times of need. In Alavanyo and Nkonya, Peki/Tsito, and Nkwanta or Hohoe conflicts, for instance, there are a number of victims of the age-old conflicts who have totally been deprived of their means of livelihood, but interestingly have not benefitted from any form of social protection. This has made especially the females who lost their husbands who were breadwinners to conflicts, find life very difficult to lead.

Due to gender differences within the household as well as in society, women and men experience poverty differently. A gender equality approach to social protection policies, strategies, and programs is therefore paramount to enable equal access to protection from extreme poverty, vulnerability, and social exclusion. Social protection contributes to challenging gender roles through increased income for women, decreased intimate partner violence, and increased school attendance for girls. In spite of the positives of social protection programs, social protection has still been criticized for not being gendered enough in its approach (SIDA, 2019).

Limitation

As a result of the purposive selection of study participants in the various study areas, their views expressed may not be exactly the views of the larger community members.

Suggestions for Further Studies

Further studies could focus on how the Oti and Volta regions in Ghana would draw up or push for more gendered policies and programs in conflict management in relation to social protection

Conclusion

The current study had several forms of social protection measures evolving as perspectives from various communities and conflict management institutions. Evident was social protection from governmental or non-governmental Institutions followed closely by those from religious groups and leaders. Social protection also came from the pockets of benevolent government workers, appropriate agencies, the Peace Council, individuals in the conflict hotspots, and international donors. Some external organizations/institutions were seen to be disappointing to the communities as they never followed up on promises they made in response to social protection requests from the communities. Social protection measures for communities were observed to be inadequate as well as not gendered.

Recommendations

The study recommended that social protection measures should be factored into conflict management processes to ameliorate the distress of populations in conflict settings. Privileged institutions in conflict management should work hard in providing social protection measures to communities as well as ensure community development. Additionally, attention was to be paid to social protection policies and programmes through a gender lens as a matter of necessity, to help ensure the sustainability of such programmes.

Declaration of Interest Statement

The authors declare that there are no known conflicts of interest associated with this publication and there has been no significant financial support for this work that could have influenced its outcome.

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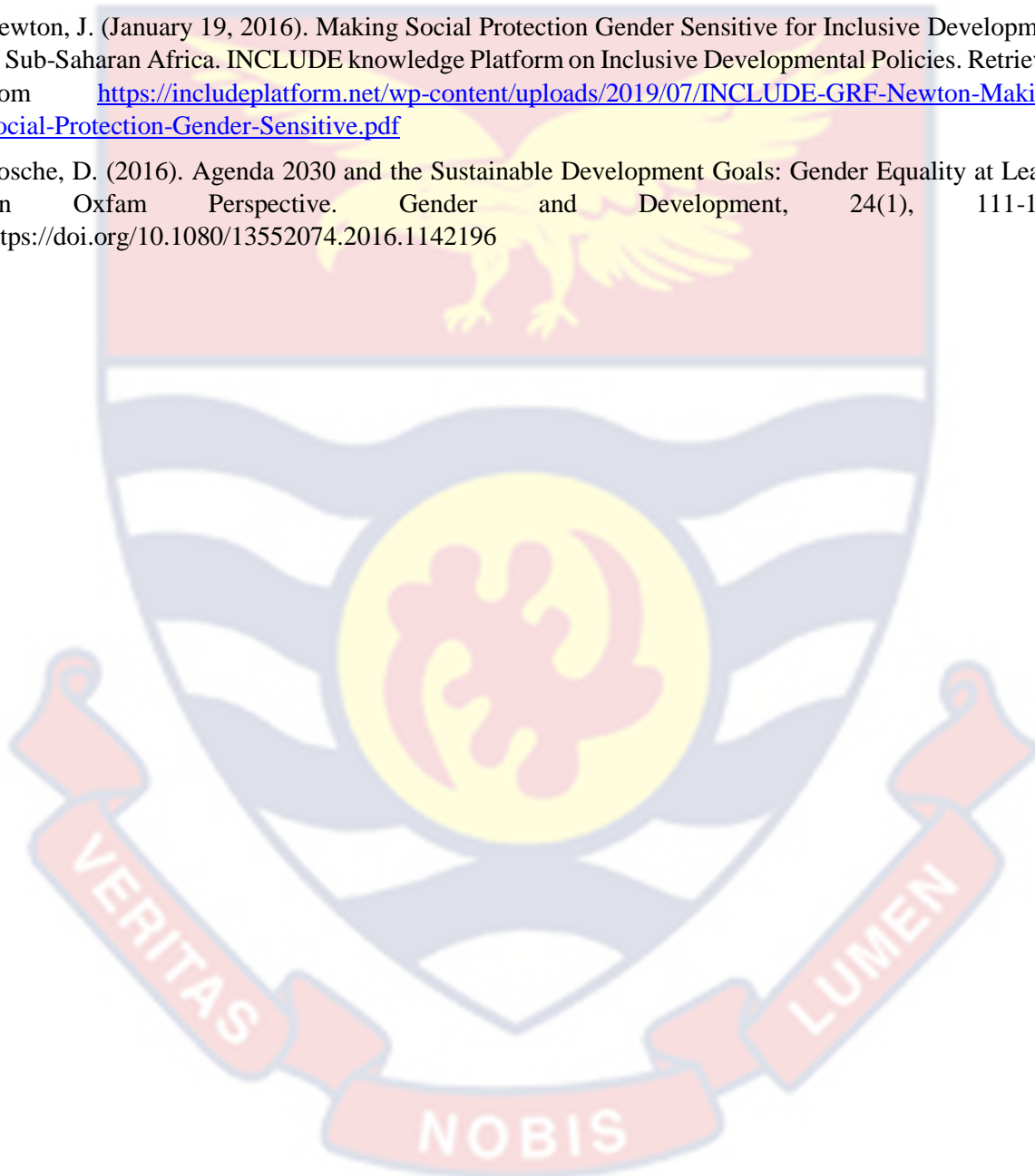
GENDER DYNAMICS IN CONFLICT MANAGEMENT POLICIES AND PROGRAMS IN GHANA'S OTI AND VOLTA REGIONS

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Abstract: A number of conflict hotspots, as old as the age of the communities, can be associated with the communities of the Oti and Volta Regions of Ghana, respectively. These conflicts must be managed sustainably so they do not degenerate into violent situations time after time. The study analysed the gender dynamics of conflict management policies and programmes and their influence on development. A case study design was adopted. Data was collected through interviews, focused group discussions, and observation. Narrative thematic analysis was used in bringing out key issues related to the study. Institutional gender perspectives on policies and practices of gender equality, mainstreaming, women's empowerment, and the involvement of women in peace and security issues revealed that even though there was an education on gender equality and gender mainstreaming, the involvement of women was generally low in all spheres. The findings also indicated there was name-calling by other women, resulting in women shying away from taking various positions in public. Some institutions also maintained the status quo that women were below men and so should therefore work under the authority of men. Gender equality and mainstreaming were to be applied only when women qualified for the positions they were applying for. Concluding, the consideration of gender balance in the creation of committees that helped to manage conflicts was overwhelmingly affirmed across the board, emphasizing the inclusion of women just like men on the conflict management committees. However, female empowerment seems to be a concept yet to be practicalized in some settings.

Keywords: gender mainstreaming, gender equality, gender dynamics, conflict management, women's empowerment, development.

Introduction

According to the European Institute for Gender Equality [EIGE], 2020, gender dynamics are informed by socio-cultural ideas about gender and the power relationships that define them. Depending on how they are reinforced, gender dynamics can reinforce or challenge existing norms. The essence of conflict management under such a circumstance is to help build on and sustain gender role changes that result from conflict (OSCE 2001; Kumar 2005; ILO 2001 as cited in Bouta, Frerks & Bannon, 2004). It was observed from the literature that conflict management policies and programmes even though were well spelled out by conflict management institutions lag in practice. Also, the gender dynamics of most of the conflict management policies and programmes were skewed towards males with some institutions with policies and programmes which were gender biased.

Conflict management refers to various processes of resolving conflict, peacemaking, conflict transformation, and other measures or overtures that ensure individuals, families, and social groups of a given environment coexist peacefully. This has the added benefit of facilitating development. In settings where a gendered approach was used, an amicable settlement of conflicts was arrived at. Anecdotal evidence points to the absence of gendered perspectives in the conflict management approach being implemented within diverse conflict hotspots in Ghana. The Dual Concern theory,

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Thomas Kilmann's Model, and Feminist theories are all theories that propose equal opportunities for women and men and would guide the assessment of the gender dynamics of conflict management systems within the study communities - facilitating the investigation of conflict management from a gender perspective and its influence on the overall development of communities in the Oti and Volta Regions of Ghana.

The study analyzed the institutional gender perspectives on policies and practices of gender equality, mainstreaming, women's empowerment, and the involvement of women in peace and security issues; assessed the gender balance in the creation of conflict management committees; and assessed formal or informal requirements of institutions mandating "equal gender representation" in the process of managing conflict and building peace. Gender mainstreaming is a public policy concept of assessing the different implications for people of any planned policy action, including legislation and programmes in all areas and levels. Empowerment is a process, which can be long and complex. For women and men to be empowered, conditions have to be created to enable them to acquire the necessary resources, knowledge, political voice, and organizational capacity (Prabhu, 2020).

