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THIRD-PARTY INTERVENTION AND CONFLICT TRANSFORMATION: A STUDY OF ALAVANYO-NKONYA CONFLICT, GHANA

HAGAR ASARE

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THIRD-PARTY INTERVENTION AND CONFLICT TRANSFORMATION: A STUDY OF ALAVANYO-NKONYA CONFLICT, GHANA

BY

HAGAR ASARE

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

JULY, 2023

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DECLARATION

Candidate's Declaration

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

Candidate's Signature: ..... Date: .....

Name: Hagar Asare

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: .....

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ABSTRACT

Conflicts, if not resolved or transformed, have the tendency of becoming protracted. In Ghana, protracted conflicts have been intervened by various third-party actors with varied approaches towards conflict transformation. In the case of the Alavanyo-Nkonya conflict, despite several third-party interventions, the conflict persists, and the underpinning reason(s) need further exploration. Guided by the input-output transformation process model, the study sought to assess the role of third-party intervention and conflict transformation in the Alavanyo-Nkonya conflict in Ghana. Using the exploratory design, the study collected data from three FGDs, eighteen key informant interviews (KIIs) and 28 in-depth interviews (IDIs) purposively. Third-party actors constitute both neutral and modified neutral individuals, including opinion leaders, assembly members, traditional authorities, the clergy, as well as government and non-governmental organisation who have intervened in the conflict. The results revealed that third-party interventions have contributed to a change in violent behaviours and attitudes of the conflicting parties, leading to relative peace in the area. The third-party actors used approaches including peace committee engagements and community engagements to generate the transformation processes to enable them to get this outcome. Lastly, although there has been relative peace, as a result of third-party intervention, the process faced challenges, including inadequate funding, inadequate expertise, and failure to implement third-party recommendations by government. It is therefore recommended that government should collaborate with other stakeholders to set up victim support centres and training of local third-party actors to continue and sustain the conflict transformation processes.

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KEY WORDS

Conflict actors

Transformation

Third-party actors

Third-party intervention

Conflicting parties

Alavanyo-Nkonya

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DEDICATION

To my children: Kobina Nhyira Esia-Donkoh, Abena Aseda Esia-Donkoh and Kobina Ayeyi Esia-Donkoh

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

CSO	Civil Society Organisation
ECOWAS	Economic Community of West African States
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
IDI	In-depth Interviews
KII	Key-Informant Interviews
NPC	National Peace Council
PSC	Protracted Social Conflict
PSC	Protracted Social Conflict
UCC	University of Cape Coast
WANEP	West Africa Network for Peacebuilding
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
GIZ	German Agency for International Cooperation
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
REGSEC	Regional Security Council

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Generally described as a disagreement between two or more parties, conflict, and its (violent) plurality have been mentioned as the bane of progress at all levels of development in Africa (Adetula, 2015; UNTAD, 2017). In Ghana, both violent and intractable conflicts related to resources and chieftaincy are predominant across all regions and most districts (Anumel, 2017; Deja, 2002; Maasole, 2012). Various approaches are used to address these conflicts in the country including transformation, which attempts to reduce violence conflicts to non-violent ones (Akudugu & Mahama, 2011; Yaro, 2019). This study focuses on the transformation of the Alavanyo-Nkonya resources-based conflict. This chapter provides the background to the study, statement of the problem, objectives of the study, research questions, significance of the study, and the scope of the study.

Background to the Study

Conflict is an integral and inevitable part of human life and existence, and sometimes, a natural process for change and development in society (Messman & Mikesell, 2000; Thakore, 2013). From the global space to national contexts, records and evidence of both manifest and latent constructive or destructive outcomes from violent and non-violent conflicts have been, and could be mapped (Govier, 2008; Hoel & Cooper, 2001; Specialpedagogik, 2016). With regard to constructive outcomes, conflict can bring about social change as well as changes in attitudes, behaviour and relationships (Coser, 2016; Szczecińska-Musielak, 2016). Constructive outcome reflects long-term peace and cooperation due to support from all conflicting parties (Burges,

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2013). However, the occurrence of violent conflict is an anomaly in society due to its negative impacts on human lives, property and development, especially in developing countries where intra and inter-national violent conflicts disproportionately affect the poor (Enu-Kwesi & Tuffour, 2010; Marks, 2016).

Noticeably, conflicts contribute to poverty, and by extension, prevent the poor from realising their freedom to create wealth (Annan, 2014; Braithwaite, Dasandi & Hudson, 2016). This partly explains why conflict-affected countries were unable to achieve any of the millennium development goals (Alejandra & CARE, 2013; Motala, Ngandu, Mti, Arends, Winnaar, Khalema & Martin, 2015). Perhaps, it is for this reason that the sixteenth Sustainable Development Goal (SDG 16) focuses on building sustainable, inclusive, strong institutions and just societies for all including the poor.

Third-party intervention is a common approach to solving violent conflicts around the world, especially, when the conflicts tend to be protracted with no end in sight (Kendie et. al, 2014; Wielenga & Akin-Aina, 2016). Third-party actors include individuals, groups, organisations, states and agencies both officials and non-officials who with diverse knowledge and expertise about a specific conflict may play a neutral and impartial role in facilitating peaceful resolution and transformation between conflicting parties (Corbetta, 2014; Mial, 2001). Third- party actors may be invited by the conflicting parties themselves who have agreed based on their inability to settle their differences and they may also be invited by a government, an organisation, a state or agencies who may have a vested interest in the resolution and the transformation of the conflict (Ajayi & Buhari, 2014). The rules of engagement of third-parties are set based on who invited them to help resolve or transform the conflict. For instance, if

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the State or government invite the third-party, then the state set the rules of engagement. In such instances, third parties may be confronted with challenges as they may be seen as doing the biding of the government instead of genuine commitment to resolving the conflict. On the other hand, if the conflicting parties invite the third-parties, then it can set the rules of engagement for them (Fisher, 2001). Third-parties in conflict resolution/transformation are either funded by themselves, a non-governmental organisation (NGO), or the state.

According to Dudouet and Dressler (2016), and Sousa (2014), third-party interventions can put an end to complex protracted and intractable conflicts. This, perhaps, explains the increasing number of third-party interests in conflict resolution and transformation across the globe. For example, about one-half of all mediation efforts around the world, particularly since the mid-1990s, have included third-parties (Beber, 2010; Bercovitch & Jackson, 2009; Bhattarai, 2014; Crocker, 2011; Crocker, Hampson & Aall, 2001; Ibrahim, 2018; Lindgren, Wallensteen, & Grusell, 2010). Globally, third-party intervention has brought resolution and transformation to conflicts such as Bosnia and Herzegovina which led to the signing of the Dayton Accord in 1995 which ultimately ended the war and established Bosnia and Herzegovina as a federal republic (Balázs, 2008). The apartheid era in South Africa was transformed through the intervention of third-party actors that brought about a democratic government in 1994 (Lloyd, 2001). Again, the "Good Friday Agreement" brought transformation and peace to Northern Ireland (Tannam, 2001).

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Throughout history, third-party intervention has been the most widely used mechanism for responding to violent conflicts (Corbetta, 2014; Fisher, 2006). In Africa, third-party interventions have brought relative peace to places such as South Africa, Rwanda, Mozambique, and Kenya, especially when and where there are hurting stalemate, and both parties are unable to engage each other to transform the conflicts (Gentili, 2013; Ibrahim, 2018; Kendie et. al, 2014). Outside Africa, a classic case of third-party intervention is when the UN sent troops to halt an ethnocide in East Timor (Rioux, 2003).

A broad spectrum of individuals, states and agencies may perform the role of a third-party as local and external parties in conflict transformation (Corbetta, 2014). Lar (2017) categorises local actors into three, comprising those who are party to a conflict, official actors and non-official actors within a country. The official actors include government institutions, government organisations, government commissions and security agencies while the non-official actors are made up of non-governmental organisation (NGOs), international institutions, civil society organisations, traditional institutions, religious groups, community groups, media, eminent individuals and former government officials (Lar, 2017). On the other hand, the external third-parties may consist of nation-states or a coalition of states, transnational or sub-national organisations, ad hoc commissions, eminent individuals, or any other actor with international standing (Dixon, 2012; Yılmaz, 2006). Third-party actors must have a certain level of knowledge and expertise in conflict resolution, negotiation, and communication. They should possess a deep understanding of the root causes and dynamics of the conflict as well as possess knowledge of

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the cultural and social context of the conflict (Corbetta, 2014; Ester & Osunsan, 2020).

Concerning the outcome of third-party intervention, the available literature points to five main proximal factors (Dudouet & Dressler, 2016). These are neutrality, context-specificity, knowledge, experience, and approach (Corbetta, 2014; Dudouet & Dressler, 2016; Rioux, 2003). From a philosophical perspective, neutrality is the tendency not to side in a conflict. Gent and Shannon (2011) deepen the understanding and conceptualise neutrality within the perspective of interest. They further argue that mediators and intervenors in conflict transformation efforts would succeed because they do not have individual or group interests.

Context-specificity is regarded as a critical facilitating factor to the outcome of third-party intervention. The perspective on context has also been conceptualised into two main dimensions. These are the socio-cultural and the physical contexts (Osei-Hwedie & Galvin, 2008; Miall, 2007). The socio-cultural dimension comprises the underlying issues of the conflict, and the behaviours and attitudes of the conflicting parties which are fashioned within the socio-economic, cultural, political and spiritual spaces (Osei-Hwedie & Galvin, 2008). The physical context is the geographical location(s) that the conflict can be linked to (Miall, 2007). To Achankeng (2006), being specific with these contexts, and particularly, the social contexts, is key to understanding the possible manifest and latent dynamics of the conflict for effective implementation of third-party intervention. Thus, the third-parties focus on the underlying issues while others intervene to shape behaviours and attitudes towards non-violence, which is critical to conflict and its transformation.

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Broadly, conflicts are seen to evolve and are embedded within socio-economic, cultural, political, and spiritual spaces. As such, the cause(s) and sources of (protracted) conflicts are better understood and contextually addressed if the third-party to intervene has adequate knowledge about the context and the required experience in third-party interventionism (Botes, 2003; Effendi, 2007; Fisher, 2005). This is one of the reasons Corbetta (2014), argues that knowledge about the contexts is important to conflict transformation. In fact, available evidence equally shows that the selection of third-parties to intervene and transform conflicts in Africa, which has contextual plurality, takes into account knowledge of these contextual underpinnings (Adegbonme, 2016; Corbetta, 2014; Beardsley & Lo, 2013). This view, largely, reflects the theory of multi-track diplomacy, which looks at the web of interconnected activities of persons, groups and institutions that work together to achieve a common goal within a specified context (Beardsley & Lo, 2013; Diamond & McDonalds, 1996).

Another facilitating factor to third-party intervention is its approach. Contrary to the systems approach and the structural perspective (Bekelcha, 2019), third-party interveners usually use the bottom-up approach within the formal structural framework (Pickering, 2008). The bottom-up approach, as explained by Pickering (2008), identifies different levels of groups, beginning with the grassroots, who are not only marginalised but are also more likely to be physically involved in violent conflict. Lederach (2007) conceptualises this with his conflict transformation pyramid theory which identifies three levels of focus in conflict transformation – top, middle and grassroots levels. The top-level constitutes the elite-leadership in society, the middle level represents the

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middle-range leadership who are the respected leaders in religion, ethnic groups, and other intellectuals among others. Finally, grassroots leadership is made up of local leaders, leaders in indigenous non-governmental organisations, and community groups (Lederach, 2007). All these three levels become important to the transformation of violent and protracted conflicts.

These notwithstanding, third-party interventions in Africa have not brought much of a desired transformation as expected. Although such interventions are central to conflict transformation, they are short of the desired outcome of transforming conflicts (Bartunek, Benton, & Keys, 1975). This has been explained by several writers including (Bartunek et al., 1975) and (Bagshaw, 2015) who argue that it is a result of over-reliance on mediation and negotiations which often do not transform conflicts in terms of actors, behaviours and issues after intervention (see Bagshaw, 2015). It has also been discussed extensively by Yilmaz, (2006), Akindele, (1987) and Gurkaynak, (2007), that most third-party activities are often geared towards peacekeeping and peace-making, with less attention on conflict transformation.

As posited by Piccolino and Minou (2014), and also reiterated by Appiah-Thompson (2020), the neglect of conflict transformation ideals in mainstream approaches to peace has resulted in many protracted intra-state conflicts in Africa. There is a plethora of theoretical perspectives to explain the evolution and reason of (violent and protracted) conflicts, as well as how to transform them. Here, the question, however, is, which one is best suitable and applicable to specific context-based conflicts, especially, within Africa's multi-socio-cultural context? Authors such as Azar (1990), Miall (2001) and other scholars, have advanced reasons, theoretically, using colonial legacy, unmet

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basic human needs, inequalities in resource allocation and the multi-communal nature of societies to back their arguments on why protracted conflicts occur (Paffenholz, 2014; Kara, 2018).

Some opine that because most of these theories were developed outside Africa, their application to African conflicts that are culturally-sensitive would not yield the desired results. Others have, therefore, advocated for context-based theories such as conflict transformation theory and indigenous peace-making theory that are underpinned by indigenous or traditional constructions (Ibrahim, 2018; Uwazie, 2011; Akudugu & Mahama, 2011).

The other leg of the argument is the focus of the lens on intervention. Third-party interveners usually adopt two broad areas to focus on conflict resolution and transformation. These are the interests of the disputing parties and the ultimate interest of the community and the larger society (Ibrahim, 2018; Lederach, 2007; Miall, 2001; Uwazie, 2011). However, some authors argue that if the lens of third-parties is placed on the interests of the conflicting parties, transformation delays because it is always a challenging activity due to the complexities associated with such interests (E-Gent & Shannon, 2011). For instance, Corbetta (2014) clarifies that some of these interests cannot easily be determined and satisfied because they are historically connected and value-centric. Others place the strengths and flaws of third-party interventions on time, scale and interests embedded in the conflict (Nugent, 2002; Beardsley & Lo, 2013; E-Gent & Shannon, 2011).