The paper discussed findings that emerged from the qualitative interviews on gender dynamics of conflict management policies and programmes. The gender dynamics focused on institutional gender perspectives on policies and practices of gender equality, mainstreaming, women's empowerment and the involvement of women in peace and security issues, consideration for gender balance in the creation of conflict management committees, formal or informal requirements of institutions mandating "equal gender representation" or otherwise of committee members in the process of conflict management and empowerment of women and their ability to participate in managing conflicts and building peace. Opportunities for implementing gender-sensitive provisions or demands for gender equality should begin with creating permanent structures at the national and regional levels (Reimann,2014). Bouta and Frerks (2002) confirm the promotion of gender-sensitive structures in conflict management through the essentialization of the role of women.

General Objective

To investigate conflict management from a gender perspective and its influence on the overall development of communities in the Oti and Volta Regions of Ghana.

Specific Objectives

1. Explore institutional gender perspectives on policies and practices of gender equality, mainstreaming, women's empowerment, and the involvement of women in peace and security issues.

2. Assess the gender balance in the creation of conflict management committees.

3. Formal or informal requirements of institutions mandating "equal gender representation" in the process of managing conflict and building peace.

Review of Related Literature

Gender Dynamics of Conflict Management

Gender dynamics are informed socio-cultural ideas about gender and the power relationships that define them. Gender dynamics can reinforce or challenge existing norms (EIGE, 2020). Every conflict situation creates developmental challenges. The essence of conflict management under such a circumstance is to help build on and sustain gender role changes that result from conflict (OSCE 2001; Kumar 2001; ILO 2001 as cited in Bouta, Frerks & Bannon, 2005). In such a situation, therefore, conflict management should as a matter of necessity include economic assistance programs that would build on the newly acquired skills of women and men, encourage them to continue their

46

participation in new economic tasks and activities, and ensure more gender balance in accessing productive resources and labor markets (Bouta *et al*., 2005).

According to Reimann (2014), opportunities for implementing gender-sensitive provisions or demands for gender equality should begin with creating permanent structures at the national and regional levels. An example was cited from the Philippines, where in 2012 a Women's Peace Table was established to bring together women of different religious, social, and ethnic backgrounds and promote their participation. Secondly, it suggests the introduction of quota systems as was the case in Burundi, Kenya, and Somalia that gradually gave a voice to women engaged in different peace processes. Laws were passed in Burundi for example that set a quota of 30% female representation in the higher levels of decision-making. Thirdly, it mentions ensuring legal and political improvements for women as another structure. Burundi adopted and ratified statutes that recognize the right of all citizens to participate in the public life of their country, without discrimination, and they passed laws and provisions that aim to improve the integration of women into political and economic life by. Fourthly, it mentioned the monitoring of the implementation of peace agreements. Fifthly, it was suggested to combine international pressure, with highly personal and local commitments and finally mentioned awareness raising and knowing one's rights through capacity building to promote the participation of women in local land management.

Gender Dynamics of Conflict Management Policies and Programmes

Robinson & Cordaid (2016) advocate that understanding the policy framework of gender, peace, and state building matters firstly because gender equality and women's rights are of great essence, as articulated in Goal 5 of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Secondly, integrating gender into peace- and state-building is of instrumental value as attested to by evidence that interventions aimed at peace- and state-building may be more effective when they are gender-sensitive or linked to promoting gender equality. Thirdly, gender sensitivity enhances accountability, inclusion, and legitimacy, which are key underlying principles of peacebuilding and state building. Finally, applying a gender perspective brings an important analytical dimension to peacebuilding and state-building processes.

To Bouta and Frerks (2002), in a literature review and institutional analysis on women's role in conflict prevention, conflict resolution, and post-conflict reconstruction, an important lesson learned was that to develop an effective and transparent policy about women in armed conflicts, women and gender policies must be translated into concrete plans of action and qualitative/quantitative benchmarks or targets, which are continuously monitored and evaluated. They also said it was important to develop mechanisms to hold states accountable for not complying with internationally agreed gender policies and objectives such as the UNSCR 1325. Reimann, 2014; Greenburg and Zuckerman, 2009; Strachan and Haider, 2015 are all researchers who espouse the gender perspective in the policies and programmes of conflict management institutions.

In Ghana, the National Gender Policy (2015) is one important national policy that spells out issues on the involvement of men/ boys and women/ girls aimed at removing systemic social-cultural practices that slow down women's empowerment especially ending violence against women and girls and improving gender relationships in homes and public places. The GHANAP I and 2 are also policies that specifically focus on the involvement of men and women in conflict management and thus deal with some gender dynamics in relation to conflict management.

Study Areas

The study covered two districts in the Oti region with the Nkonya community located in the Biakoye district and the Nkwanta community located in the Nkwanta South district. In the Volta region, however, the study covered four districts. The Peki community is in the South Dayi district, the Tsito

community in the Ho West district, and the Alavanyo and Hohoe communities in the Hohoe municipality. The study therefore generally covered two regions in Ghana and five districts in the Oti and Volta regions altogether.

Figure 4.1: Map showing the location of conflict hotspots and their districts of location in the Oti and Volta Regions of Ghana.

Source: HypaSpatial (2019).

Materials and Methods

The study adopted Interpretivism as a philosophy of the qualitative research paradigm with a focus on culturally derived and historically situated interpretations of the social world (Chowdhury, 2014).

A case study design was adopted for the study with data collected through interviews, focused group discussions, and observation. In all, a total of 36 key informants were interviewed from the conflict hotspots and institutions in addition to 48 focus group participants, giving a total of 84 study participants. The data types, population, data collection methods, and instruments are also indicated in Table 1. Narrative thematic analysis was used in bringing out key issues related to the specific objectives of the study. The data collected were interpreted and discussed in accordance with the literature review.

48

Table 1: Data Types, Population, Data Collection Methods, And Instruments

Type of Data/Source of Data	Study Population	Data Collection Method	Data Collection Instrument
Qualitative/Primary	Key Informants from Institutions and conflict hotspots (Mainly heads of institutions and top ranks as well as traditional authorities)	In-depth interview	Interview Guide
Qualitative/Primary	Gatekeepers and opinion leaders from conflict hotspots/ Communities (mainly Queen mothers, traditional representatives, opinion leaders, the youth, women, and men)	Focus Group Discussion	Focus Group Guide
Qualitative/Primary	Infrastructure and human activities within Conflict hotspots/ communities	Observation	Observation Guide

Results and Discussions

Institutional gender perspectives on policies and practices relating to women in peace and security issues

Emerging themes here were: even though there's education on gender equality and gender mainstreaming, the involvement of women is generally low in all spheres; name-calling by other women results in women shying away from taking various positions in public; some institutions are still maintaining the status quo that women are below men and should therefore work under the authority of men; women being their own enemies and gender equality & mainstreaming should be applied only when women qualify for the positions they are applying to.

> ### *Key policies were in place to enhance gender equality and mainstreaming even though their implementation fell short of expectations.*

Though most institutions have policies that are aimed at promoting gender equality and mainstreaming, the practice lags. Some institutions such as the NCCE and the Army actively work at bridging the gap between men and women in their institutions, whereas others like the House of Chiefs have sectors where females are unable to assume functional roles traditionally.

> The Peace Council's take is that, in peace processes where both men and women participate, the outcomes are long-lasting. In other words, the institution believes once the population of Ghana is composed of both men and women and even with the fact that the population of women is higher than that of men, when it comes to conflict management women should be equally represented. But, as you already know, the women's representation on the Council is woefully inadequate. The nomination of persons to be appointed on the Council is within the domain of the institutions that are mandated to do so and so when they do nominate these individuals, the administrative arm of the institution has very little to do about it, but then we always urge the institutions to nominate women (3rd September 2019).

> Fortunately, NCCE for example from the top to the bottom of its structure tries very hard to ensure that the male-female balance is maintained. That is why for example when you look at the structure of the commission, the head is a female. Out of the two

49

deputies we have, one is a woman. You realize the commission is trying very hard to encourage women (5th September 2019).

In chieftaincy, there are women. Even though men dominate over women, we have a section of women in chieftaincy at the regional houses. We have the research unit; we have the judiciary and the accounts section. In the research unit, ever since, women have dominated, they work there. It's more of registration of chiefs, filling forms - where women can be in that office for long. The accounting office as we know is dominated by both females and males. But the judicial aspect is the pivot, let me say the heart of the institution where a little error can bring so many problems in the traditional areas. As a result, ever since I've been in the institution, I haven't seen females dominating the judicial section. (7th September 2019).

For example, based on the policy that is already there, and the UN resolution, the department at the national level actively gets involved in the activity of the committee and reports periodically. Now every ministry, department, and agency is supposed to have a gender desk officer who ensures that gender equality issues are mainstreamed into the work of every ministry, department, and agency. And that is how come we are offering training to all these people. Training has been offered to the ministries' gender officers and the district assembly's gender desk officers are being taken up. But I can say that almost every district assembly has a gender desk officer – whether the person has the capacity or not, there is somebody who serves as the gender desk officer. And when it comes to empowerment, and empowering women, we mostly organize a forum to create awareness because we believe that when somebody is informed and knows what decision to take that is enough empowerment for the person. But the ideal practice that we think should take place is that the Department of Gender, at the headquarters and regional level, should have a unit that is specifically doing the empowerment issue because sometimes women empowerment issues get lost up in the mainstream agenda. For example, when we are talking about mainstreaming gender issues in the area of participation in politics that one needs specific woman empowerment which can include training women who are interested in getting involved in politics. Because when we tell political parties to mainstream gender into their constitution, they will do it on paper alright, but they will always insist on every woman as well as every man fighting to get there. Unless of course what we should be asking for is a quota system. When we have a quota system or a representation system, we will look at every region, you should present a number of women in your region so that we could have that (6th September 2019).

Females should be encouraged to assume functional roles in all institutions. There should be an established mode of selection in all such institutions to map out a strategy that would ensure equal representation of both males and females to ensure the participation of all the sexes in the process of conflict management. Key policies that support the functional roles of females here in Ghana are the Ghana National Action Plan (GHANAP), 1 and 2. The essence of conflict management in conflict situations where there are developmental challenges is to help build on and sustain changes in gender roles that result from conflict (OSCE 2001; Kumar 2005; ILO 2001 as cited in Bouta, Frerks & Bannon, 2005). Frerks, 2002 talks about women's role in conflict prevention, conflict resolution, and post-conflict reconstruction make it important for their involvement

> ***Programs of some institutions were geared towards education on gender equality and women's rights.***

Based on the mandates establishing them, some institutions purposely educate citizens on gender issues. They educate them on gender equality, women's rights in society, and other empowerment issues.

We do door-to-door sensitization which is community-to-community sensitization for women to advocate for their rights. We, men, have cheated the women for long, so now we are asking the women to cut when the men cut (4th September 2019).

As the name of the organization the Global Action for Women's Empowerment (GLOWA) suggests, we try to generally ensure gender equality. For instance, under the POWER project, there is one activity that we are implementing, is unpaid care work, where we try to educate both men and women, traditional authorities, schoolboys and girls, by making sure that we re-distribute care roles in our homes so that the unpaid care work burden will not solely be on women so that men can also assist their wives. We realized that because of the unpaid care work, most women are unable to engage in economic activities, as a result, the financial burden is always on the man which may lead to misunderstandings in the home which at times result in violence and conflict. So, we are trying to re-orient the minds of men so they get to know that care roles are not solely for women and that it is a shared responsibility so that the women can also have the time to engage in economic activities to enable them also to support in the home in terms of finance. We also try to involve the Queen mothers in most of our activities, so that they are not left out since they are the mouthpiece of the communities, as well as the chiefs (4th September 2019).

"We are a department under the ministry of gender, so our views do not differ from the views of the ministry so in our work we also promote gender equality among boys and girls. We believe that when that level playing field is given to them, in the near future, most of the problems we are facing now will be solved because we believe girls have a lot of untapped resources that can open the prospects of the country (7th September 2019).

The findings above are congruent with the OSCE, 2001(as cited in Bouta *et al*., 2004). It states that there is a need to educate and sensitize key actors such as legislators, judges, employers, communities, and traditional leaders about gender issues regarding conflict management work.

Women shied away from leadership positions due to "subtle stigmatization".

Women were demoralized through name callings by other women or not given the opportunity possibly due to traditional gender perspectives of women's role in society.

Traditional societal gender perspectives do influence women taking on leadership positions even when they stand a better chance of assuming them. Women at times demoralize their peers vying for leadership positions and on occasions go to the extent of actively working against their choice to such positions. Kiamba (2008) stated that historically, leadership had gone with the masculinity notion which doubles in the belief that men are better leaders than women, till today. Kiamba, in view of the earlier statement, stated that even though female leaders had increased in numbers, they are normally picked as an afterthought. Societal conventions in relation to leadership according to Højgaard (2002), exclude women. Højgaard again states that the top leadership positions are also regarded as a male domain arguing that this has been the norm for ages and that the cultural construction of leadership is the very source of this difference which is now being contested as more women get into leadership positions. This state of leadership pattern is confirmed by Ngcongo, 1993 (as cited in Grant, 2005).

Interestingly, there is enough evidence to suggest that women lead differently from men (Eagly and Johnson, 1990, as cited in de la Rey, 2005). For instance, women portray a more participatory approach, are more democratic, allow for power and information sharing, are more sensitive, more nurturing than men, focus on relationships, and enable others to make contributions through delegation (Tedrow and Rhoads, 1999; Growe & Montgomery, 2000; De la Rey, 2005). Tedrow and Rhoads (1999) also noted characteristics such as building coalitions and advancing individual and community development as constructs women display in their relational styles. He added that women

51

are also better at conflict management, have better listening skills, and show more tolerance and empathy. The different gifts possessed by men and women, he said should not mean that one is dominant over the other. Possibly the cultural stance of a woman leader is what has culminated in women themselves using it as a weapon and more so as a societally accepted norm to stigmatize their fellow women who have made it to such leadership positions and thus resulting in these women being called names like "Iron Body", "Man-Woman" and a whole lot in the Ghanaian setting. Possibly these women are rather upholding the culture of the land forgetting development is producing a fast-changing society where everybody matters and where everybody's right is catered for. Below are statements indicating acts of subtle stigmatization of women leaders by their fellow women in some institutions.

Gender equality and mainstreaming were either on merit or by affirmative action

Gender equality and mainstreaming were easily accomplished when the women qualify for the positions they are aspiring for in institutions, however, affirmative action is applied on some occasions to get more women up the institutional ladder or to encourage them to take on certain roles. Some people also are of the conviction that before women are given positions at places their qualifications should be what would speak for them and not for the fact that they are pushed to such places. A key respondent from the Ghana Police stated this below.

> For me, it is nice when the woman qualifies and is picked to be at any place that is institutional. In the Ghana Police, we don't give any priority to men. It is open to all. Of course, we at times give some level of priority to women especially when it comes to enlistment, the height is reduced for women and at times, even the grades are reduced for women all because we want more women. At times it also creates problems. It creates problems because even in some of the units headed by women, they come and tell us they want people or personnel who are men and not women. (9th September 2019).

All the above statements or findings are buttressing that of Robinson & Cordaid (2016) who advocated that there was a growing body of evidence that peacebuilding and state-building interventions may be more effective if they are gender-sensitive or linked to promoting gender equality.

There was consideration for gender balance in the creation of committees.

The consideration of gender balance in the creation of committees that helped to manage conflicts was overwhelmingly affirmed by a majority of interviewees across the board.

By their nature and their diverse calming roles during conflicts, women were to be equally included as men on conflict management committees.

The findings here are still in line with the findings of Robinson & Cordaid (2016) who again state that applying a gender perspective brings an important analytical dimension to peacebuilding and state-building processes. Gen. John Allen who argued that "No society has ever successfully transitioned from being a conflict-ridden society to a developing society unless women were a part of the mainstream" (Connell, 2016) also confirmed the findings of these key informants from Peki, Tsito, and Nkwanta below.

> Yes. I know that they have to consider women. As I have already said men alone cannot do it and women alone cannot do it. They have to come together to form this

52

committee. If women's representation on this committee is not that adequate, then there is the need to add more women. (5th November 2019).

Just as the Bible specifies that anybody who finds a woman finds a good thing, we as a peace group would always want to have both men and women to work with (10th December 2019).

The women too are doing so well in modern times, so we are ready to involve them in whatever we do (12th December 2019).

A focus group discussion later in the day also endorsed gender balance. It established that, if the gender balance is ensured, it would be good because women naturally love sharing experiences and ideas that work as well as bring to bear short-term ideas that will quickly help the group in taking decisions. Researchers that espouse the gender perspective are, Reiman,2004; USAID,2011; Greenburg and Zuckerman,2009 and Strachan and Haider,2015.

Women perceived as domineering were not to be on committees.

There was this perception, especially among men about women with very strong character i.e., women being domineering and by virtue of that, it was thought that they were not to be allowed onto conflict management committees. The reason for the suggestion was that such women had the penchant to foment trouble and would not help in achieving the objectives of such committees. Key informant statements that vividly point out the non-inclusion of women who were domineering are captured below.

I think the representation of women as it is now should be as it is. Gradually with time, the numbers would increase when the need comes. Women are the cause of most conflict situations. This is because something that a man would see and ignore is what a woman would make an issue. And they are the types who can go to every length to be heard even though they might even not have a case. The Alavanyo case of a fight over water for instance at a riverside was brought back to the community and that was the origin of the Alavanyo/ Nkonya Conflict. I think we don't need an equal representation of men and women on such committees now (21st October 2019).

You know our society has been structured in such a way that females are limited to some areas because of their nature. We are thinking of how to change it. So, the male, and female imbalance composition- that is the problem, but the elders have a way of tapping in very brilliant young ladies and men into our committees. They have been doing it everywhere, you see, but one thing is that as a colleague has said when you come, you feel you must dominate, that is the area we are worried about. So, we have been thinking about how to include them in the system but when they come this is the problem we have with them, but we are managing it (repeated), we are not going to send you out but we feel that you should stay in the committee and work and help to build the committee solidly so it will flourish and do the work because the work outcome will favor all of us, no gender imbalance in there. So, we feel that women's opinions must prevail on some of the issues we need to discuss, but our custom limits women in some areas especially with our council of elders (14th October 2019).