The ambiguity surrounding the objective of third-party intervention is of critical concern and this has been discussed in the literature extensively (Lotz, Okimoto, Schlösser & Fetchenhauer, 2011; Maiese, 2004). Evidence available

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explains that third-party actors are usually caught between whether to work to resolve or transform conflicts. Whilst both the interest and objective of third-parties sound arguable in the available literature, objectivity has been emphasised in contemporary discourse (Siqueira, 2003). Therefore, the argument some authors have advanced is that third-party intervention needs to reflect theories (such as the indigenous peace-making theory, multi-diplomacy theory, conflict transformation theory and structural third-party theory) that contribute to transforming conflicts (Constantinou & Sharp, 2016; Genger, 2020; Lundy, Collette, & Downs, 2022; Raboin, 2014; Wils, Hopp, Ropers, Vimalarajah, & Zunzer, 2006).

Locally-centred theoretical perspectives have been cited as relevant bases for third-party intervention development and implementation (Ibrahim, 2018; Mahama, 2010). For instance, the indigenous peace-making theory, which is informed by local dynamics and socio-cultural contexts, explains that long-established practices and local customs should form the basis for dispute resolution, conflict-management techniques, and transformation practices (Bukari, 2014; Ibrahim, 2018; Mahama, 2010). It therefore, emphasises the adoption of indigenous approaches to third-party intervention through local participation and the use of factual and tacit-based cultural views and norms to transform conflicts (Salifu, 2021; Uwazie, 2010). This theoretical position, by extension, describes the composition of a third-party in a context-specific conflict as proposed by Rioux, (2003) and Bennett (2015). These authors argue that third-parties should not only understand the cultural context and its reflection in the conflict, and be familiarised with the factual and tacit-based

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cultural views and norms, but should also be willing to allow local engagement and participation.

The idea of conflict transformation in conflict-prone and post-conflict societies and countries in Africa has been of concern to many peace practitioners and African governments as well. The concern becomes crucial because of the emergence and re-emergence of new and old conflicts, and the relapse of several other violent ones at various levels (Lederach, 1997; Paffenholz, 2014; Tschrigi, 2003; Mac-Ginty, 2008; Newman & Evans-Lane, Pealer & Tuner, 2013; Newman, Paris & Richmond, 2009). Lederach (2007) has stressed the need for all levels of societies to embrace conflict transformation with context-specific measures (top, middle and grassroots leadership participation) to deal with the relapse of violent conflicts.

Lederach's view is supported by Paffenholz (2014) and Einsiedel (2017) who also agree that conflict transformation goes beyond resolution because it is a form of building peace. As such, they see conflict transformation as an action rather that an activity. The conflict transformation theory expatiates these understandings. The theory explains the relevance of peace-building strategies at all levels of society. It emphasises the use of the bottom-up approach to include all levels of society as well as the parties involved in the conflict (Pickering, 2008). Largely, conflict transformation may include third-party interventions. It is important to note that third-party intervention is usually geared towards mediation which will ultimately lead to negotiations. This study aligns with and conceptualises conflict transformation along these perspectives.

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Admittedly, third-party interventions towards conflict transformation often face challenges, and this delays or deny the achievement of intended outcomes. Critical, in the view of Keethaponcalan and Royster (2020), is related to power status dynamics. Keethaponcalan and Royster (2020) explain that power status dynamics become pronounced especially in contexts where power relations between the third-parties and the conflicting parties are asymmetrical. Power status dynamics, as explained by power theories include the cultural, educational and economic backgrounds as well as the status or position persons occupy in the socio-political environment (Svarstad, Benjaminsen, & Overå, 2018; Lemke, 2003). To Wani and Suwirta (2013), these background characteristics of interveners and conflicting parties influence decision-making processes during conflict transformation (Wani & Suwirta, 2013).

Baber (2010) has earlier, on similar grounds, outlined three challenges that affect the functions of third-parties in conflict transformation. Not in any order of importance, he lists them as conflicting interests and opinions on which approach to take; the specific role the conflicting parties must play; and the delay in decision-making processes. From the discussions by Collett (2014), these challenges sometimes create an atmosphere of mistrust between the third-party interveners and the contending parties, and sometimes, aggravate the underlying issues that drive the conflict, therefore making it difficult to transform. Thus, disputants often see some perceived unfairness and possibility of biases from third-party actors during the transformation processes (Botes, 2003; Collett, 2014).

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Other issues that have been raised to explain the reasons third-party interventions fail to transform conflicts have been highlighted in the available literature (Bhattarai; 2014; Ester et al., 2020). One such issue is the role of third-party interventionists. Bhattarai (2014), for example, argues that because some of the third-parties do not have adequate or recognised 'power', they often play communication and facilitation roles. To him, these do not address the interests and positions of belligerents. Similarly, it has also been reiterated that most of the third-party interventions are carried out by external actors, along formal structural lines, usually underpinned by the systems approach and structural theory, and implemented by official actors and organisations (Bekelcha, 2019). A critical example is the provision of military assistance in protracted conflicts which usually leads to a stalemate but not transformation (Bhattarai, 2014; Gun, 2014; Khosla, 2004).

The other factor which makes it a challenge for third-party intervention to succeed in transforming conflicts, especially, protracted ones, is the difficulty to distinguish between the basic needs of the conflicting parties (Bhattarai, 2014). Discussing this challenge, Bhattarai, (2014) underscores that the success of third-party intervention is buttressed by the identification of the critical needs of the conflicting parties. Specific to these needs are security, recognition and acceptance, communal identity, fair access to political institutions and economic participation (Burton, 1997; Fisher,2005; Miall, 2001), and these could best be addressed through participation (Azar, 1990; Bhattarai, 2014; Uwazie, 2001). Marker (2003) admits this position and further argues that without these basic human needs resolving protracted conflict becomes a difficult task.

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As theorised by Azar (1990), the critical factor in many prolonged and often violent protracted social conflicts (PSCs) is the struggle by communal groups for such basic needs. It is based on these consistent thoughts that the application of the need and satisfaction theories becomes relevant in conflict transformation in the sense that human needs are drivers of survival (McLeod, 2007; Park, 2010). To determine these needs and satisfaction, the application of Lederach's pyramidal model, and, in recent discussions, the multi-track diplomacy theory become relevant in conflict transformation (Bonmelt, 2010; McDonald, 2012).

The multi-diplomacy theory looks at a multi-faceted approach which highlights other alternatives to conflict transformation. Also based on the systems approach (McDonald, 2012), the multi-diplomacy theory emphasises the categorising of the society into segments, and adopting specific third-party interventions which are conceptualised as tracks at each segment to facilitate conflict transformation (Bonmelt, 2010; Diamond & McDiamonds, 1996; Miall, 2001; Paffenholz, 2003). In this regard, all categories of persons in society, comprising those in top leadership positions (including traditional authorities and experts in varied fields of work) and those at the grassroots level have roles to play in conflict transformation (Lederah, 2007; Miall, 2001).

In Ghana, third-party interventions have been used in several violent conflicts ranging from chieftaincy, ethnic, political, and resource to religious conflicts. Unfortunately, many of these conflicts have become protracted with some re-escalating and taking on different dimensions (Hamza, 2019; Issifu, 2015; Mahama & Longi, 2015). Commonly, the approaches to interventions have been mediation and peace education by Civil Society/Non-Governmental

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Organisations (CSO/NGOs) and the National Peace Council (NPC) as the state agency for peacebuilding, establishment of committees of inquiry, arbitration by the law courts, and another state/government interventions through military/police deployment.

The Alavanyo - Nkonya conflict is one such conflict typified as an ethno-resource conflict between the Ewes of Alavanyo and the Guans of Nkonya. The conflict, which is a century old, is linked to a land resource (Agyei, 2020). The first recorded violence between the two communities occurred in 1923 during the preparations for Empire Day Celebration (Tsikata & Seini, 2004). Since then, periodic violence had taken place, with at least, one occurrence each year (Agyei, 2015; Gariba, 2015; Kendie et al., 2014). Successive governments, citizens of the area, NGOs, chiefs and the Volta Regional House of Chiefs have implemented third- party interventions since 1923, when the first violent occurred but without the desired outcome (Penu, 2016).

Currently, there is a stalemate in the Alavanyo-Nkonya conflict. It is believed that this is due to the presence of the military (troops) on the disputed land (Anumel, 2017; Mensah, 2013). The questions that arise are; has the presence of the military and the takeover of the land transformed the conflict? Also, how effectively have third-party interventions helped to facilitate the transformation of the conflict? Currently, third-parties involved in the Alavanyo-Nkonya conflict include; the national and regional peace councils, civil society organisations, insider mediation committees, and regional and district security councils. Although third-party intervention is central to conflict transformation, it is not clear the extent to which the Alavanyo-Nkonya conflict

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has been transformed. This calls for a critical analysis of the role of third -party interventions aimed at transforming the Alavanyo-Nkonya conflict (Gariba, 2015; Kendie et. al, 2014; NORCAP, 2021).

Statement of the Problem

Over the years, the Alavanyo-Nkonya conflict has witnessed several third-party interventions. In 1913, for example, Dr. Hans Grunner, a German cartographer was made to intervene in the conflict by demarcating the land between the two parties but the outcome was not successful (Agyei, 2021). In 2004, a joint consultative committee was set up to see to the end of the conflict. However, the committee was unable to transform the conflict as a result of their inability to amass trust and confidence from the conflicting parties (Agyei, 2014). Recently, various state and non-state actors including the West Africa Network for Peacebuilding (WANEP), National Peace Council (NPC), and Regional Security Council have all intervened to bring peace to the area but with no success (Anumel, Kendie, & Osei-Kufuor, 2021). Table 1 shows the evolution and subsequent triggers and conflicts of the Alavanyo-Nkonya conflict, the type of third-party intervention as well as the status of the intervention.

Reasons such as trust issues, lack of commitment from both parties to transform the conflict and non-implementation of third-party recommendations could account for the current status of the conflict (Anumel, 2017; Mensah, 2013; Penu, 2016). The Alavanyo-Nkonya conflict has received several interventions such as courts adjudication, security interventions, sensitisation campaigns, mediation, negotiations and the use of commissions/committees of

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inquiry (Agyei, 2015; Gaston & Al-DawSari, 2014; Nucci, 2004; Tsikata & Seini, 2004).

Table 1: Evolution of Alavanyo-Nkonya conflict and its triggers

Date of conflict	Triggers	Third-party intervenors	Type of third-party intervention	Status of intervention
1913	Encroachment of land boundary	Traditional Authorities	Arbitration	Not successful
1923	Encroachment of land boundary	German Colonial Administration	Arbitration	Not successful
1983	Water shortage	The High Court	Adjudication	Not successful
2003	Timber logging	REGSEC	Mediation	Not successful
2004	Timber logging	REGSEC	Mediation	Not successful
2012	Rumour peddling	REGSEC	Mediation	Not successful
2013	Ambush killing	NPC	Mediation/ Peace committees and Military take-over	Stalemate/ relative peace

Source: Author's Desk Review, 2021

However, with minimal success, one could argue and perhaps, support the views of Paffenholz (2014) and others that third-party interventions do not always end with transformation of conflict, but sometimes, to create the readiness for parties to come to a consensus on the settlement of a conflict

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(Conteh-Morgan, 2005; Miall, 2014; Mac-Ginty, 2008; Lederach, 2003; Richmond, 2009).

A critical question remains – what could be the reason(s) the Alavanyo-Nkonya conflict has persisted after several third-party interventions? Responses to the above question are limited in the literature, although a couple of authors over the years have studied the Alavanyo-Nkonya conflict. For example, Gariba (2015) examined the Alavanyo-Nkonya conflict by tracing its evolution and dynamics within the context of land struggle, power, and the challenge of belonging. Others have also researched issues such as the ethnic dimension and its associated threat to internal stability, conflict dynamics and attractors (Asamoah, 2014; Agyei 2015; Gariba, 2015; Kpormasi, 2013; Penu & Osei-Kufuor, 2016).

Recently, the notion that the introduction of a third-party intervention perspective is critical to conflict transformation has been heightened (Egeland, 2021). The suggestion is that third-party frameworks or interventions have achieved some level of success in Ghana. For instance, the relative peace in Dagbon as a result of efforts by the Eminent Chiefs (a group of chiefs from outside the conflict communities who served as a third-party) suggests some level of conflict transformation success in this regard (Issifu, 2017; Kanda, 2019). This gives credence to the view that conflicts (even if protracted) can be successfully transformed through third-party interventions. Perhaps attention could be directed to other factors such as developments in the conflict areas. Conflict transformation efforts by third-parties with development as a pivot could provide avenues for successful outcomes.

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This assertion, notwithstanding, the Alavanyo-Nkonya conflict has still not been transformed despite several third-party interventions. For context, even though the Alavanyo-Nkonya conflict could be traced to a land resource, and disputed boundary demarcation, it has now been broadened, and currently, the major drivers include deep-seated issues (Gariba, 2015). These issues include ethnicity, land security, local and state politics, court verdicts, economic interests in commercial trees, as well as autochthony and first-comer narratives. According to Gariba, the 'focus now should be more about transforming the communities of Alavanyo-Nkonya from conflict endemic communities to life-giving peaceful communities' (Gariba, 2015).