The above views of key informants were confirmed by a group discussion in Alavanyo. It categorically stated that the involvement of women will pick up with time. Observation of meetings in the community also indicated the presence of men compared to women.

Formal or informal requirements of institutions mandating "equal gender representation" or otherwise of committee members in the process of conflict management.

Institutions like the Peace Council had their Acts spelling out how well to involve women to ensure a balanced gender representation at the national, regional, and district levels. Others like the NCCE, House of Chiefs, and the NGO (GLOWA) did not have any formal document spelling out any modes of operation to ensure gender equality.

> So, I'll just go back to our Act. I think the Act is very conscious about the representation of women on the Peace Council Board and that should mean the processes that the Council engages in should result in equal gender representation. So, the Act is very explicit. I think it is expected that there should be 50/50 representation. That is why the President is appointing the Governing Board. The President's representative in the region, the Regional Minister, is appointing the two representations on the Council. They are mandated to have one woman, one man and if that is the leadership, then, even though the other institutions are not mandated, they are to take a cue from what the government is doing – the President is doing, the Regional Minister is doing. And when we are making the requests to the institutions, we specifically indicate that males/females should be nominated. So, whatever comes up, I think at the end of the day, the spirit of the Act that set up the institution is to have 50/50 representation (3rd September 2019).

> It is informal in the sense that we were also brought to the fore by WSR (Women Situation Room) which mandated us to make it as such. It is an embodiment of women leaders in West Africa coming together to stop political wars because of what happened in Sierra Leone and Liberia (4th September 2019).

> It's rather based on strategy. Sometimes you are asked to look at the whole issue and you have to strategize, that is using your own judgment, maybe this will be better for a woman to handle or this will be better for a man to handle (5th September 2019).

> ***Formal and Informal requirements of unequal gender representation on their committees***

The GLOWA (an NGO) for instance had an informal structure not supported by any legal framework of theirs. They adopted a mechanism from an organization that allows more women representation on their committees. The House of Chiefs on the other hand has an act that supports the representation of men (Chiefs) in the house and not Queen mothers. This has been a bone of contention between the Chiefs and some Queen mothers who think this should not be the case. The issue has been contested by some Queen mothers for some years now, while the House has also taken no decision yet because they believe their institution is established based on the Ghanaian culture. Below are statements from GLOWA and the House of Chiefs to attest to the explanations.

> In the African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM) that we're carrying out in that program, there is clear-cut legislation that states that the female should outweigh the male on the oversight committee. They stated it clearly so that the committee, the women should outweigh the men so that if you form a committee where the women are not more, they will not accept it. African Peer Review Mechanism does this to ensure the women's participation in decision-making is enhanced because if they say that they should be chosen on merit most of them will not get there. So, they make sure that if there are seven members, we are looking for four women and three men so that at least they'll be there (5th September 2019).

They should allow five Queen mothers to join as some Queen mothers are suggesting, but it is not yet a practice. But for now, when it comes to resolving chieftaincy issues, it is solely the Chiefs (7th September 2019.

Empowerment of women and their ability to participate in managing conflicts and building peace

The themes that evolved revealed that interviewees acknowledged that women needed to be or were empowered. Some pronouncements portrayed a level of empowerment of women whereas others did not.

Female empowerment seemed to be a concept yet to be practicalized in some settings.

Some pronouncements of male opinion leaders though creating the impression of empowering women were vague and seem to lack elements of that. The statements below are some of the vague statements put up by some male interviewees.

Yes, women are empowered. Yes, they have the ability to do it well (5th November 2019).

It is so vital. Yes, women are empowered because they learn from the men who have the experience (10th December 2019).

Women are doing well and must be encouraged to be part of the committees (21st October 2019).

Most women do not have the courage to speak on such platforms, so we sort out to get those who are vocal which accounts for their fewer numbers. We, therefore, ignore those who are passive (12th December 2019).

It will be useful if they receive some training in conflict resolution mechanisms to be empowered (10th November 2019).

The general attitude of females feeling comfortable in the background and not being empowered in any way was reiterated in group discussions. However, experiences from Peki and Tsito showed there was a level of empowerment occurring through the following controversial statements.

Yes, women are empowered in such a way that in our meetings at church and community gatherings, they are allowed to bring their opinion and they are listened to (10th December 2019).

In the committees, for example, nobody steps on the right of the other. And before somebody is chosen to be on the committee it is because of the good conduct and abilities of the person. Our women are therefore empowered to do what they can do and do it better (12th December 2019).

These concepts are however envisaged to act as strategies to enhance gender equality, which is an eventual goal that would make the conflict management processes in our institutions and communities a sustainable process as a result of the involvement of everybody in society.

Limitations

As a result of the purposive selection of study participants in the various study areas, their views expressed may not be exactly the views of the larger community members.

Contribution to Knowledge

The study diagnosed the various conflict management processes in conflict hotspots and institutions bringing out the gender perspectives whose neglect might have contributed to the protracted nature of conflicts as well as the changing (complex) nature of conflicts in the Volta and Oti Regions. Additionally, there was a conceptual framework on gender perspectives in conflict management spelling out ways in which conflict management can be accomplished and how sustainable conflict management, peace, and development can be arrived at.

Suggestions for Further Studies

Further studies should focus on how the management of conflict by organizations in the Oti and Volta regions in Ghana would focus on power dynamics in conflict management or push for more women in conflict managing institutions. Additionally, there should be a focus of policies and programmes on both men and women in conflict management and not one that focuses on just one particular gender.

Conclusion

Institutional gender dynamics of policies and practices of gender equality, mainstreaming, women's empowerment and the involvement of women in peace and security issues revealed that even though there's education on gender equality and gender mainstreaming, the involvement of women is generally low in all spheres. There was name calling by other women resulting in women shying away from taking various positions in public. Some institutions maintained the status quo that women were below the men and so should therefore work under the authority of men. Gender equality and mainstreaming were to be applied only when women qualify for the positions they were applying to. The consideration of gender balance in the creation of committees that helped to manage conflicts was overwhelmingly affirmed across the board. Requirements for equal gender representation on committees were formal or informal depending on statutes establishing the institutions. Some other institutions per their functions had formal or informal requirements for equal gender representations on committees. The need for women to be empowered was acknowledged with some pronouncements portraying a level of empowerment of women whereas others did not.

Recommendations

There should be key policies to enhance training and technical assistance programmes that would build the capacity of the conflict management institutions in implementing their gender equality and mainstreaming policies to involve women. Additionally, institutions tasked with managing conflicts should ensure the enhanced participation of women in their teams cognizant of their unique conflict management qualities.

Declaration of Interest Statement

The authors declare that there are no known conflicts of interest associated with this publication and there has been no significant financial support for this work that could have influenced its outcome.

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58

GENDER PERSPECTIVES ON THE STRUCTURE AND FUNCTION OF CONFLICT MANAGEMENT INSTITUTIONS AND THEIR INFLUENCE ON DEVELOPMENT IN THE OTI AND VOLTA REGIONS OF GHANA

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Abstract: The Oti and Volta Regions of Ghana have a number of conflict hotspots as old as the ages of the communities themselves. These conflicts must be managed sustainably so they do not degenerate into violent situations time after time. The study analyzed gender perspectives in conflict management looking at the structure and function of conflict management institutions and how they could facilitate sustainable management of conflicts. A case study design was adopted. Data was collected through interviews, focus group discussions, and observations. Narrative thematic analysis was used in bringing out key issues related to the structure and function of conflict management institutions. The structure of conflict management institutions across the different study communities indicated that traditional leadership plays an essential role in conflict management. There were more males than females on conflict management committees indicating a low involvement of women in conflict management. The findings also indicated the availability of specialized structures traditionally for conflict management; an interesting blend of conflict managers-traditional elders and religious leaders. The mandate of institutions in conflict management was mainly maintenance of peace, crime prevention, education on conflict avoidance, addressing the needs of the vulnerable, and facilitating conflict resolution drives. Concluding, it was suggested that institutions in charge of conflict management liaise among themselves to create a unique link and framework to enhance the inclusive nature of the conflict management process to meet the development needs of the communities in times of conflict and after. The involvement of women was also observed as essential, cognizant of their unique qualities in managing conflicts. Finally, a uniquely prominent perspective that emerged was that each gender had a unique role to play in facilitating conflict management.

Keywords: gender perspectives, sustainably, conflict management, development, conflict management institutions

Introduction

The study analyzed gender perspectives in conflict management looking at the structure and function of conflict management institutions. It presents and examines findings that emerged from the qualitative interviews on gender perspectives in the structure and function of conflict management institutions. The structure of conflict management institutions focused on persons who oversaw

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managing conflicts when they came up in communities. The function of such institutions pertains to the diverse roles conflict management institutions take on over the course of conflicts.

In the context of this study, gender perspectives involve gender equality, mainstreaming, empowering, and involving men and women in conflict management. In settings where a gendered approach was used, an amicable settlement of conflicts was arrived at (UN Women, 2012; Buvinic, Gupta, Casabonne & Verwimp, 2013). Conflict management is purely nongendered, not attaching much agency to women's participation (Rehn & Sirleaf, 2002; Duncan, 2004; Women, Peace and Security (WPS), 2011; Birkhoff, 2012; Hope, 2019; Ghana National Action Plan [GHANAP 2], 2020-2025). Anecdotal evidence points to the absence of gendered perspectives in the conflict management approach being implemented within diverse conflict hotspots in Ghana.