The present study is, therefore, conceptualised and situated not only within the context of providing empirical reasons to explain the possible gaps outlined above, but also to explore the role of third-party interventions in the transformation of the Alavanyo-Nkonya conflict and provide alternatives to promote conflict transformation and lasting peace in these communities.

Objective of the Study

The general objective of the study was to explore the role of third-party intervention and conflict transformation in the Alavanyo-Nkonya conflict.

The specific objectives were to:

1. explore the temporal dynamics of the Alavanyo-Nkonya conflict;
2. analyse the approaches used by third-parties in the Alavanyo-Nkonya conflict;
3. examine the outcome of third-party intervention in the conflict transformation;
4. explore alternative ways of transforming the conflicts.

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Research questions

1. What changes has the Alavanyo-Nkonya conflict undergone?
2. Why has the conflict persisted after several third-party interventions?
3. What are the roles played by third- parties in the conflict?
4. How has transformation taken place in the conflicting communities?
5. What alternative ways can be used to transform the conflict?

Significance of the Study

As conflict occurs, society becomes saddled with ways to adequately deal with it. Usually, the outcome of every conflict depends on the type of intervention implemented. The third-party intervention has become both a pre- and post-conflict approach to resolving conflict in non-violent ways. Undoubtedly, violent conflict is a threat to development. Therefore, conflict transformation becomes important not only to reduce violent conflict to non-violent one, but also to pave the way for socio-economic growth and sustainable development (Davis, 2016). To this effect, the present study will contribute to the understanding of third-party interventions in conflict transformation in the Alavanyo-Nkonya conflict within the context of national development. A transformation in the conflict will mean that resources that might have been directed at ensuring peace (including military operations cost) will be channelled to other areas of development.

This research has the potential to also contribute to theory and policy in the area of third- party interventions and conflict transformation. The study will contribute to the understanding of the dynamics of third-party relationships not only in their official and unofficial dimensions but also from multiple perspectives. It will also help to identify a set of factors that has the potential to

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influence third-party relationship dynamics in conflict transformation processes. A benefit of this process is the highlighting of the voices of third-party practitioners on the ground and the presentation of their perspectives and experiences regarding their relationships with conflicting parties. Findings from this study will help stakeholders in conflict transformation to understand how protracted conflicts are and could be transformed to ensure lasting peace and communal development.

The Alavanyo-Nkonya conflict is an important case as it has persisted for a long time with several third-party interventions not able to produce the desired results. As such, the Alavanyo-Nkonya conflict and third-party intervention model could serve as a model to other societies, traditional areas, and regions in the country facing similar challenges. Also, conflict resolution and peace practitioners, institutions such as the National Peace Council and other Non-Governmental Organisations will benefit from this study. Exploring third-party interventions and conflict transformation in the study area will help to develop appropriate responses that will provide a more comprehensive approach to conflict transformation in a multi-ethnic society such as Ghana. This study will also add to the existing literature on conflict transformation in general and third-party intervention in protracted conflict in local contexts.

This study is one of the few studies that assess third-party interventions and conflict transformation in the study area. For instance, Kendie, Osei-Kufour and Boakye (2014) included the Alavanyo-Nkonya conflict in their spatial analysis of violent conflicts in Ghana. Gariba (2015) studied issues relating to "land struggle, power and challenges of belonging: the evolution and dynamics of the Nkonya-Alavanyo land dispute in Ghana". Whereas these studies provide

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some important insights into the Alavanyo conflict, the issues of third-party intervention efforts towards the transformation of the conflict will require deliberate attention to understand the critical issues. In this regard, the present study will be important to researchers and academics as it could provide the basis for theorising from the grassroots perspective. This is essential because it would contribute to the formalisation of traditional, context-based, conflict-specific third-party interventions into theory.

Scope of the Study

The study primarily focuses on third-party interventions and conflict transformation of the Alavanyo-Nkonya conflict in the Volta Region and Oti Region. Third-party interventions consider both formal and informal neutral actors who help to reduce or remove destruction and persistent crises to facilitate conflict transformation. The study examines conflict transformation and explores the possible alternative ways to transform the conflict. Aside from these, the research also focuses on the changes that have taken place since the first eruption of violence a century ago between the people of Alavanyo in the Volta Region and Nkonya now in the Oti Region.

Organisation of the Study

The study is divided into eight chapters. The first Chapter deals with the introduction to the study. It comprises the background to the study, statement of the problem, objectives, research questions, significance of the study, scope, and organisation of the study.

Chapter Two is devoted to theoretical perspectives and conceptual issues. The theoretical and conceptual perspectives that underpinned the study are reviewed. Specific theories and related concepts are also reviewed. The

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review also covers issues in third-party interventions to conflict transformation, approaches to conflict transformation and implementations of third-party interventions. The adapted conceptual framework for the study is also presented in this chapter. The third chapter presents the study methodology which comprises the description of the research design, study area and context, sampling procedure and research instruments. Other aspects described are the data collection procedures, data analysis, and ethical issues.

Chapter four presents literature on the Alavanyo-Nkonya conflict with a focus on contextual issues. The related contextual issues presented include the evolution of the Alavanyo-Nkonya conflict, causes of conflict, escalation of conflict, and third-party actors and their attempt at transforming the Alavanyo-Nkonya conflict. The reason the Alavanyo-Nkonya conflict has become protracted is also reviewed and presented in the chapter.

Chapter five, six and seven discuss the findings of the study and present excerpts of the interview transcripts that were used to assess third-party interventions based on the objective of the study. The final chapter summarises the study findings, draws conclusions and makes recommendations that could inform peace practice and policy review.

Chapter Summary

This chapter put the study into perspective by providing the background to the study. It provides the statement of the problem and justification for the same. The chapter also provides various conceptualisations of conflict. Also, the chapter provides a comprehensive account of the evolution of the Alavanyo-Nkonya conflict and the triggers during the various phases of the conflict. The goal is to offer a comprehensive background and context to the study. Also, it

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introduced the concept of "third-party intervention" as a common approach to addressing and transforming violent conflicts. The Chapter also defined the research problem, stated the study objectives and research questions. It also highlights the significance of the study.

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CHAPTER TWO

THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVES AND CONCEPTUAL ISSUES

Introduction

This chapter reviews the theoretical, conceptual, and empirical literature for the study. Specifically, theoretical perspectives, including the conflict transformation theory, structural third-party theory, indigenous peace-making theory, multi-track diplomacy theory, and protracted social conflict theory have been reviewed in the chapter (Azar, 1990; Bush, 2010; Diamond & McDonalds, 1996; Fisher, 2005; Galtung, 2000; Lederach, 1997; Roasti, 1991; Miall, 2001). Furthermore, conceptual issues such as conflict, causes of conflict, stages of conflict, conflict dynamics, conflicts escalation, conflict transformation, conflict resolution and multi-track diplomacy have been discussed. In addition, an empirical review of selected case studies in Africa has been presented.

Theoretical Underpinnings of the Study

Different theoretical perspectives relevant to the study are discussed in this section. Notable among them are the conflict transformation theory, structural third-party theory, indigenous peace-making theory, protracted social conflict theory, and multi-track diplomacy theory that have shaped the discourse of conflict from an event to a continual process (Lederach, 1997; Miall, 2001).

Each of these theoretical perspectives has evolved to address a gap in an existing theoretical framework, or/and to respond to an emergent issue related directly or indirectly to conflict in general, and conflict transformation in particular (Miall, 2001; Ledeach, 1997). As indicated by Miall (2001), such theoretical perspectives provide both contextual and dynamic spaces within

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which the structure of a research project could be constructed effectively (see also Botes, 2003; Gultung, 2000). The three theories are now discussed in turn.

Conflict transformation theory

The conflict transformation theory focuses on the conversion of deep-rooted violent conflicts into peaceful ones based on different understandings of peace. Believed to have been developed by Gatlung (1996), the theory recognises that not all conflicts can be resolved, hence, the suggestion of the term conflict transformation rather than conflict resolution (Gultung, 2000; Maill, 2001). However, documented evidence shows that Kriesberg (1989), Curle (1990), Rupesinghe (1994) and Leberach (1995) are the chief proponents of the conflict transformation theory. Drawing from the complementary theory (see Fiske, 2000), the conflict transformation theory provides the need to address short-term conflict management and long-term relationship building, while taking into account the underlying causes of the conflict.

The purpose is to build long-term infrastructure for peace by supporting the reconciliation potential of the society (Galtung, 2000). In line with the conflict resolution school, this theoretical perspective also recognises the need to restore destroyed relationships, focus on reconciliation within societies and strengthen society's peace-building potential. From the writings of Galtung, (2000) and Mitchell (2008), the theory advocates for third-party interventions in efforts towards conflict transformation. However, according to the authors, such interventions should concentrate on coordinating external peace efforts and supporting internal actors.

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The literature also broadens the scope of the theory to acknowledge the sensitivity to the local culture. For instance, Paffenholz (2009) has contributed to the theoretical discussion and has posited that the largest contribution of the conflict transformation theory is its shift in focus from international to local actors. That is, the conflict transformation theory emphasizes civil society and local actors.

Building on Gatlung's (2000) position, Lederach (2007) expands the conflict transformation theory by dividing the society into three levels – top, middle and grassroots levels – with the argument that each level needs to be approached differently with specific transformation strategies. The top level can be accessed by mediation at the level of states and with the outcome-oriented approach, while the middle-level can be reached through resolution-oriented approaches such as problem-solving workshops or peace-commissions with the help of partial insiders including prominent individuals in society. However, at the grassroots level, (which represents the majority of the population) they can be reached by employing a wide range of transformation approaches. While Diamond and McDonald (1996) conceptualise this theoretical approach as a multi-track diplomacy concept of conflict transformation, where all members of the society contribute to transforming the conflict that has become protracted, Miall (2001) perceives it as a multi-dimensional task.

The conflict transformation theory has been applied to several conflicts in Africa, especially within the Horn of Africa. The Life and Peace Institute (Life and Peace Institute, 2020), for instance, has implemented this theoretical perspective using the community-based bottom-up approach, thereby, expanding Lederach's mid-level context to the grassroots track (Paffenholz

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2005). The conflict transformation theory has gained recognition among peace practitioners due to its participatory intent in the local context, in that, recent approaches to conflict management and peace studies and practice have inclined to local actor participation (Botes, 2003; Paffenholz, 2003).

Despite the prominence of the conflict transformation theory, questions have been raised about the theoretical notions and their application for practice to peace and conflict studies, and whether it is in essence, simply a reformulation of the term conflict resolution or exists alongside it (Botes, 2003; Miall, 2001). Perhaps, the theory is still at its development stage and evolving in the sense that it has not been a core construct in conflict and peace studies. Botes (2003), explains that as an evolving field, the theory is still in the process of defining, shaping and creating terminologies. This notwithstanding, he argues that the idea of transforming conflict to mitigate or even end a protracted social conflict has now become an integral part of the literature and fields in conflict and peace studies.

Drawing from the conceptual and theoretical argument from Gatlung's tri-dimensionality of conflict, it becomes imperative for third-party interveners to transform not only the context of the conflict but also the attitude and behaviour of the parties in the conflict (Botes, 2003; Miall, 2004; Lederach, 2007). These arguments relate to the Alavanyo-Nkonya conflict, thereby, making the conflict transformation theory applicable to this study. It is appropriate in the sense that it relates to the cultural, grassroots and social levels of interactions that define the Alavanyo-Nkonya conflict, and the interventions for its transformation (Gultung, 2000; Maill, 2001; Lederach, 2003).

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Structural third-party theory

The structural third-party theory is one of the theories that has been used to explain and discuss conflict transformation (Carment & James, 2000). The theory, which is an offshoot of the classical structural theory, holds the view that third-parties rely on formal structural systems to develop and implement interventions towards conflict transformation. Like the structural conflict theory, the structural third-party theory underscores the competing interests of groups as the most important motivation that underpins conflicts (Szczecińska-Musielak, 2016). The theory further emphasises that institutions are usually responsible for this competition and the subsequent transformation of the conflict. It highlights the reliance on structured frameworks for interventions such as dialogues, capacity building, education and public debates (Lemay-Hebert, 2013; Rioux, 2003).

The theory assumes the top-down approach where interventions aimed at transforming conflicts are developed and implemented by top leadership in society with less or no involvement and participation of the grassroots which constitutes a sizeable proportion of the population and is more likely to be affected by the conflict (Lederach, 1997; Richmond, 2009). The theory has been applied in some conflicts in countries in Africa, including the Liberia, Sierra Leone, and Mozambique crises (Carment & James, 2000). In each of these crises, the theory was applied to transform the conflict using the top-down approach (Carment & James, 2000; Lederach, 1997; Richmond, 2009).

Notwithstanding its applicability, the literature also presents a couple of flaws associated with the application of the structural third-party theory. One of the critiques is that it is mostly theorised within the formal structure of conflict

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resolution, making it difficult, if the status-quo has to be challenged (Richmond, 2009; Miall, 2004). This, to some authors, is one of the reasons that contributed to the inability of third-parties to resolve the conflict in Liberia in the 1990s (Fisher, 2005; Lederach, 2005).

Moreover, the structural third-party theory largely dwells on institutional processes with no or little emphasis on community-based processes that incorporate different ranges of measures necessary towards sustainable peaceful relations and outcomes (Lederach, 1995). Some have argued that the unresolved conflicts in Liberia and Sierra Leone could be attributed to the use of the structural third-party theory with no regard for community-based processes (Haider, 2009; Uwazie, 2001; Richmond, 2009). For instance, in the case of the Alavanyo-Nkonya conflict, Gariba, (2015) argues that the third-parties overly used formalised structures and frameworks although the conflict-generation was widely at the grassroots.

Indigenous peace-making theory

The indigenous peace-making theory is an age-long system of reconciliation and relationship-building (Bamidele, 2014; Bukari, 2013; Mac-Ginty, 2008). The theory is contained in the customs and traditions of local people in general, and African traditional societies in particular. According to Brock-Utne (2001), indigenous peace-making dwells on the traditional process of a well-structured, time-proven social system geared towards reconciliation, maintenance and improvement of social relationships. Traditionally, peace is seen as a communal virtue. As such, there is always the attempt by traditional or indigenous communities to ensure cordial and harmonious relationships between nature, humans and spirits (Millar & Haverkort, 2006; Osamba, 2001).

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That is, whatever activities that take place in the social world relate to the natural and spiritual worlds, hence, there is always the attempt to achieve such interdependent harmony.

This epistemology transcends all facets of human lives which consciously or unconsciously must be pro-peace; a value that cannot be compromised. This is manifested in the daily lives of the local people in language and cultural expressions including wise sayings, proverbs and conflict reconciliation (Kalman, 1999). Therefore, Brock-Utine (2001) asserts that indigenous peace-making has the major aim of rebuilding broken relationships, correcting wrongs and restoring justice.

This does not tend to mean that traditional communities are always peaceful. However, based on their inter-relationship with nature, spiritual and social interaction, traditional methods of peace-making are appropriate, especially, at the local level (Conteh-Morgan, 2005; Kendie, 2010; Sarpong, 2009; Kirby, 2006; Kouassi, 2008; Ojiji, 2006; Osamba, 2001). This, to a large extent, explains the relevance of the indigenous peace-making theory in ethnic-based conflict resolution and transformation owing to its appreciable rate of success, particularly in some parts of Africa (Mwagiru, 2000; Uwazie, 2011). This goes to attest to the fact raised by Mac Ginty (2008) and others (Alemie & Mandefro, 2018) that the indigenous peace-making approach to conflict transformation is collaborative and sensitive to the customs and cultural relations in Africa's complex and pluralistic contexts.

Multi-track diplomacy theory

The multi-track diplomacy is a theory that views the process of international peace-making as a living system. It looks at the web of

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interconnected activities of individuals, institutions, and communities that operate together for a common goal of achieving world peace (McDonald, 2012). The theory calls for a systematic approach that involves a diversity of actors and activities needed for successful conflict transformation. It emphasises that state and non-state actors constitute integral and complementary organs in conflict transformation (Diamond & McDonalds, 1996). The theory calls for the bridging of all societies in conflict transformation and seeks to reject the individualistic and somewhat segmented approaches to the analysis of conflict transformation.

The multi-track diplomacy theory depends on the integration of both track one and track two initiatives for successful conflict transformation (McDonald, 2012). In this perspective, all members of society, from those in elite leadership positions – a variety of community specialists including lawyers, economists, scholars, chiefs and queen mothers, and youth/women/religious leaders, to those at the grassroots level have a role to play in conflict transformation (Lederach, 2003; Mitchell, 1998). There are nine tracks proposed by the theory. Tracks one, two and three relate to activities of government, professional conflict resolution and business, while tracks four, five and six cover activities of private citizens, research, training and education, and peace activism respectively. The last three tracks touch on the roles of religion, funding and media and public opinion (McDonald, 2012).

The multi-track diplomacy theory holds the view that conflict transformation is a public peace process. The public peace process is based on the assumption that while governments are the official bodies that make peace agreements, successful conflict transformation depends on public consent as

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well as the involvement of different actors and individuals within the society (Ron, 2010). The tracks are effective in the transformation of conflicts because of their exposure to the public, and inherent potential to help marginalised communities or groups that might be unable to achieve positive change without external assistance (Shilling, 2012).

In the case of the Alavanyo-Nkonya conflict, multi-track diplomacy may be an effective approach to addressing the problem due to the deep-seated nature of the conflict. Drawing from multiple actors; official, unofficial, and a combination of official and unofficial actors will mean bringing various expertise to the fore. As such, this approach offers comprehensive perspectives towards the transformation of the conflict. This theoretical perspective is deemed relevant to this study due to the dynamics of the Alavanyo-Nkonya conflict.

Protracted social conflict theory

The protracted social conflict theory was developed by Azar (1985). The theory refers to conflict situations characterised by prolonged, and often, violent struggle by communal groups for basic needs such as security, recognition, acceptance, fair access to political institutes and economic participation (Ryan, 1990; Reiman, 2002). Ryan, for instance, describes the theory by relating it to conflicts between ethnic groups which have been active, and appear to be unresolvable.

The theory prescribes preconditions and determinants that shape the evolution and progression of such conflicts and their prolongation. The pre-conditional factors include colonial legacy, domestic historical setting, and the multi-communal nature of the society, while the determinant factors include

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communal identity, deprivation of basic needs and complex casual chain involving the role of the state and the pattern of international linkages (Azar, 1985, Reiman, 2002; Ryan, 1990; Ramsbotham, 2011). As explained by Azar, communal groups may experience grievances based upon racial, religious, cultural or ethnic lines. These grievances are characterised by continuing hostility with sporadic outbreaks of violence, usually caused by the frustration of human needs, recognition, and distributive justice (Azar, 1985; Reiman, 2002; Ryan, 1990).

Azar (1990) argues that such identity-driven rifts (e.g., need for recognition, and distributive justice) are the result of an underlying fear of extinction that often grows within vulnerable ethnic groups who live with the memories or fear of persecution (see also Mitchell, 1998; Tschirgi, 2003). This, according to these and other authors, usually contributes to ethnic divisions and perceived threats that have been a function of domination of the state machinery by a single group or coalition of elites who deny access to basic human needs of other ethnic group(s) (Burton 1990; Miall, 2004).

Azar expands the discussion on the theory by identifying the roots of protracted conflicts. To him, the interlocking nexus of underdevelopment, structural deprivation (political, economic and psychological) and communal or identity cleavages comprise the fundamental causes of protracted conflict (Azar, 1985). This suggests that there is no one cause or dimension to protracted social conflicts. Rather, there are combinations of factors that converge to prolong social and ethnic conflicts. Studies by Lederach, (2003) and Tschirgi, (2003), for example, have shown that these interlocking nexuses are responsible for most of Africa's prolonged conflicts (see Colman, 2000; Gultung, 2000).

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Concerning the Alavanyo-Nkonya conflict, for example, the complexity of the interlocking linkages relates to multi-dimensional factors that have colonial, cultural, institutional, political, psychological and economic influences (Gariba, 2015). That is why Pence argues that conflict transformation interventions that intend to address protracted conflicts need to be eclectic (Pence, 2017).

Others have, however, raised issues about the relevance of the protracted conflict theory as a guide to conflict transformation. For instance, Colman's (2000) argument is that protracted conflict theory fails to recognise other community-based factors such as cultural identity, mistrust and fear. In line with his argument, it becomes difficult to explain certain conflicts with the use of the protracted conflict theory even though these conflicts are ethnic, communal and protracted (Haasz, 2012; Lederach, 2003). In fact, Conteh-Morgan (2005) and Utterwulghe (1999) hold similar views. They argue that the theory has not been able to include other external factors that are not pre-determined.

These, notwithstanding, the protracted conflict theory has been applied and used as the bases for the development of third-party conflict transformation interventions in Africa, including the Hutus and Tutsis conflict in Rwanda, and the Liberia conflict (Haasz,2012; Miall, 2001; Tschirgi, 2003). The theory is deemed relevant to this study as the tenets of the theory resonate with the problem definition of the Alavanyo-Nkonya conflict.

Conceptual Issues

Concepts are critical in research and other academic studies. They define the parameters for the understanding of issues from different contexts (Creswell, 2014). Common in conflict studies are the concepts of conflict, conflict

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dynamics, conflict transformation, conflict resolution, and multi-track diplomacy. These concepts have been reviewed and their relevance to the current study is discussed in this section.

Third-parties

Third-parties in conflict resolution and transformation are not a new phenomenon. It has been a common approach in bringing conflicting parties together to find common ground in resolving their differences (Corbetta, 2014; Fisher, 2011). Conflicting parties in most societies and at all levels of social interaction have had access to external actors to whom they can turn if they are unable to resolve their differences on their own (Ledrach, 2007; Knoop, 2014). Third-parties then become a common response to perceived incompatibilities in goals, methods or values between conflicting parties to enter into a process of negotiation and mediation to reach a mutually acceptable agreement on their differences (Miall, 2001; Fisher, 2011).

Third-parties are neutral parties or mediators who intervene in the conflict between two or more conflicting parties to facilitate communication and negotiation towards a resolution or transformation. Third-parties can be conceptualised based on neutrality, context-specificity, knowledge, experience, and approach. The outcome of their intervention (successful or otherwise) largely hinges on how they are funded and constituted in their activities/efforts towards the transformation of conflicts.

According to Corbetta, (2014), neutrality relates to not taking sides with any of the conflicting parties so as not to breach the trust reposed in them that will jeopardise the outcome of the intervention. Corbetta further argued that it is important that third-parties know the context in which they operate. Third-

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parties need to understand the context within which they operate to be able to give solutions that fit the context. They need to be abreast of the socio-cultural and physical context of the conflict. With regard to socio-cultural dynamics, third-parties must have an understanding of the attitudes and behaviours of conflicting parties in the conflict to be able to mediate with these background characteristics in mind (Corbetta, 2014; Knoop, 2014; Maill, 2001).

The expectations of third-party actors also differ in terms of aims and goals towards conflict transformation. When a healthy relationship is targeted, third-parties try to rebuild broken relationships and restore confidence in conflicting parties. The goal is to build long-term relationships to avoid a relapse of the conflict. They sometimes also facilitate negotiation and mediation through dialogue towards conflict resolution (Siqueira, 2003). The selection of third parties in conflict transformation depends on the nature, desire and expected outcomes of the intervention. Selection depends on the role they are expected to play in the process of the transformation.

It is essential to know if the third-party is to serve in an official/formal role, with all the requirements that entail, or whether he or she is instead operating in an unofficial or informal capacity, with greater freedom of movement within its operation. In some cases, conflicting parties may agree on a mediator role in an official or unofficial capacity for third parties. In some cases, third-parties may play the role of an external actor from an organisation based on their expertise and neutrality.

Concerning status and skills, third-parties need to be equipped with the necessary skills and techniques for managing difficult conversations, facilitating dialogue, and helping conflicting parties find solutions that are

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mutually beneficial and sustainable. Funding of third-parties may come from conflicting parties themselves, states, agencies NGOs and external donors. It is essential to ensure that funding sources do not compromise the neutrality and impartiality of the third-party actors. Funding can be used to support activities such as mediation, negotiation, capacity building, and other forms of conflict transformation activities. Third-party organisations may also use the funding to conduct research, provide training, and develop resources related to conflict transformation.

The Alavanyo-Nkonya conflict has witnessed several third-parties with varied backgrounds. Both official and unofficial third-party actors have intervened in the conflict with several approaches, including mediation, negotiation, dialogue and preventive diplomacy in their effort towards the transformation of the conflict. Third-party actors in the conflict include traditional leaders, youth groups, the National Peace Council, regional and district security councils, NGOs, and international and non-governmental organisations. As a result of the third-party actors' involvement, there has been relative peace in the area in recent times. The relative peace means third-party actors need to do more to sustain the successes achieved towards the total transformation of the conflict.

Conflict

Generally, conflicts are inevitable because it forms part of human relationships (Lederach, 2003). Conflicts are likely to occur where opposing interests, values or needs hinge on people's relationships with each other, and these can be due to overt and covert power struggles, political issues, values,

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identity or dependence on natural resources (Jeong, 2008; Swanstrom, & Weissmann, 2005).

Conflict can be conceptualised based on its cause (e.g., social conflict, resource-based, religious, etc) intensity, scope, coverage, organicity, and impacts (Adetula, 2015; Tonah, 2007; Miall, 2001; Lederach, 2003). The intensity of a conflict relates to its duration or time dimension. As such, conflicts can be described as protracted or non-protracted. The literature available does not show a well-defined time-dimension to describe protracted conflicts and those that are non-protracted. However, usually, interpretive and contextual views have been used to conceptualise the intensity of conflict (Haralambos & Holborn, 2004; Haugerudbraaten, 1998). Other authors (Lederach 2003; Paffenholz, 2014) have expressed that the number of times varied interventions have been implemented and failed is also critical to describe how protracted a conflict could be.

The scope of a conflict relates to the number of actors and their roles. Mateos (2010) explains that there are primary, secondary and tertiary actors in internal and international conflicts. The primary actors include government, armed groups, militias and criminal gangs whose interests relate to influence, power and authority. The secondary actors are businessmen and regional and international governments who are widely interested in the continuation of the conflict. Their interests often touch on political, economic and social benefits (Wagnsson & Holmberg, 2014), and at times have roles such as the power to mediate, negotiate and transform conflicts (Deja, 2002).

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The tertiary actors are those who try to intervene with or without a mandate to manage and transform the confrontation (Fisher, 2005; Miall, 2001). Normally, interventions by actors who are not primary adversaries in a conflict often contribute greatly to conflict transformation (Kriesberg, 2011). Their interests could be varied, including the provision of human security, basic needs such as food and shelter, and the power to mediate between conflicting parties. For instance, in the Liberia-Sierra Leone conflict the primary, secondary and tertiary actors were the government, opposition rebel forces and civilians respectively (Adetula, 2015; Galtung, 2000; Haasz, 2012; Mateos, 2010). The scope of actors also includes conflict entrepreneurs whose interests are usually personal and biased and could be identified in each of the three actors described above (Adetula, 2015; Collier, 2000).