The Volta Region's communities of Alavanyo, Peki, Tsito, and Hohoe as well as the Oti Region's communities of Nkonya and Nkwanta are some conflict hotspots located in these two regions of Ghana, which have all seen strides in conflict management over time (Kendie *et al*., 2014). In this study, conflict management refers to various processes of resolving conflict, peacemaking, conflict transformation, and other measures or overtures that ensure individuals, families, and social groups in a given environment coexist peacefully (Bercovitch,1983; Miall, 2004; Mckibben, 2017). This has the added benefit of facilitating development through the reduction of violence and hostilities (Kremenyuk, 2002; CCR, 2012; Bayer & Schernick 2015; Folger, Poole & Stutman, 2017).

General Objective

To investigate conflict management from a gender perspective and its influence on the overall development of communities in the Oti and Volta Regions of Ghana.

Specific Objectives

   i.   To explore gender perspectives in the structure of conflict management institutions.

   ii.   To explore gender perspectives in the function of conflict management institutions.

   iii.   To assess how the structure and function of conflict management institutions would lead to sustainable peace and development.

Review of Related Literature

Gender Perspectives of the Structure of Conflict Management Institutions

The structure of conflict management institutions has always involved both men and women with a question mark of the women always lagging the men in terms of numbers for several reasons. Shepherd (2015) states that women have a long history of contributing to global peace and security mostly outside the seemingly formal systems of military decision-making and international dispute resolution. He, therefore, stated that women need to be included in formal and informal processes that underlie the design of post-conflict dispute resolution processes and structures. The viewpoint expressed by Shepherd is reinforced by Currier (as cited in Brahnam & Chin, 2005) who pointed out that women still find a way to organize themselves through grass root activism, non-profit

2

organizations, and other non-official ways even though they are not involved in official peacebuilding and conflict management efforts.

The Ghana National Action Plan for the Implementation of the UN Security Council Resolution 2 (GHANAP 2) - which was an amendment of GHANAP 1 in 2020, was to enhance the role of women in the maintenance of peace and security in Ghana in line with the UN Security Council Resolution 1352 which indicated locally that females were not deployed for peacekeeping operations in places like Alavanyo, Nkonya, Bimbila, and Dagbon. Women however play fewer leadership roles in patrilineal societies like the Oti and Volta Regions (under investigation) but assume leadership positions like Queen mothers, assembly women in their communities

Gender Perspectives of the Functions of Conflict Management Institutions

In their study on gender and its role in conflict management, Benharda, Brett & Lempereur (2013) stated, that looking at females and males functioning as third parties indicated that women's traditional leadership strengths of collaboration and participation can result in unique outcomes when they have less rather than more authority over disputants. The results of the work of Bayu (2020) indicated that women in Ethiopia played critical roles in times of wars and peace as community organizers and activists.

The National Peace Council in November 2019 observed that Ghana cannot flourish by stifling women's potential and in so doing deprive itself of its contribution towards conflict resolution. According to the Chairman of the Council, if Ghana was desirous of development, it should be twice as desirous of empowering and including women in conflict management decision-making. He challenged Ghanaians to know that there is much urgency to empower women more than ever as the country's socio-political atmosphere was highly polarized. (Hope, 2019). However, it is interesting to note that, the National Peace Council of Ghana, just like the United Nations, is ironically battling with low numbers of women, especially in their top ranks. In addition to the statement made by the former Chairman of the National Peace Council (Professor Asante) in the paragraph above, a whole number of research and works in Ghana speak to the inclusion of women in conflict management and decision making (Acheampong, 2010; Kilu, 2015; Avornyo & Sekyi, 2015; Shepherd, 2015). The structure and function of Conflict management organizations if it includes women would help ensure development through the reduction of violence and hostilities (Kremenyuk, 2002; CCR, 2012; Bayer & Schernick 2015; Folger, Poole & Stutman, 2017).

Study Areas

The study covered two districts in the Oti region with the Nkonya community located in the Biakoye district and the Nkwanta community located in the Nkwanta South district. In the Volta region, however, the study covered three districts namely: the Peki community in the South Dayi district, the Tsito community in the Ho West district, and the Alavanyo and Hohoe communities in the Hohoe municipality. The study therefore generally covered two regions in Ghana and five districts in the Oti and Volta regions altogether.

Figure 4.1: Map showing the location of conflict hotspots and their districts of location in the Oti and Volta Regions of Ghana.

Source: HypaSpatial (2019).

Materials and Methods

The study adopted the qualitative research paradigm with a focus on Interpretivism as a philosophy, which looks for culturally derived and historically situated interpretations of the social world (Chowdhury, 2014).

A case study design was adopted for the study with data collected through interviews, focus group discussions, and observation. The distribution of the sample for the study is indicated in Table 1. In all, a total of 36 key informants were interviewed from the conflict hotspots and institutions in

4

addition to 48 focus group participants, giving a total of 84 study participants. The data types, population, data collection methods, and instruments are also indicated in Table 2. Narrative thematic analysis was used in bringing out key issues related to the specific objectives of the study. The data collected were interpreted and discussed in accordance with the literature review.

Table 1: Distribution of Study Sample – Made up of Interview and Focus Group Participants Key Informant Interview Participants

Institutions	Sample	Institutions	Sample
National Commission for Civic Education (NCCE)	3	Alavanyo Traditional Authority	3
Peace Council	3	Nkonya Traditional Authority	3
Department of Gender	1	Peki Traditional Authority	3
Department of Children	1	Tsito Traditional Authority	3
Department of Social Welfare	1	Hohoe Traditional Authority	3
House of Chiefs	3	Nkwanta Traditional Authority	3
NGO (GLOWA)	3	Security Services (Police	3
Sub-total of key informants			36
Focus Group Discussion			
Alavanyo	8	Nkwanta	8
Tsito	8	Hohoe	8
Peki	8	Nkonya	8
Sub-total of key informants			48
Total Respondents of the Study			84

Table 2: Data Types, Population, Data Collection Methods, and Instruments

Type of Data/Source of Data	Study Population	Data Collection Method	Data Collection Instrument
Qualitative/Primary	Key Informants from Institutions and conflict hotspots (Mainly heads of institutions and top ranks as well as traditional authorities)	In-depth interview	Interview Guide
Qualitative/Primary	Gatekeepers and opinion leaders from conflict hotspots/ Communities (mainly Queen mothers, traditional representatives, opinion leaders, the youth, women, and men)	Focus Group Discussion	Focus Group Guide
Qualitative/Primary	Infrastructure and human activities within Conflict hotspots/ communities	Observation	Observation Guide

Results and Discussions

Perspectives on the structure of conflict management institutions

Perceptions of respondents that emerged from the qualitative interviews in relation to persons in charge of managing conflicts pointed to the essential role of traditional leadership in the structure of conflict management institutions across different communities. There were some permutations of traditional leadership oversight of conflict management reported by participants. Other persons overseeing the management of conflicts included religious leaders, the leadership of youth groups, elderly women, and members of formal peace committees. Political leadership did not seem to have a prominent role in leading conflict management drives.

Traditional elders lead conflict management sessions.

Traditional leadership of the community was overwhelmingly perceived by study participants to lead deliberations when conflicts were being managed. Such leadership was predominantly the Chiefs, their elders, and clan/Asafo leaders.

A key informant from Tsito confirmed the predominance of chiefs in leading deliberations during conflict management by remarking:

It is the chief and elders who are in charge, and though the ministers contribute to solving some of the problems, it is mainly the chief and elders of the Tsito community who are in charge (5th November 2019).

Additionally, a key informant in Nkwanta after several weeks had this to say as a confirmation:

It is generally the paramount Chief (12th December 2019).

A later discussion with a focus group in Nkwanta also alluded to the fact that chiefs played a paramount role in conflict management. It was established that a chief in charge of a single lingua town deals with any conflict situation that arises in the community. However, it was noted that in bigger towns with sub-chiefs superintending different lingua groupings, the sub-chiefs were the ones who handled conflicts. Such conflicts it was said, if still unresolved at the level of the sub-chiefs proceeded to the paramount chief and further to the traditional council if still unresolved. The role of the chiefs was again confirmed by an earlier discussion in Hohoe which indicated that, way before the coming of the Europeans, Chiefs were the first to be notified when something happened in Gbi land (Hohoe land). It was also confirmed the chiefs had subjects who are always updated on happenings, so they inform the Chiefs. This act it was said enabled Chiefs and their elders to deal with issues appropriately. The role of chiefs and traditional elders is therefore non-negotiable when it comes to issues of conflict management (Gedzi, 2009).

Traditional Leadership working in tandem with religious leaders and others

Traditional leadership with oversight responsibilities was observed by respondents collaborating with religious leaders of diverse denominations in leading the management of some conflicts in the community. There were instances when traditional leadership took on leadership roles with the

religious leadership in a supporting role. This was evident in a key informant statement captured in the Hohoe community as follows:

> The Elders of the community, the Mallams, the Chiefs, and so on (21st October 2019).

Likewise, in the Tsito community, a key informant also reiterated the fact that traditional leaders were taking up leadership roles with religious leaders:

> It is the chief and elders who are in charge, though the ministers contribute to solving some of the problems mainly it is the chief and elder of the Tsito community (5th November 2019).

To buttress the statements above, a focus group discussion at Peki categorically stated that chiefs and pastors helped in managing conflicts in their community as already stated in statements from Hohoe and Tsito. In all this, the role of chiefs in conflict management was still evidently clear even though they were now enjoying a kind of partnership with pastors. This part of the study reveals cooperation (a necessary tool for conflict management) at its best and which is a very vital foundation of the Dual Concern theory and Thomas Kilmann's Model which is also captured in the conceptual framework.

Religious leaders had oversight of conflict management in collaboration with community and political leadership and others.

There were instances when religious leaders primarily took the initiative and led in conflict management or in collaboration with other stakeholders such as traditional, political, and youth leadership. This was what an opinion leader who was a key informant from Tsito had to say.

> In the case of conflict management, people approach us as Pastors. People approach their clan elders. They also approach their Paramount Chiefs. Even though the paramount chiefs are not in town, there are representatives such as the Linguist and Okyeame who are all approached to manage conflicts (5th November 2019).

The stance of the Tsito key informant was confirmed by group discussions in Hohoe and Peki. In Tsito for instance, the Christian Council, Chief Executives, and the Zongo chiefs all helped to bring peace under such circumstances while leaders of youth groups that the youths confide in were also involved in Peki.

Reasons provided by respondents justifying the leadership roles of religious leaders during conflict management were the fact that traditional leaders at a point in time were perceived to be themselves fomenting conflicts. There was a loss of trust in them resulting in religious leadership getting into the fray. This was indicated by a community leader from Tsito as follows.

> But it came to a time when the pastors came together because they realized that the chiefs and elders were more interested in fighting than resolving the conflict, so the pastors came together to form a committee that began to mediate with one committee in Tsito and another in Peki. Since the pastors intervened as far back as 2004, there has been no such conflict situation in Tsito and Peki. (5th November 2019)

7

The inclusion of pastors in issues of conflict management or better put, the use of religion in conflict management is an age-old phenomenon. On the flip side, however, religion could also be a source of conflict especially as pertains to most parts of the Islamic world today. Nyamwaya (2014), states that religion in as much as is destructive can also be successfully used in managing conflicts. He confirmed in his statement that religion can also be used for the management of conflict in order to attain sustainable peace.

Community members lead conflict management and are further involved in traditional leadership

Findings also revealed that depending on the level and scope of some conflicts, members of the community took the lead in conflict management. Conflicts within the family or the home, for example, were managed by family or clan heads initially. When outcomes were not favorable or progress was stalled, that was when traditional leadership was brought into the process. An opinion leader who was a key informant from Alavanyo indicated this in a statement below.

> Conflict management in the community is at different levels depending on the severity of the conflict. They include parents, Family heads, Clan heads, and Community elders including the chief. Minor conflicts among women are handled by the Queen mothers and her elders (10th November 2019).

To buttress the statement above, a group discussion at Nkwanta had community leaders and opinion leaders stating that family conflicts were settled by the family leader or clan leader. The chief linguist was then brought into the picture if things don't go well for people at the family stage. The courts are the last resort if conflicting parties are still not satisfied.

The role of religious and traditional leadership in conflict management has been demonstrated in diverse conflict hotspots across the globe. The Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) of Liberia as part of the findings of their report noted that civil society representatives such as the religious community, traditional organizations, and other stakeholders participated in contributing to ceasefires that culminated in the Comprehensive Peace Agreements. The commission did this by explaining its mandate to the stakeholders, as well as educating them on the various roles they could all play in healing the nation through their various groups (TRC, 2009).

Ettang (2018) mentioned the importance of religious actors and institutions in preventing or managing religious conflicts in Northern Nigeria. Leadership by Chiefs as per the current study is congruent with the findings of Gedzi (2009) who mentioned that historically and in modern times they played and continue to play remarkable roles in conflict management or managing disputes in indigenous areas of Ghana. Gedzi further mentioned that in the past Chiefs resolved conflicts in indigenous courts, a position which was curtailed by the colonial authority but repealed by the Chieftaincy Act of 1971. The Chieftaincy Act however maintained some restrictions on the judicial powers of the Chiefs resulting in them having to act extra-judicially as arbitrators to conflicting parties that voluntarily appeared before them in the community. Adjei & Adebayo, 2014 (as cited in Ibrahim, 2018) also mentioned the existence of "indigenous conflict management mechanisms" in communities prior to the colonial era in Africa. Most of these interventions by the leadership have been informal as opposed to formal conflict management roles.

Involvement of other societal groupings in conflict management

Youth groupings were observed in the study to have taken on leadership roles in managing conflicts. The leader of one such group in Nkwanta was perceived to have actively engaged in managing conflicts in their community.

> Speaking from the perspective of the youth, our youth chairman is the one who directly handles conflict (12th December 2019).

Waldman (2009) states that Youth involvement and interaction with conflict or their role in post-conflict peacebuilding and conflict management is a new and emerging concept. The youth in the Central African Republic was engaged in diverse roles in the conflict transformation process during the wars between 2013 and 2016 (Conflict trends, 2017).

Women were identified in the study communities to have provided leadership in conflict management. These were mainly elderly women and those who felt the responsibility to step in to ensure conflicts did not escalate. Some of these women served as referees in that, when such conflicts did not end as expected, they helped in seeking further help in addressing issues for example from the security services or other forms of leadership. A key respondent from Peki had this to say.

> At times we also have women to help the men realize the peace we want (10th December 2019).

This was re-echoed in a group discussion at Nkwanta which indicated that if you are a woman in an area and there is misunderstanding or conflict, you can call for the conflicting parties and make peace especially if you are an elderly woman. If that happens and there is peace, that ends it. If the parties are not still convinced, the issue can be sent to the assemblyman or better still the police station depending on how the issue evolves.

Women's role in conflict management has received a lot of attention over the past decades. The leadership role of women in traditional settings emanates from Queen mothers who are seen in the image of Chiefs. As noted by Abukari (2019), most Ghanaian communities recognize female leadership with Queen Mothers being essential parts of the chieftaincy institution and dully recognized as leaders in their communities. They are therefore very important personalities asides from the chiefs in conflict management.

Political leadership was the least referred to of the themes with respect to leadership in conflict management in the community. Local political operatives such as assemblymen were those who were perceived to be involved with conflict management. In one such statement, an opinion leader in Hohoe made it clear that:

> The political leadership was made up of the Regional Minister/Community Leaders (21st October 2019)

A discussion in Nkwanta indicated that beyond the home, the management of conflicts could be passed on to the assemblyman. When politics is introduced into conflict resolution, it operates by means of compromise, conciliation, and negotiation instead of coercion (Center for Multiparty Democracy - CMD – Malawi, 2001). Political leadership at diverse levels requires these skills and competencies to navigate conflicts among their constituents.

9

Perspectives on Gender Representation in the Conflict Management Structure.

There were much more males than females on committees in the conflict management process. Some interviewees were not sure of the male/female representations on the committees. The only exceptions to the rule of men being more were with organizations that had female heads such as GLOWA (an NGO) and the Alavanyo community which had its leader as a Queen mother.

Gender representation on committees of conflict management was skewed in favour of males.

A key finding emerging from the interviews was that there were much more males than females on committees in the conflict management process. This cut across all the study communities. Key informant interviews in Tsito, Peki, and Nkwanta all confirm this situation of more males than females are indicated below.

> Normally the men or males are always more than the females. Sometimes they take four (4) men and two (2) females (5th November 2019).

> In fact, at most Committee levels the men are more than the females. But the female court /committees also are dominated by females to deal with issues that concern women (10th December 2019).

> I think both women and men are on various committees. We don't discriminate, only that almost everywhere, men dominate on such committees than the women (12th December 2019)

Group discussions in Hohoe, Nkwanta, Alavanyo, and Nkonya all reiterated the submissions of the key informant interviews. In Hohoe for instance, it was noted that the women were formally relegated to the background in the community, as most conflict management sessions had more males than females, precisely 70% men as against 30% of women.

In Nkwanta however, it was categorically stated that women were not part of such committees and that if even they were, they just made up about 10 % of the members of the committees. Observation also revealed that most of the focus group meetings except for Alavanyo and Nkonya were male-dominated even though the researcher called for a 50/50 representation. These were very interesting revelations on the non-involvement of women in conflict management and showed a gross non-involvement of women across the board.

Fair gender representation within institutions managing conflict.

The predominant view that emerged pointed to the fact that fair gender representation in conflict management processes was necessary as each gender brought to bear unique qualities that facilitated the process. De Zwaan and Feenstra (2015) are of the opinion that unequal power relations can contribute to the institutionalization of gender-based violence. According to the World Bank (2012), investing in gender equality and women's empowerment can unlock human potential on a transformational scale. The statement below from a key respondent interview reinforces the need for a look at a fair representation/ gender equality in the process of conflict management which was a predominant view of respondents.