The coverage of conflict is also used as an indicator to conceptualise conflict. Coverage relates to both physical or geographical and virtual spaces of conflicts, and some of the conflicts are related to both spaces (Uwazie, 2011; Wencker & Schwank, 2016). For instance, ethnic conflicts usually cover both spaces because they touch on defined ethnic identities (virtual space) and (defined or semi-defined) locations (geographical space) of parties (Haasz, 2012; Trinn, Wencker & Schwank, 2016).

However, the virtual space usually identifies the locations. For instance, the ethnic conflicts in Burundi in 1993 and Rwanda in 1994 affected both spaces (Uvin, 1999). In Ghana, the Dagbon and the Kokomba-Nanumba conflicts touched on both identities and locations (Maasole, 2012). Equally, the coverage of the Alavanyo-Nkonya conflict is known to have largely been restricted to a geographical space although cultural identities have been mentioned (Gariba

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2015; Penu, 2014). Understanding the coverage, at times, is complex. It could have multiple virtual and geographical spaces. Richmond (2009) and Uwazie (2011) have indicated that the difficulty in resolving conflicts in Africa is due to the plurality and complexities of its societies and communities, and the relationships therein.

Another indicator that has been used to explain the concept of conflict is its life-span, and how it relates to new (emerged) and old (re-emerged) conflicts. Here, the focus is on how organic the conflict is. That is, some of the conflicts are regarded as dead, dormant or active (Galtung, 2000; Lederach, 2003). Theoretically, conflicts that travel to the end of their lifespan could be classified as dead. However, certain actions, events or occurrences could be sources of triggers to 'resuscitate' or revive dead and dormant conflicts (Azar, 1990; Chadefaux, 2016). Available literature explains that most of the ethnic conflicts in the northern part of Ghana are dormant, and are usually triggered by events, some of which are unrelated to the original conflicts (Awedoba, 2009; Kendie et. al., 2014; Salifu, 2018). Similarly, the Alavanyo-Nkonya conflict in the south of the country has been in existence for close to a century, with events (mostly unrelated to the original conflicts) often triggering violence and unrest among the people (Gariba, 2015; Jaha & Midodzi, 2011). The organicity of a conflict is also an indicator of how protracted it is or could be (Miall, 2001; Ojiji, 2006).

Lastly, the conflict has been conceptualised based on its impact, hence, the terms violent and non-violent conflicts. The impact of violence could be measured by how negative and/or positive the conflict was/is. Negative impacts include destructions that affect the lives, socio-economic, political and physical

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structures of a society or nation (Lederach, 2007; Trinn et. al., 2016). For instance, the internal crisis in Liberia and Rwanda led to 250,000 and 800,000 losses of lives, respectively. Again, the estimated cost of conflict in Africa between 2000 and 2010 is about $10 billion (Fearon, 2015; Nncube, Jones & Bicaba, 2014; Mueller, 2013).

The Alavanyo-Nkonya conflict has a wider scope, involving several actors with varied interests. Whereas the coverage of the conflict is limited in terms of geographical location, the ethnic undertone offers a recipe for escalation (Gariba, 2014). As such, the conflict had assumed a long-life span, with the end seemingly out of sight. The Alavanyo-Nkonya conflict has also witnessed negative impacts due to the violence that usually characterised the conflict. The protracted social conflict theory best explains the reason for the occurrence and re-occurrence of this conflict (Beaudoin, 2013).

Stages of conflict

Conflicts all over the world develop in stages and escalate in phases and in magnitude. Every conflict has stages or phases it travels. What this means is that conflict transits from one stage to another. Understanding these stages of conflict becomes critical if the conflict is to be resolved and transformed (Adenyi, 2016; Lederach, 1995; Krause, 2016).

Different authors have categorised conflict into different stages starting from the beginning to the end of conflict or the resolution stage (Mayer, 2000). This section reviews the works of Adenyi (2016), Krause (2016) and Brahm (2013). Adenyi identifies eight stages of a conflict, namely, the development or evolution, enemy formation, mobilisation or preparation, pre-emption, hostility, cessation or cease-fire, resolution and reconstruction stages.

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The first stage of the conflict which Adenyi postulates as the "development or evolution stage" signifies the beginning of the conflict. Brahm (2013) describes it as the latent stage. At this stage, there is a disagreement or difference over one thing or the other which may be tangible or intangible but it could be resolved immediately by a third-party (Adenyi, 2016; Krause, 2016). For instance, relative deprivation of resources and power inequalities or other differential status levels based on ethnic, religious and racial differences can start a conflict (Sriram & Wermester, 2003). This stage is the best time to prevent violence because there is no commitment of resources, energies or time by any group or party. However, if one of the conflicting parties decides to protect and defend its position and interest, a minor quarrel may likely degenerate into a second stage.

The enemy formation stage is perceived by Adenyi (2016) as the next stage. Other authors like Brahm (2013) refer to the stage as the emergence stage. At this stage, the minor problem that developed at the development or evolution stage degenerates into a stage where the two parties see each other as enemies. In interstate conflict, it is at this stage that parties begin to take stock, stripe and assemble their military arsenal, as well as evaluate the readiness of their armies in case the conflict becomes confrontational (Adenyi, 2016; Krause, 2016; Sriram & Wermester, 2003).

At the third stage, referred to as mobilisation and preparation, a high degree of tension and confrontation between conflicting parties manifest, and parties use or threaten to use force such as coups, electoral fraud and clashes, governmental repression, and clashes between ethnic or other groups (Adenyi, 2016; Krause, 2016; Sriram & Wermester, 2003). Parties to the conflict mobilise

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and take stock of resources available that will empower them to further pursue their interest and position, at times with the use of violence (Krause, 2016; Sriram & Wermester, 2003).

However further escalation could be averted with the timely use of early warning signals by the authorities concerned. At the international level, leaders and heads of national governments during this stage, seek the support of both their cabinet and legislatures to execute the impending confrontation. At the communal level, youths are mobilised, deities and oracles consulted, and forts are built while several types of rituals are made all in an attempt to reduce or bring to a halt the tensions and violent intentions (Adenyi, 2016; Krause, 2016; Sriram & Wermester, 2003)

Conflicts evolve into a fourth stage when one party attacks the other. Adenyi (2016) calls this stage pre-emption while Brahm names it as escalation. Any party that wishes to adopt a violent attack will, at this stage, first launch a pre-emptive attack to know the reaction of the other party (Adenyi, 2016). If the issue in dispute is resources such as land, the aggressive party may resort to occupation, trespass and seizure of the resource to provoke the other party (Krause, 2016).

It is at the fourth stage that incontrovertible evidence of impending hostility, confrontation and fighting is established. In international conflict, the third stage marks the involvement of the United Nations Security Council or through their allies in the council or may approach the International Court of Justice for adjudication by the party whom the pre-emptive attack was launched against (Adenyi, 2016).

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Adenyi's (2016) fifth stage of conflict is termed hostility or escalation. Parties at this stage engage in physical and violent actions. If it is a national conflict, the stage may lead to a full-blown civil war, while groups that adopt unconventional warfare tactics may, apart from armed attack, resort to insurgency, terrorism, guerrilla tactics etc (Adenyi, 2016; Krause, 2016). In a non-violent conflict, this is the stage of a total breakdown of relationships, ties and communication as well as a cold war between parties occur (Brahm, 2016). Best (2006) also explains that in a communal or ethnic conflict, the government mobilises its apparatus such as the armed forces, and the police to enforce peace. A critical example is the military occupation of the disputed land central to the Alavanyo-Nkonya conflict.

The sixth stage of conflict is the cessation or ceasefire. This is the stage where there is a cessation of violence, and the parties are prepared to resolve their impasse. Others call the stage de-escalation, or stalemate (Krause, 2016; Brahm, 2013). Adenyi (2016) identifies five factors at this stage. The first is a brokered ceasefire by a third-party by which the parties agree to respect and honour. The second is when one party suffers defeat, surrenders and withdraws from the issue of dispute while the third factor is when parties exhaust their armament or when the supply route is blocked. The fourth factor is when there is a shortage of their supply of armament or exhaustion by parties, and lastly, when parties suffer exertion (Adenyi, 2016).

At this stage, parties to a conflict usually become tired of fighting and look for other ways to refresh their energies and weapons. Sometimes parties in a conflict may use cessation of hostility or ceasefire as a strategy to mobilise and reinforce their troops or warriors and their weapon arsenal (Krause, 2016;

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Brahm, 2013). This is also the stage where third-parties try to intervene to bring about peace.

The seventh stage is the resolution stage. According to Adenyi (2016), this is the stage the parties agree to end the conflict and replace it with peace through third-party interventions. It is the stage where mediation and negotiation become effective. The resolution of the conflict paves the way for peacebuilding and conflict transformation (Krause 2016). However; there is a high risk of conflict re-emerging if grievances are not properly accommodated and precipitated during the third-party intervention (Adenyi, 2016).

When the conflict comes to an end after its resolution, reconstruction begins. This may be in the form of rebuilding damaged infrastructures or structures, relationships and ties, as well as emotions. This is the eighth and last stage of the conflict (Adenyi, 2016). For a conflict to be transformed and peace restored, it is imperative that the damages caused at the various stages of the conflict have to be repaired. For instance, the disagreements and differences that existed in the first stage of the conflict have to be addressed. In the case of the Alavanyo-Nkonya conflict, the disagreement over the land border demarcation has to be resolved as part of the conflict transformation process.

Conflict dynamics

Conflict is part of many fields of human endeavours, and a natural phenomenon that exists in human relationships which normally occurs when there is a disagreement between individuals' interests, opinions and behaviours. Conflict may be viewed as a feeling of disagreement, a real or perceived incompatibility of interests or worldviews or a set of behaviours (Ramanna &

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Skowron, 2007). Conflicts usually travel on a continuum across space and time from no conflict to post-conflict and peacebuilding (Brahm, 2003).

The life span of conflicts becomes complicated by the attitudes, behaviours and actions of conflicting parties over some time. Colman and Vallacher (2010) posit that the evolution of conflict reflects a complex interplay of factors operating at different levels and time scales. They argue that over time, conflict actors and drivers change, and their rational and motivations also change. These factors, to these authors and others, make it complex for conflict to be resolved and transformed because other interests and motivations emerged (Galtung, 2000; Miall, 2001). These explain the dynamics of conflicts.

The complexities of conflict are influenced by incidences such as violence, isolated attacks, and lack of punishment for perpetrators of violence. Consequently, these could, over time, change the perceptions of parties and may influence a change in attitudes by conflicting parties to commit to conflict transformation (Agyei, 2020; Kendie et al, 2014) The Alavanyo-Nkonya conflict is said to have evolved over a long period – close to a century, and has seen changes in behaviour, attitudes and relationships as a result of unresolved issues from the past (Kendie et al, 2014; Penu & Osei-Koffour, 2016). These changes could be attributed to factors such as lack of trust, inadequate punitive measures and the nature of conflict resolution mechanisms (Agyei, 2015; Agyei, 2020; Gariba, 2015). These factors have contributed to a change in behaviour, attitude and relationships among the conflicting parties making it a challenge for resolution and reconciliation (Gariba, 2005; Kendie et al, 2014; Penu & Osei-Kufour, 2016).

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Conflict resolution

The concept of conflict resolution continues to attract attention from scholars and organisations seeking to address conflict-related issues at national and international levels. Conflict resolution comprises a complex network of forces surrounding the parties in a conflict. It is a healing process in which all stakeholders contribute positively to addressing a conflict. The core mission is to re-establish the energy flow within individuals, families and communities to rebuild social harmony (Alemie, 2018; Brock-Utine, 2001; Munthi, 2006). Conflict resolution refers to all levels of conflict whether within or between families, organisations, communities or countries (Alemie, 2018).

Conflict resolution provides an opportunity to interact with the parties concerned during formal and informal meetings with the hope of, at least, reducing the scope, intensity and effects of conflicts (Ajayi & Buhari, 2014). In the case of the Alavanyo-Nkonya conflict, it appears that conflict resolution as an approach has not been effective as attempts by various third-party actors to bring finality to the conflict by leveraging on the existing mechanism have not been successful (Gariba, 2015; Mensah, 2013). This, notwithstanding, the popularity of the concept of finding solutions to conflicts continues to grow (Osei-Hwedie & Rankopo, 2010).

Conflict transformation

Conflict transformation is one of the concepts that have been widely used in the literature, with the concept gaining more prominence with the evolution of current societies and conflict studies (Mac-Ginty & Richmond, 2013). Since the beginning of human existence, seeking peace has been a common concern and an integral component of human nature and relationships,

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especially in societies affected by violent conflicts (Bukari, 2013; Conteh-Morgan, 2005; Osamba, 2001). This makes conflict transformation relevant in contemporary societies and is usually used to change 'destructive' behaviours to 'constructive' ones (Maill, 2001; Pathfenholz, 2003).

Conflict transformation has been defined by Miall (2001) as the process of engaging with and transforming the relationships, interests, discourses and the constitution of society that support the cultivation of violent conflict. Rupensinghe (1995) also defines conflict transformation as the transformation of deep-rooted armed conflicts into peaceful ones based on a different understanding of peacebuilding. Kriesberg (2011) adds that conflict transformation is seen as both the process of transition to relatively non-destructive conduct and to a relationship between adversaries that is regarded as largely non-contentious. His definition sees conflict transformation to include the actions of adversaries as well as intervenors in affecting conflict transformation. Kriesberg (2011) identified two phases that are essential to conflict transformation. First is the transition from destructive to constructive contention which often focuses on ending widespread violence and secondly, fashioning an enduring peaceful relationship and reducing its underlying causes.