10

It is good we have a fair representation. Exactly, because we are not the same, the women differ from us; the men also differ from the women. Yes, maybe our levels of understanding also differ from each other, so when the man thinks of violence he may be calmed down by the woman. Men will be ready to fight whilst women will calm them down or women will be ready to let things escalate by shouting or quarreling with others. Men can also calm everything down and vice versa. Anything at all can happen so if the gender 'balances', then we can manage the conflicts very well (5th November 2019).

More importantly and as a confirmation of fair gender representation, discussions by opinion leaders of the Nkonya community established that gender balance was very effective in conflict management because the difficult and harsh nature of men could be toned down by bringing in women who would come in with their naturally calm voices to calm down tempers. They were therefore of the opinion that, if women are not part of such sessions, it would be very difficult at times to come to a peaceful conclusion on matters. Also, in a similar discussion in Hohoe, fair representation was seen as really helpful and very important. They noted that it should be the stance of all communities in conflict management as it would inure to gender balance. They categorically stated that a (50/50) representation of men and women should be the case. They were also of the view that women were always more than men in population and should therefore be fairly represented. They also stated that men keep issues to themselves and hardly would want to give explanations whereas women were naturally predisposed to very good conversation and explanations. They finally concluded their discussions by stating that, if conflict management sessions are to be all men, things would definitely not go very well.

An analysis of these statements shows that a fair representation of both genders is essential in the conflict management processes as both bring on board perspectives unique to their type which ensures fairness in deliberations. It also establishes the fact that each gender is also equally endowed with the properties of providing good counsel in addressing conflict situations.

Male's appreciation of female's role in conflict management.

Males admitted to having better appreciated the relevance of women to the conflict management process and wanted their voices heard in such situations. This was buttressed in the statement of this opinion Leader.

The most important thing is that we are already saying that men and women have to be involved in conflict resolution. So, I am thinking it should be that. Anything apart from that will not bring peace and unity and therefore the community will not grow. Women naturally know their role and in conflict resolution sometimes you need to send women to the other party to go and talk to them, sometimes when men and men come face to face, you will see that the respect is not there, so sometimes men will listen to women because they have that respect for them, so sometimes we have to use the women as a strong weapon if we want to solve conflicts so that there will be unity and growth (10th November 2019).

A male pastor and an opinion leader of one of the communities had this to say to affirm his stance for a fair inclusion of men and women in the conflict management process.

I would love a 50/50 representation because God has given every human the brain to do anything possible. A woman or a man can have very good pieces of advice for our community.

11

As a pastor therefore I do not discriminate but give everybody the chance to bring his/her view to bear in the church building (Peki Opinion Leader 3- IDI).

In a group discussion, a youth representative of the Zongo community who could not hide his joy of now seeing women on board in their deliberations in conflict management stated with so much passion that:

Years ago, there was that ignorance that made us relegate women to the background but this time it is not so with the Islamic setup. This time we try to seek views from our "Magagiers" within the community. They contribute a lot. God has endowed them a lot with knowledge. In fact, it is very important in all conflict management circles (21st October 2019).

Women's involvement in conflict management architecture in the past was more in theory than in practice.

Conflict management institutions have always had a structure involving both men and women with a question mark of the women always lagging behind the men in terms of numbers for several reasons. Shepherd (2015) states that overcoming such gender assumptions underlying the design of post-conflict dispute resolution processes and structure and working toward greater inclusion of women in formal and informal processes was a way out. The tradition of the low levels of involvement of women in conflict management sessions especially the very formal sessions was echoed by some community leaders that gave some hope for the inclusion of women. These community leaders also related to Shepherd's statement of overcoming such gender assumptions, in their various statements below. First is a key informant from the Nkonya community.

The most important for me is for the voice of women to be heard. Because sometimes when you go for reconciliation sessions, women don't talk in these sessions, they just sit and are not called to give their opinion (14th October 2019).

Discussions in the Hohoe community highlighted the fact that in the past they never involved women but now when conflict management issues come up, they add women leaders and other women representatives. They now made sure they involved at least two women before going for any conflict management session. This they said was because they realized their contributions to a greater extent helped to add up to that of the men to calm down tempers and ensure a peaceful atmosphere in their communities.

In the Nkwanta community, group discussions pointed out that Ghana was growing and had to change its old ways. The respondents also confirmed that at first women were not regarded in such instances of conflict management but that the generation of today had realized that mothers were better at resolving conflicts basically because their involvement always culminates in the achievement of peace. They concluded they had therefore decided any issue that borders on the management of conflicts should involve women as well as men.

An analysis of the above statements is indicative of the fact that gender mainstreaming is catching up with conflict management institutions. The mere fact that respondents are saying they never involved women in the past but are now doing that is an attestation to the fact that gender is being mainstreamed into the institutional framework of conflict management institutions. This will help in

empowering both men and women and eventually lead to gender equality which would also culminate in the involvement of women in peace and security architecture.

Non-feasibility of fair gender representation in some circumstances

There were instances where fair representation by gender was perceived as not feasible in all circumstances as there were no women with the needed competencies to be involved, as in the church for example. The following statement from an opinion leader and a church leader from Peki in a group discussion was indicative of this.

> A fair gender representation would work in some instances and not work in other instances. In the community where we are looking for people to form a peace committee, the 50/50 could be gotten for both men and women, but in instances like trying to get Pastors' representation for a peace committee in a church, it would be difficult to get a 50/50 representation basically because women pastors are few in number (10th December 2019).

Perspectives on the functions of conflict management institutions in conflict situations

Maintaining or bringing peace, facilitating amicable management, settlement, or the resolution of conflicts in the community were themes that emerged from interviews with respect to the perceived objectives and concerns of conflict management institutions in conflict situations.

Conflict management institutions maintained or brought peace to the community.

A key theme that emerged from the various communities was that conflict management institutions were perceived as those to maintain or ensure that peace prevailed in the community. Some key informants from Tsito and Hohoe indicated this below.

> Normally the objective of conflict management is to bring mutual understanding or live in peace with each other (5th November 2019).

> To bring peace to the Community (21st October 2019).

> In the first place, if you are a community leader and there is conflict among some individuals or groups in your town, you have to be very fast to see what will bring about peace in the community. You have to send the "Tsiame", a sub-chief to do some background checks on the conflict and send the feedback to you as the chief. The various parties involved in the conflict are called the "Tsiame" who finds out from each of the parties what has caused the existing state of conflict. After picking the feedback from the "Tsiame", the chief then sits the parties down as a leader and tries to settle the conflict amicably (12th December 2019).

In group discussions, the Peki community observed that their main aim generally was to ensure a peaceful community. They stated they are peace-loving people who hate conflicts and bloodshed. They concluded that even though people refer to them as a conflict hotspot because of the occurrences in the past, they would want to say that they are a peace-loving community now.

13

Conflict management institutions facilitated amicable management, settlement, or the resolution of conflicts.

Another emergent theme was that conflict management institutions were perceived to facilitate the amicable management, settlement, or resolution of conflicts in the community. Statements of key informants from Peki and Alavanyo who were opinion leaders who attested to this were as follows.

Our concern is to ensure an amicable settlement (10th December 2019).

My major concern has always been to resolve the issues that brought about the conflict and to restore relationships back to normalcy (10th November 2019).

In a group discussion, it was observed that there was a misunderstanding causing a problem that should be solved. Additionally, it was noticed that conflicts happening in the community were basically among individuals or groups. It was also established that the chief's role was to ensure that there was an amicable settlement of minor conflicts whereas conflicts among various tribes which were seen as a security threat were reserved for the police who are called to see how they can relate to the situation and ensure some calm or peace. All these expositions buttressed and confirmed the earlier statements of the key informants who all perceived the function of conflict management institutions to be the amicable settlements of conflicts.

To Bercovitch, (1983) the purpose of conflict management, is to affect the entire structure of a conflict situation so as to contain the destructive components in the conflict process (e.g. hostility, use of violence) and help the parties possessing incompatible goals to find some solution to their conflict. Effective conflict management according to Bercovitch succeeds in minimizing disruption stemming from the existence of a conflict and providing a solution that is satisfactory and acceptable. The findings of the study basically talking about achieving peace, amicable management, and resolution of conflicts are all congruent with the findings of Bercovitch.

Additionally, the military of the 66 Artillery Regiment from the Volta Regional Capital was also observed patrolling the outskirts of Alavanyo and Nkonya as well as the disputed land area which separated the two communities. Also, there was a heavy presence of members of the Volta Regional Police Service at various barrier posts erected before these two communities. All these pointed to activities that would help limit the probability of conflicts coming up again and thus help in amicably settling the existing conflict which had metamorphosed over the years into different complex forms.

These findings which indicate moves that are tailored towards ensuring an environment free of conflicts and which is generally peaceful are in line with the findings of Bercovitch on the purpose of conflict management. Similarly, the findings are also in line with that of Marquis and Huston Mckibben (2017), who state that considerate management fosters an environment that minimizes precursory conditions for future conflicts and organizational stasis.

Perceptions of male and female involvement in contributing to the success of the conflict management process.

There was the perception that both genders have important qualities that come to bear when approaching conflict management, hence the need to have both males and females as part of the process always. These were evident in key interviews conducted in the communities of Peki, Hohoe, and Nkwanta as stated below.

14

Yes, it's important so I normally explain to them that men and women are all important in ensuring a peaceful community (10th December 2019).