These definitions present and conceptualise conflict transformation as an approach, a process, and a multi-dimensional issue (Crocker et al, 2011; Kriesberg, 2007; Lederach 1997; Rupusinghe, 1995). The conflict transformation approach focuses on the value of thinking and acting inclusively to initiate and sustain transformations. It also underscores the value of a long-term perspective in undertaking and continuing conflict transformation efforts. For instance, Lederach and Maiese (2009) indicate that conflict transformation

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is like a set of three types of lenses that need to work together to achieve a whole. Focusing on one type of lens will not bring the varying aspect of the conflict. and therefore. conflict transformation needs to incorporate all three aspects of the lenses to help envisage a framework and create a platform to address content, context and the structure of the relationship.

Lederach and Maiese (2009) put forward three approaches to conflict transformation. Firstly, the lens to see the immediate situation; secondly, the lens to see past problems and relationship patterns that form the context of the conflict, and finally, the lens to help envisage the framework that holds these (immediate and past) together and create a platform to address the content, context and the structure of the relationships. From these three approaches parties will then begin to find creative responses and solutions to constructively transform the conflict. This form of transformation is seen in the South African struggle for independence where various approaches to solving the underlying causes of conflict were brought to bear. This brought about significant changes between the whites and the non-whites and subsequently reduce violence and transform the conflict politically and socially.

Lederach (1997) also proposes different approaches to conflict transformation. His approach focused more on understanding the actors involved in a conflict and provides an actor analysis that distinguishes between levels of leadership in conflict areas, differentiating top from mid-range and grassroots leaders. He suggests analysing possible or existing peace actors within the same matrix and then presenting corresponding intervention strategies.

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The approaches to conflict transformation have some relevance for sustaining and expanding the transformation but none of them is fully adequate for the achievement of conflict transformation. At best, they complement each other and together offer a reasonably comprehensive explanation (Kriesberg, 2011). Again, since conflict transformation often occurs in many interlocking conflicts simultaneously, different approaches may be relevant for the various conflicts at the local grassroots level, at the elite level between opponents or within one side in a conflict (Kriesberg, 2011).

As a process, conflict transformation does not occur at the same time but follows several processes (Diamond, 1994; Kriesberg, 1997). For instance, Miall, Ramsbotham and Woodhouse (1999) explain that conflict transformation occurs in a continuum, starting with settlement, management, resolution and transformation. Kriesberg (2011), also agrees with the assertion that conflict transformation occurs in a continuum where there is a shift away from destructive to constructive transformation that may occur at different points in a conflict's course. Usually, conflict transformation arises after protracted violence with casualties, and even begins after one side has been coercively defeated (Miall, 2001).

Conflict transformation has also been conceptualised as multi-dimensional. According to Lederach (1997) and Miall (2001), conflict transformation occurs at different levels, from the elite to the grassroots. Augsburger (1992) states that conflict transformation is more permeating and goes deeper than conflict resolution since it transforms not only the attitudes and behaviour of actors in a conflict from negative to positive but also the conflict itself. He argues that conflict transformation, therefore, has to involve

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different actors from the grassroots level to the elite to carry out real transformation.

Similarly, Lederach (1997) and Rupesinghe (1991) are of the view that conflict transformation needs an appropriate strategy involving networking between mid-level leaders with links to parties across the conflict. They propose the idea of a conflict transformation pyramid model with elite leaders and decision-makers at the top; leaders of social organisations, churches, top journalists etc. at the mid-level and grassroots community leaders at the base (Figure 1). To them, this establishes a form of leverage among the structure of the society to intervene in conflicts. Lederach (2003) also viewed conflict transformation as a structure involving different actors at different levels. Starting from the top leadership which he calls Track I, middle-level leadership – Track II, and the grassroots – Track III, with the purpose of developing different transformation strategies at each level (Gyamfi, 2009; Miall, 2001; Staub & Pearlman, 2010).

Conflict transformation pyramid model

Theoretically, the conflict transformation pyramid model is based on the understanding that the transformative process in conflict prioritises relational and reconciliation concerns. Based on the theory of Lederach, (1997), the model identifies actors of conflict transformation at different levels of status, power and influence (Lederach, 1995; Miall, 2001). Typically, the model visualises conflict transformation as a society that is structured in a form of a triangle of various sizes, usually, with a broad base and narrow apex, signifying the graduation of power and influence from the grassroots to the elite society (Figure 1). Thus, whatever type of triangle it represents, Lederach and others

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opine that its base can be understood to represent local communities and grassroots actors (Richmond, 2009; Miall, 2001; Uwazie, 2001).

The focus of the conflict transformation pyramid model is that since conflict affects all the levels of society (as depicted by the pyramid), specific and varied interventions towards its transformation should be designed to target these various levels, especially, the grassroots (Lederach, 1997; Miall, 2001). The model has been useful in its application in conflicts in Africa – Namibia, Angola and Mozambique. However, time constraints, cost, and delay in reaching amicable transformation due to diverse interests are the challenges associated with its change in violence application (Lederach, 1995; Paffenholz, 2013).

The adaptation of this model is appropriate for this study owing to three main reasons. Firstly, it identifies the grassroots as part of third-party actors and joins them with the practitioners to help transform the conflict. Secondly, it identifies the various levels of society in the study area that can be targeted with specified interventions. Lastly, using approaches that consist of a change in attitude, behaviour and restoration of strained relationships embedded in the model is relevant to any protracted conflict transformation (Shulika, 2013).

In the case of ethnic and resource-based conflict like that of the Alavanyo-Nkonya, the top-range leadership comprises top officials from the National Peace Council, Ghana Armed Forces, and the Police; the middle-range leadership constitutes the Volta Regional House of Chiefs, Regional Peace Council, Regional Coordinating Council, Regional Security Council, and various religious leaders and Civil Society Organisations; and the grassroots leadership includes, insider peace committee members, assembly members,

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youth leaders and opinion leaders in the communities. Conflict transformation intervention, in this case, could be targeted at the relationships, interests, attitudes and behaviours of the conflicting parties. The position is that the approaches to the intervention should differ from one level to another (Shulika, 2013). This could be done depending on the level of society in which the conflict occurs, and then, conflict transformation interventions must relate to the type of society the conflict occurs. This framework applies to all conflicts, especially, the resources and ethnocentric ones in Africa, Ghana and the Alavanyo-Nkonya conflict transformation.

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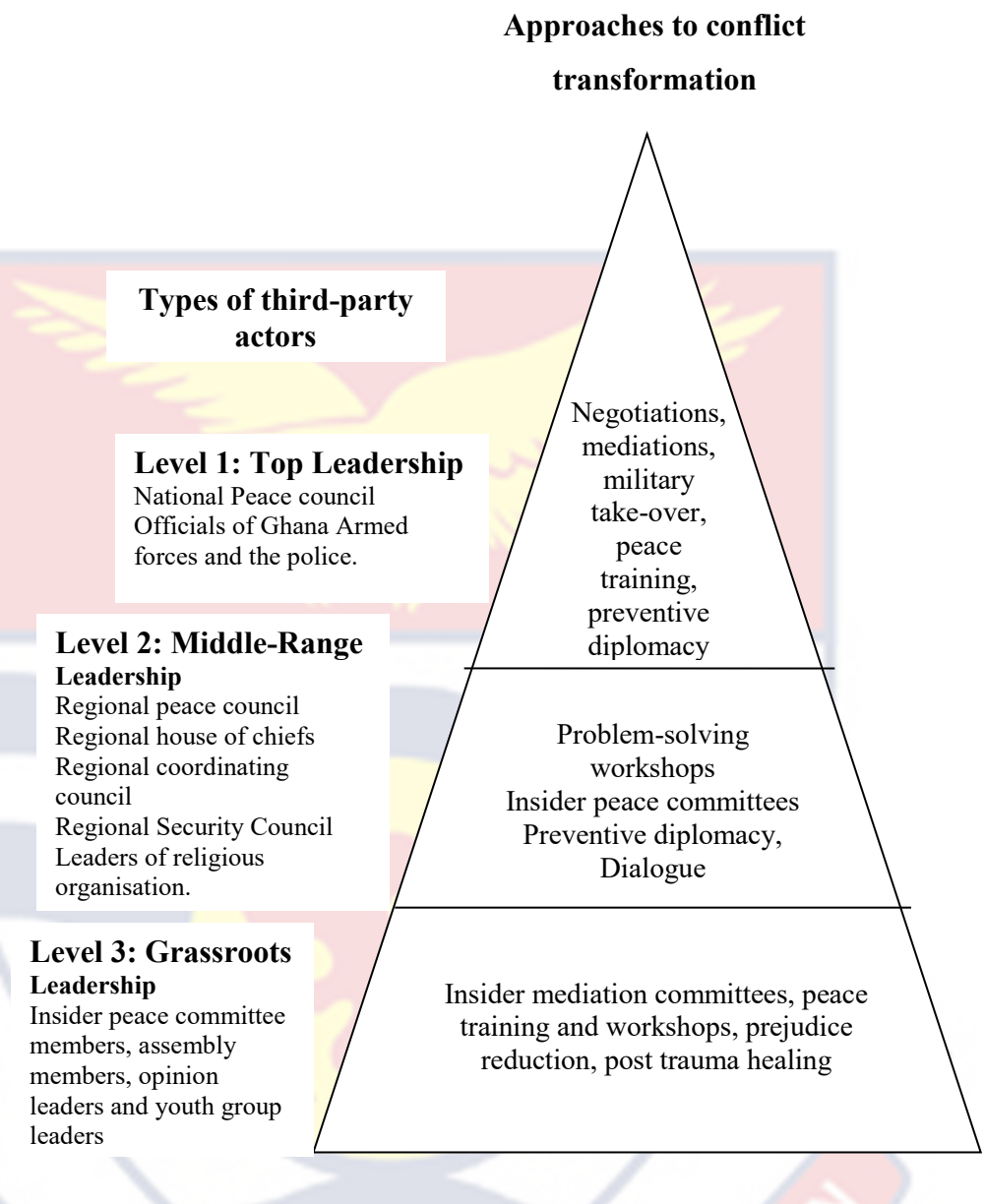

Figure 1: Conflict Transformation Model
Source**:** Adapted from Lederach, 1997

Conflict Transformation Practices in Africa

Various approaches to conflict transformation have been recorded across the African continent with the focus of fostering inter-ethnic and intra-community co-existence and reducing violent clashes. This section briefly profiles selected case studies of conflict that have and are undergoing transformation.

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Sulima Fishing Community Development Project: A Case of Conflict Transformation in Sierra Leone

The southern Sierra Leonean District of Pujehun was one of the first places in Sierra Leone to experience the rebellion that plunged the country into civil war in 1991. Almost a decade of the civil war was punctuated by various half-hearted and unsuccessful peace efforts, including the failed Abidjan Accord of 1996 and the compromised Lome Agreement of 1999 (Ayalew, 2018; Mckeon, 2003). With peace achieved on paper, the parties showed little effort to make it happen in practice. Despite the important roles played by UN peacekeepers and British Special Air Service Forces, communities were scarred by spirals of horrific violence and devastated basic infrastructure, and the transition to peace remained slow and painful.

The Sulima Fishing Community Development Project (SFCPD) initiated an intervention to improve living standards and promote development. In the period of relative calm following the 1996 elections, and the context of refugees' return to the locality, the SFCDP initiated various conflict transformation interventions, including youth vocational training, micro-credit, resettling women victims of war and developing communal fishing as a means of rebuilding the economic base of the community. The interventions specifically addressed the root causes of conflict to alleviate existing tensions within the community.

To develop responses to the problems faced by communities, local people organized workshops in three chiefdoms, bringing together youths, local authority officials, Imams, elders and women (Conteh, 2014; Massaquo, 1999). The workshops, recounted by Conteh (2014), identified specific conflict issues in each chiefdom and explored possible paths to problems, including disputes

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caused by the death of the paramount chief, and lack of civil authority (see also Mckeon, 2003).

According to Mckeon (2003), in response to these conditions, the workshops enabled the communities to establish mechanisms for conflict resolution in the form of 'peace monitors. Once a peace monitor was appointed for each section (sub-division of chiefdom) with a mandate to identify early signs of conflict and intervene before they escalated. At the beginning of their work, the peace monitors appointed twelve principal peace monitors to be responsible for overall management and coordination (Conteh, 2014; Mckeon, 2003).

Drawing on the strong Islamic traditions of the area, the twelve peace monitors are mainly respected by Koranic teachers or Mwalimus. They used the mediation and other conflict resolution skills acquired through their religious faith and training, as well as additional training in Western approaches to conflict transformation.

Similar to the separatist conflict, the Sulima Fishing Community Development Project conflict in Sierra Leone, was transformed outside the official adjudication process (Conteh, 2014; Mckeon, 2003). This was possible through the organisation of local community workshops and meetings by the local chiefs. It is thus, convincing to indicate that conflict transformation becomes effective when there is an atmosphere of good security and participation (Marfo, 2013; Mckeon, 2003). In addition, this study argues based on the indigenous peace-making conflict theory, that community participation underpinned by the local knowledge, values and beliefs cherished by the

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conflicting parties tend to contribute effectively to conflict transformation (Bamidele, 2014; Mac-Ginty, 2008).

Community-based peace committees in Burundi

In the case of the Burundi conflict, successive cycles of ethnic-identified massacres led to community-based disputes over rural land. The evidence available indicates that members of one ethnic group would flee during a period of the massacre, and members of the other would come and occupy the land (Van Leewen, Nindorea, Kambale Nzeweve & Corbijn, 2019). Afterwards, the descendants of the refugees would return and also reclaim the land (Nganje, 2020). Thus, the documentary evidence of ownership was often in doubt.

In 2006, the Friends Church in Burundi, primarily through an organisation called Mission pour la Paix et Reconciliation sous la Croix (MiPaReC), began to join with other churches and Muslim communities to form and train rural neighbourhoods peace committees with representation from different elements of the local community (Chaturvedi, 2019). Among other functions, Chaturvedi, (2019) recounts that the role of the peace committees was, primarily, to mediate between the claimants of a piece of land, and arrive at a satisfactory arrangement. The peace committee mediators help both sides to become aware that neither is guilty of the situation because the overall conflicts of the past were beyond their control. This showed "win-win" features of the transformation of the conflict (Van Leewen et.al, 2019; Nganje, 2020).

Natural resource-based conflict transformation in Ethiopia

Ethiopia is said to have abundant potential water resources. However, the level of water supply in the country is among the lowest in Africa (Ayalew, 2018; Hendrix, 2012). As a result, both intra and inter-ethnic conflicts over water-

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based resources are not uncommon in the dry lands in general, and in the Awash River Basin, Liban, and Borana Zones in particular (Edossa, Namara, Babael, & Gupta,2005). Edossa et al. (2005) have well-analyzed conflicts in these areas and the various interventions and methods that are usually implemented to resolve and transform the conflict. This section draws largely from the account of Edossa et al. (2005).

The Borana Zone is located at the southern fringe of Ethiopia occupied by the numerically dominant Borana Oromo ethnic group. The area is traditionally noted for conflicts between rival pastoral groups over resources. Evidence shows that the frequency and magnitude of these conflicts have been alarming, especially over the last three decades. For instance, three major conflicts occurred between the major pastoral groups, namely, the Boran-Garri, Merehan-Digodi, and Digodi-Boran conflicts. In addition, there is also a generation of tension and periodic violence when pastoralists from neighbouring Kenya and Somalia move into Ethiopia in search of water and food, especially, when the rains fail in those regions (Edossa et al., 2005; Wood, 1993).

The Boran (people from Borana) use their indigenous peace-making mechanisms and instituted a governance system, known as the *Gadaa* to transform conflicts. The system has also implemented measures to regulate and manage the use of water resources to minimise conflicts and promote transformation (Edossa et al., 2005; Hendrix, 2012). In most instances, leaders from various ethnic groups in the conflict meet with the Gadaa Elders to negotiate for conflict transformation. This, according to Tache and Irwin (2003),

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has ensured co-existence of diverse local communities and ethnic groups under the traditional negotiated system (Edossa, et al., 2005; Bassi, 2003).

Community participation in the conflict transformation process in Mali

Community participation is one of the commonest processes usually adopted in conflict transformation, especially, in Africa (Baudais, Bourhrous & O'oriscoll, 2021; Mckeon, 2003). Mckeon (2003) asserts that inter-community participation has been employed in an attempt to ensure and promote conflict transformation in West Africa. For instance, inter-community participation and meetings were used as alternative mechanisms in the Malian separatist conflict, north of the country between June 1990 and March 1996. It has been argued that the conflict resolution methods (negotiation, mediation and arbitration) that were employed earlier in the separatist conflict could not lead to peace due to the top-down approach, hence, the failure to build peace (Miall, 2001; Lederach, 1997).

Conceptual Framework for the Study

The input-output transformational model is the conceptual framework underpinning this study. It reflects both the theoretical and empirical reviews that are related to conflict transformation (Bracciotti, 2017). The input-output transformation model has been applied to conflict transformation by Alder & Williamson (2010) as a conflict resolution and transformation assessment model to review interventions. Originally, it was developed and used in operation management (in both profit and non-profit organisations) to transform input (labour, capital, equipment, land, buildings, materials and information) into outputs (goods and services) that provide added value to customers (Zwikwel & Smyrk, 2011).

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In the description, the model conceptualises a business system with five main interrelated variables, namely, the environment (comprising customers, suppliers, regulation, economy and technology), input (capital, materials, equipment, facilities, labour, suppliers, knowledge and time), transformation system (denoting alteration, transportation, inspection and storage), monitoring and control, and output (comprising facilitating goods and services). The variables are linked together with the transformation system and the monitoring and control variables as the mediating factors to maximise the quality of their transformation processes to meet customer needs (Figure 2) (Bracciotti, 2017).

The input-output transformation model has been applied in conflict discourse in designing, reviewing and assessing interventions in the business environment. Specifically, it has been employed to assess the performance of organisations in business environments (Bracciotti, 2017; Zwikwel & Smyrk, 2011).

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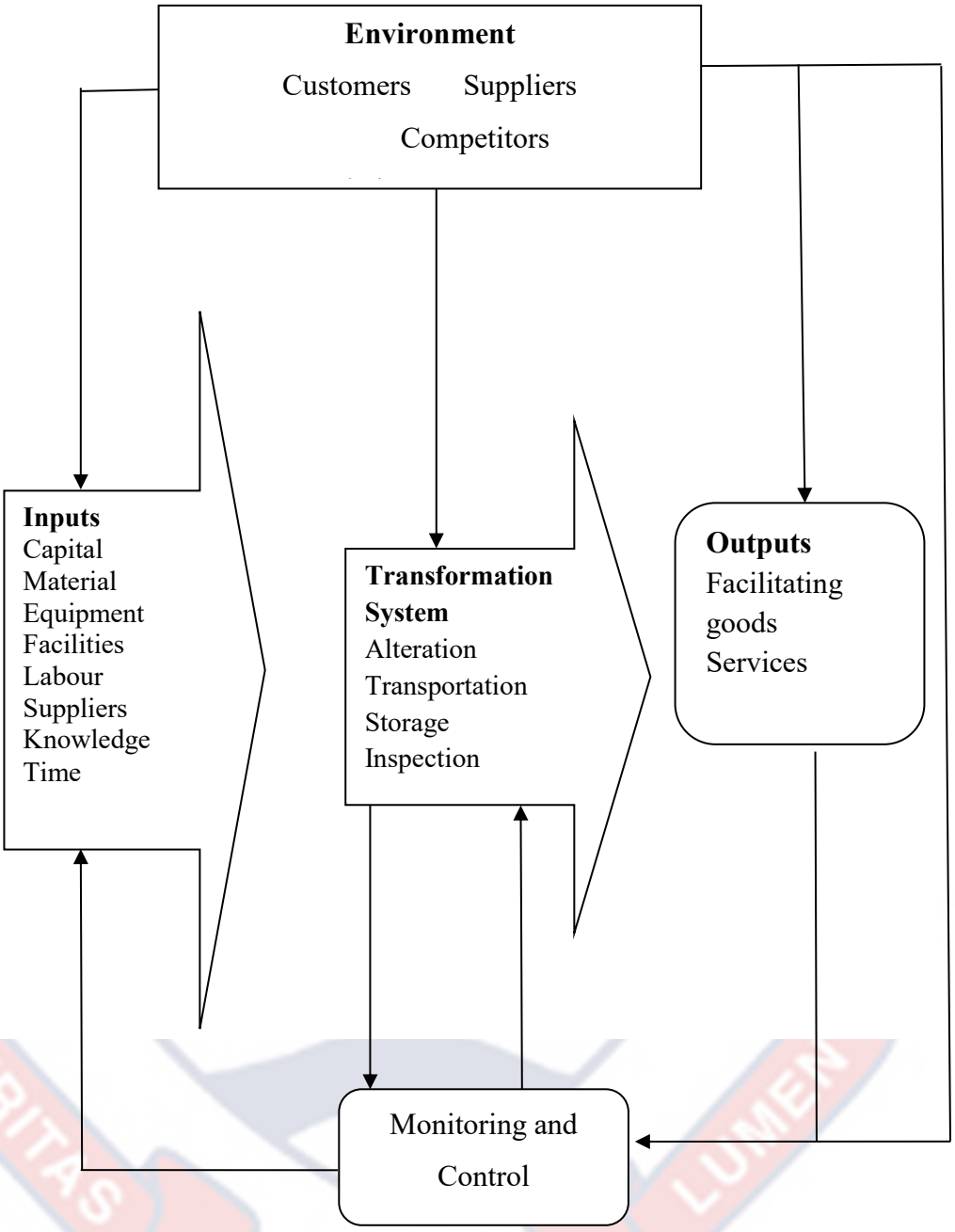

Figure 2: The input-output transformation model
Source: Bracciotti, 2017.

The present study adapts this model to assess the role of third-party intervention in conflict transformation in the Alavanyo-Nkonya conflict. In as much as the variables in the model are relevant to this study, they (and the

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indicators) have been revised to make the model suitable for application in this current study (Figure 3).

The adapted framework has seven main interlinked domains: actor's background, third-party actor role, approaches, outcome, monitoring and challenges. The actor's background comprises the essential elements that characterise third-party actors (Galtung, 2000; Miall, 2001). These characteristics not only make the actors independent but also capable to identify, select and implement the appropriate roles and approaches, which interrelate and are needed for conflict transformation (Miall, 2001). It is also important to note that the environment in this case goes beyond the actors' background to include the political and economic environment. The political dynamics surrounding the transformation efforts of the third parties are important to the successful transformation of the conflict or otherwise. The roles played by the third parties may include mediation, facilitation, education and training.

Approaches, such as cessation of conflict before dialogue, persistent dialogue, formation of the insider-mediation committee and preventive diplomacy, when applied effectively to the transformation process would generate the needed result into an outcome. The evidence of the outcome could be relative peace, change in conflict behaviours and improved relationships due to the manifestation of persistent dialogue, local participation and preventive diplomacy (Galtung, 2000; Miall, 2001).

However, if any of the conflicting parties perceive breaches arising out from the actor's background or implementation of the approaches, it could lead to mistrust that will affect the transformation domain, and subsequently, would result in a negative outcome. On the other hand, if the actor possesses

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characteristics such as neutrality, knowledge, experience and expertise, it would generate trust among conflicting parties which will result in a positive outcome (Bracciotti, 2017; Zwikael & Smyrk, 2011). A supportive political and economic environment will serve as enablers for a successful transformation of the conflict. In the case of the Alavanyo-Nkonya conflict, due to the protracted nature of the conflict and frequent changes in government, there is little leverage for the conflicting communities. In terms of the economic environment, the conflicting area has little leverage. This could explain the reluctance of the government to commit substantial resources towards the transformation of the conflict. The monitoring loop will interact with the approaches and transformation process to identify the challenges associated with the use of the approaches that generate the transformation process.

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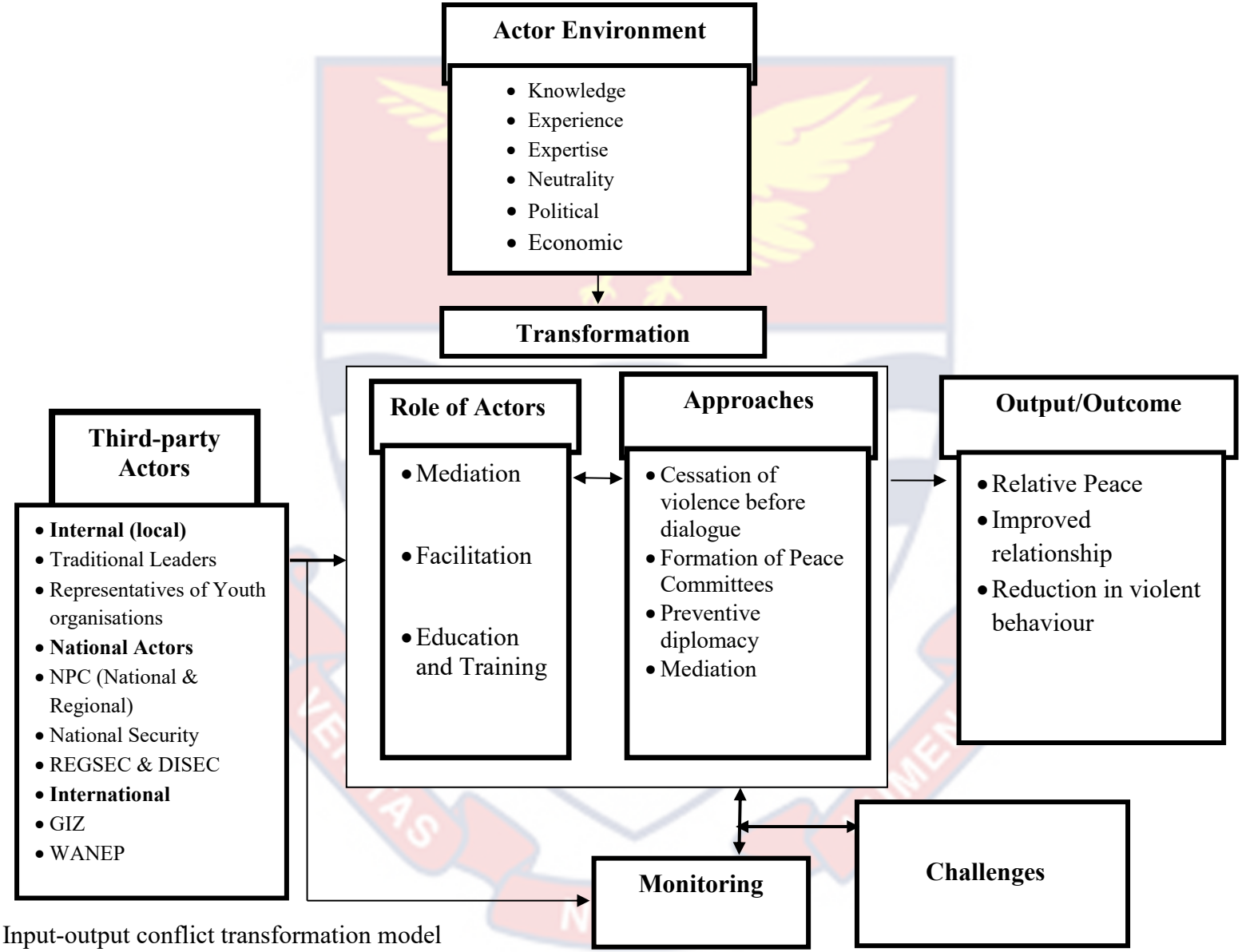

Figure 3: Input-output conflict transformation model
Source: Adapted from Bracciotti (2017)

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The main challenge associated with the application of the adapted input-output transformation model is where there is a gap in the challenge loop. This challenge would be addressed with the use of conflict transformation and multi-diplomacy theoretical frameworks.