Yes, we involve both men and women (10th December 2020).

Yes, I consult both males and females in resolving conflicts because women always know about the real cause of conflict whereas men don't have the patience to listen to the main cause of the conflict before they jump in (21st October 2019).

In the Peki community as a conflict hotspot, group discussions suggested that conflict when it surfaces affects the community as a whole and does not factor in the fact of whether one was a man or a woman. This they said was the basic philosophy of the people of Peki and Tsito to an extent that both men and women were involved in issues that would help do away with conflict and ensure peace in the two communities. They also made it known that the communities did not restrain women from helping out in ensuring peace in the two communities. It was also confirmed that even in times of journeying for peace programs, their women were with them. They also went down memory lane remembering something that once happened in their town which warranted a 24-hour curfew. They reiterated there were some deaths during the occurrence and that it was women who went for the dead bodies, dug their graves, and buried them. They, therefore, concluded that since then, the financial issues in their Peace Committees were handled by women showing how well they revered them. These confirmed earlier statements from the key interviews above perceiving both genders as important in the process of conflict management.

In Tsito, it was evident that when you visited their churches, leaders who were male and female elders dealt with conflict cases and managed them. In the same way, they went about the process of conflict management in the church, the communities also had male leaders, who were chiefs, and female leaders who were the Queen mothers who also dealt with conflict cases. If the case concerned the females, and the females know more about it, they sat and took a decision on it. On the other hand, if the males had the opportunity, they helped. Both men and women in Tsito, therefore, worked together to manage conflicts in their community.

The findings above correlate with the findings of Birkhoff (2012), who stated gender affects and indeed permeates, conflict dynamics at the societal and individual levels. Kofi Annan, 2005 (as cited in Manchanda, 2012) also stated emphatically that "Sustainable peace will not be achieved without the full and equal participation of women and men." The involvement of both men and women in the process of conflict management which was perceived by both genders as important for successful outcomes, therefore, falls in line with Kofi Annan's view. Almost all the commonly listed structural causes of conflict have a gender dimension that should be monitored (UN Women, 2012). The findings above therefore are highly congruent with this position by the United Nations.

Each gender had unique roles that contributed significantly to facilitating the conflict resolution process.

As if to further justify the contribution of both genders, respondents shared their perspectives on the unique qualities of each gender and how these would contribute to resolving conflicts thus leading to peace in the community. These were outlined in statements from key informants from the Volta Regional Capital as indicated below.

Women should not be sidelined. In some communities, you see that when it comes to conflict resolution, they call men only together, but I am of the view that women should be added to decision-making in solving conflicts so that when the two sides have agreed on something it will be lasting, but when one party accepts peace and the other party does not accept it then it has become a problem, so I think women and men should be involved in solving conflicts (5th November 2019).

Gender roles play a significant role in the causes and resolution of conflict. Mediation processes are also an opportunity to sensitize parties in the conflict about these roles. An understanding of these roles sometimes facilitates the conflict resolution processes in our communities (10th November 2019).

When we leave out the women to do their own thing and the men to go their way what will happen is that you will not have people with mindsets that take decisions. This will not help in community development and it will not help to bring about peace and unity. So, women have to be involved, men should play their part, women should also play their part and through these things, all will be fine (5th November 2019).

In involving both men and women, we look at the roles each play in starting conflicts and the roles each play in resolving them so we know the need of each other. We so much treasure the roles each of us plays in resolving conflicts in our community (10th December 2019).

It is very important to involve both men and women in an all-societal activity (10th December 2019).

Group discussions held in the communities indicated the involvement of both males and females in deliberations on what is to be done to ensure peace between members of the community. They also indicated the achievement of good results if males, as well as females, are factored into the equation of decision making. In relation to the findings above, a study by Gichuru (2014), in Somalia's capital as a case in point, saw women involved in peace-building processes after the collapse of Siad Barre's regime in 1991. Similarly, another study by Chebet (2011) looked at how women were involved in the violence related to Kenya's post-election violence (2007/2008) and the subsequent roles they played in managing and resolving it.

Delimitation

As a result of the purposive selection of study participants in the various study areas, their views expressed may not be exactly the views of the larger community members.

Contribution to Knowledge

The study diagnosed the various conflict management processes in conflict hotspots and institutions bringing out the gender perspectives whose neglect might have contributed to the protracted nature of conflicts as well as the changing (complex) nature of conflicts in the Volta and Oti Regions.

Suggestions for Further Studies

Further studies could focus on how the management of conflict by organizations including Oti and Volta regions in Ghana would draw up or push for more women in the structure and function of conflict-managing institutions.

Conclusion

The structure of conflict management institutions across the different study communities indicated that traditional leadership plays an essential role in conflict management. There were much more males than females on conflict management committees. The only exceptions to the rule of men being more were with organizations that had female heads such as GLOWA (an NGO) and in Alavanyo where a Queen Mother's influence was substantial. The concerns of conflict management institutions in conflict situations were maintaining or bringing peace, facilitating amicable management and settlement, or the resolution of conflicts in the community.

Recommendations

The study recommended that formal/state institutions should be cognizant of their traditional, religious, and developmental counterparts and actively solicit their involvement in conflict management. Also, institutions tasked with managing conflicts should ensure the enhanced participation of women in their teams cognizant of their unique conflict management qualities.

Declaration of Interest Statement

The authors declare that there are no known conflicts of interest associated with this publication and there has been no significant financial support for this work that could have influenced its outcome.

17
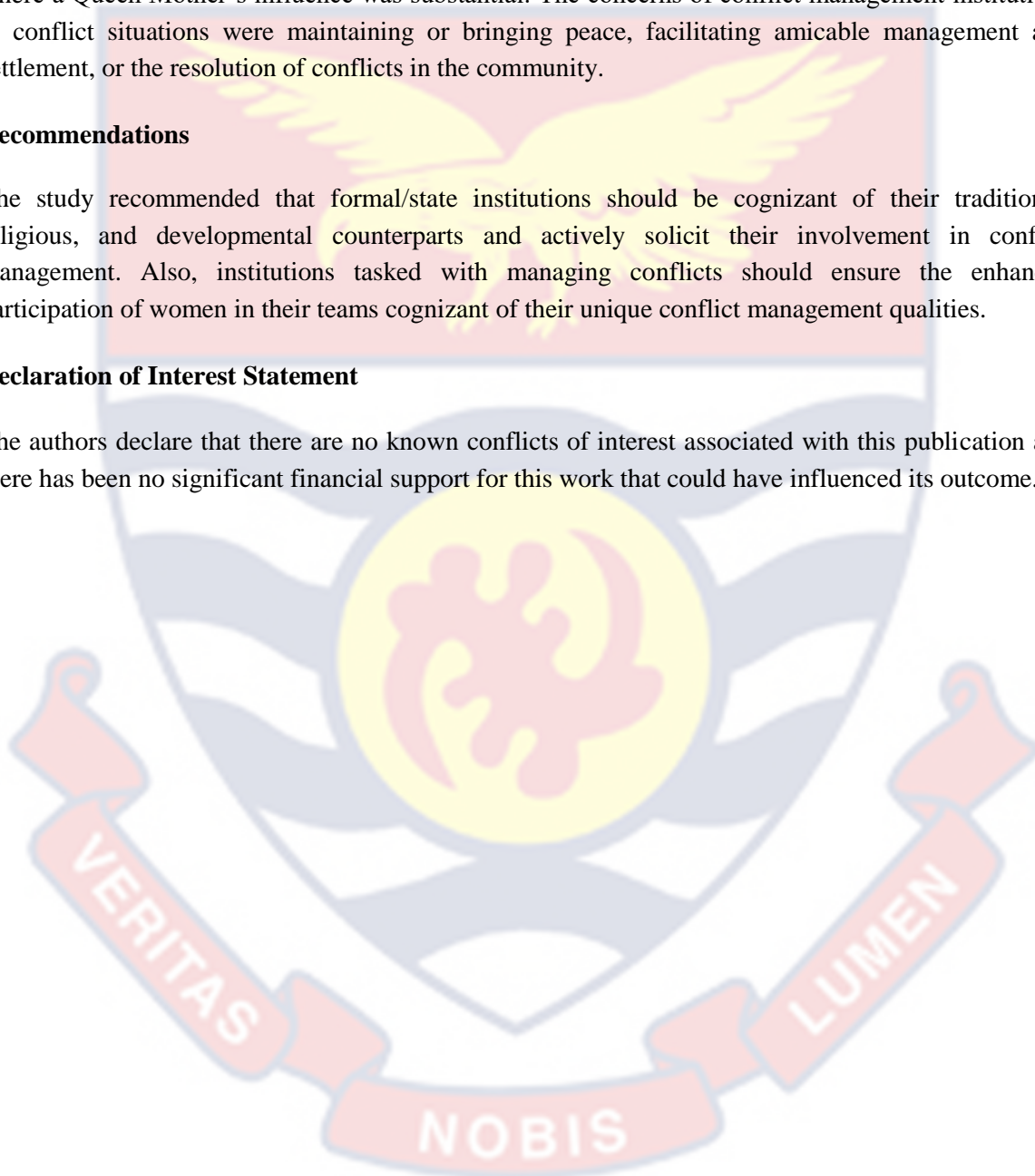
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