This notwithstanding, the model is suitable and appropriate as an underpinning model for the present study owing to three main reasons. Firstly, through the interaction of multiple actors; official, unofficial, and a combination of official and unofficial actors, various experts will be brought to the fore in addressing the root cause of the conflict. Secondly, the introduction of the challenge(s) loop that emanates from monitoring the various variables (input, transformation process and outcome) allows us to assess the strength and weaknesses of each intervention, and how to apply them to transform the Alavanyo-Nkonya conflict. Finally, the introduction of the challenge(s) as a component of the framework enables the third-party actors to address them in order to sustain the relative peace being enjoyed in the Alavanyo and Nkonya traditional areas.

Chapter Summary

This chapter reviewed the theoretical perspectives and conceptual issues regarding third-party intervention and conflict transformation. Theoretical perspectives such as conflict transformation theory, structural third-party theory, indigenous peace-making theory, multi-track diplomacy theory, and protracted social conflict theory were reviewed. In addition, concepts, including third-party, conflict, causes of conflict, stages of a conflict, dynamics of conflict, conflict escalation, conflict transformation, and multi-track diplomacy were discussed. The study was informed by the conflict transformation pyramid

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model as it was deemed appropriate for the problem under investigation. The model was built on the premise that understanding the transformative process in conflict emphasizes commitment to relationship building.

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CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

Introduction

Research methodology is an important component of any study. It provides the foundation upon which the research process is situated (Creswell, 2012). Presented in this chapter are the research design, study context, target population, sources of data, the selection of study participants and description of the instruments that were used to collect the data. The chapter also covers the description of the data collection procedures, data management, data analysis and ethical issues. Lastly, the challenges the study faced and how they were addressed are described in the chapter.

Research Design

Research design is the framework of methods and techniques that spell out how a study combines various components of research in a manner that is scientific, reasonable and logical so that the objectives of the study could be achieved (Creswell, 2012). The research design is always situated within a philosophical perspective. From the social sciences standpoint, three philosophical perspectives have been emphasised – the positivist, interpretivist and critical view positions (Sarantakos, 2012). The interpretivist perspective, which underpins this study, points out that reality is best explained by those who observe, live and experience it. Thus, reality is experiential and could be best explained by those who have encountered it and have, thereafter, constructed it (Creswell, 2012; Sarantakos, 2005).

The study, therefore, adopted the qualitative research approach to describe, explain, analyse, assess and examine third-party experiences, actions

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and interpretations of events relative to the transformation of the Alavanyo-Nkonya conflict. This study conceptualised the Alavanyo-Nkonya conflict as a "case study", and thus, adopted the case study inquiry to explore the role of third-party interventions and conflict transformation in the study area. The case study inquiry was selected to enable the study to explore issues relating to the conflict based on the understanding, experiences and perspectives of persons and groups in the transformation of conflict at Alavanyo and Nkonya traditional areas (Boru, 2018, Agyei, 2015).

The Alavanyo-Nkonya conflict as indicated earlier has been a protracted conflict spanning over a century. Currently, there is relative peace in the area, indicating that the conflict has not been transformed. This is despite several third-party interventions aimed at transforming the conflict. As such, this makes the Alavanyo-Nkonya conflict a unique case for a conflict transformation study involving third parties. Empirically, other researchers have successfully used qualitative case study inquiry in similar cases but in different contexts (Agyemang, 2017; Dohersty, 2001; Punu, 2014).

Study Areas

The study contexts are the Alavanyo and Alavanyo Kpeme in the Alavanyo Traditional Area, Nkonya and Nkonya Tayi (see Figure 4) in the Nkonya Traditional Area. The Alavanyo Traditional Area is located in the Volta Region while the Nkonya Traditional Area is located in the Oti Region (a new region carved out of the Volta Region) (Aikins, Agbesinyale, & Enuameh-Agbolosoo, 2022). Generally, these traditional areas have similarities in context in terms of geographical location, demographic characteristics, economic

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activities and institutional features. The other common feature of these traditional areas is that they share common resources (GSS, 2021).

Due to the availability and use of common resources, conflicts between the two communities are often resource-based and largely described as protracted (Agyei, 2012; Duah, 2014; Gariba, 2015). The historical brief about the conflict and the related conflict resolution mechanisms and peacebuilding interventions that have been employed over the period are equally similar (Gariba, 2015). The information presented in this section about the profiles of these study areas was largely sourced from the Ghana Statistical Service (2014).

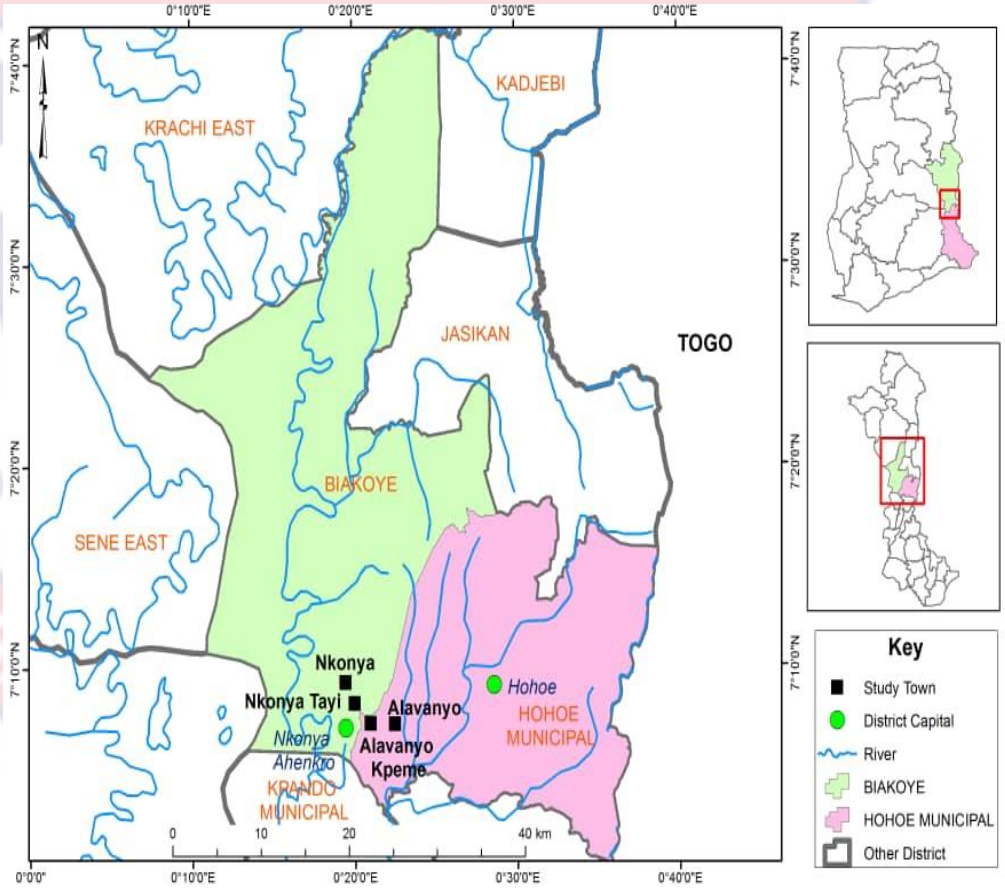

Figure 4: Map of study context
Source: Geographic Information System and Remote Sensing, University of Cape Coast (2022).

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Alavanyo

Oral literature shows that Alavanyo literarily means '*it shall be well*'. It is a (peri-urban) town located in the Hohoe Municipality. The Municipality is positioned on Latitude 7° 09' 6.52" North of the equator and Longitude 0° 28' 25.03" East. To the east, west, north and south are The Republic of Togo, Krachi East District, Kadjebi District and Biakoye District respectively. Politically, there are twenty (20) settlements in the Municipality with Hohoe as the administrative capital (Ghana Statistical Service, 2014). However, traditionally, there are 11 settlements in Alavanyo Traditional Area with Alavanyo as the paramount seat. The settlements are Alavanyo-Abehenease, Alavanyo-Afaben, Alavanyo-Agome, Alavanyo-Agoxoe, Alavanyo-Bator, Alavanyo-Deme, Alavanyo-Dzogbedze, Alavanyo-Kpeme, Alavanyo-Wudidi, Alavanyo-Wuti, and Alavanyo-Kope (GSS, 2021).

Alavanyo is surrounded by forests and mountains. It is home to the Tsatsadu Waterfalls in Alavanyo-Abehenase. Most of the residents are farmers and hunters. Apart from these, there are other complementary economic activities such as trading in fish and farm produce, artisan-related and formal-oriented services. These employment activities are regulated both by the Municipal Assembly in the traditional area (Duah, 2014). The main language of the people of Alavanyo is Ewe.

Nkonya

Nkonya is a town located in the Biakoye District that is located at Latitude 7°24'0" North and Longitude 0°28'0" East. The district is located north of the Hohoe Municipality. Also, to the east, west and south are The Republic of Togo, Krachi East and Hohoe respectively. Politically, there are thirty-three

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(33) settlements in the Biakoye District with Nkonya Ahenkro as its district capital. Conversely, there are fourteen (14) settlements in the Nkonya Traditional Area, and Nkonya is the paramount seat (Ghana Statistical Service, 2014). The communities located in the Nkonya Traditional Area are Nkonya-Kadjebi, Nkonya-Ahenkro, Nkonya-Ntsumuru, Nkonya-Ahonbrease, Nkonya-Ahondwo, Nkonya-Ansah Akuraa, Nkonya-Bumbula, Nkonya-Dzogbekofe, Nkonya-Ntumda, Nkonya-Tadiani, Nkonya-Tayi, Nkonya-Tepo, Nkonya-Wurupong, and Nkonya-Askyiri.

Out of the fourteen communities in Nkonya, six of them share boundaries with Alavanyo. The distance between Nkonya and Alavanyo is 32km. Notwithstanding, the boundaries between Nkonya-Tayi, Nkonya-Ntsumuru, and Nkunya-Kadjebi (on the Nkonya side), and Alavanyo-Kpeme, Alavanyo-Wudidi, Alavanyo-Agoxoe are the subject of the land conflict (Gariba, 2015). The main ethnic composition of the Nkonya people is Guan and they speak the Guan language. Agriculture and fishing are the two main activities in Nkonya and account for about 82 per cent of the total employment. However, in the Nkonya Ahenkro District, about 58 percent are into agriculture and fishing (Kendie et al., 2014). The Biakoye District is predominantly rural, and this explains the reason the majority of the population is engaged in agriculture and fishing.

Original Conflict Areas

The Alavanyo-Nkonya conflict started mainly between two communities - Alavanyo-Kpeme and Nkonya-Tayi. These communities often serve as the epicentre of the conflict. However, the conflict has evolved to affect other communities in both traditional areas (Agyei, 2015).

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Alavanyo-Kpeme

According to the 2021 Population and Housing Census, the total population of Alavanyo-Kpeme is 1,582 comprising 740 males and 842 females (Ghana Statistical Service, 2021). The demographic characteristics of Alavanyo-Kpeme are similar to that of the larger Alavanyo township. It is believed that they migrated first from Notsie in now-modern Togo to Agorme and later from Sovie in the Volta Region (Asamoah, 2014).

The main economic activities in the community are farming, hunting and trading (Ghana Statistical Service, 2021). The people of Alavanyo-Kpeme are predominantly from the Ewe ethnic group.

Nkonya-Tayi

Nkonya Tayi is one of the communities in the 14 towns in the Nkonya Traditional Area. It shares a boundary with Alavanyo Kpeme, and the ethnic antecedent of the people is Guan. According to the 2021 Population and Housing Census, the population of Nkonya-Tayi is 1,483, made up of 738 males and 745 females. The people of Nkonya-Tayi are predominantly farmers and petty traders. Others engage in fishing on a small scale (Ghana Statistical Service, 2021).

From Gariba (2015), Nkonya-Tayi was part of the entire Nkonya town that settled in their current location (which includes the disputed land), in the 16th century. Gariba's account explains that Nkonya-Tayi and the entire Nkonya community settled in the area long before the arrival of the people of Alavanyo who came to settle at their present location in the early 1800s. The disputed land, which covers an area of 6,459.82 acres (2,616.23 hectares) possesses resources including timber, deposits of gold, mercury and clay. The land is also fertile for

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agrarian activities (Gariba, 2015). Available evidence indicates that the Alavanyo-Nkonya conflict started between the people of Nkonya-Tayi and Alavanyo-Kpeme before it broadened to other parts, of Alavanyo and Nkonya traditional areas (Gariba, 2015; Mensah, 2013; Duah, 2014).

It is important to note that Alavanyo-Kpeme and Nkonya-Tayi share land borders and the closest to each other geographically. As such, they are likely to interact frequently as they share borders. The geographical proximity of the two communities means that members of the two communities are likely to come into contact with each other even if there is an enmity between them. In effect, this could easily fuel periodic violence and keep the conflict going.

Governance structure

Ghana practices a dual governance system with both Western political and indigenous institutional frameworks. At the lower level, the metropolitan/municipal/district assemblies and the chieftaincy institution complement each other for grassroots development, conflict resolution and conflict transformation (Antwi-Boasiako, 2010; Awedoba & Odotei, 2006).

Concerning the study contexts, the traditional governance structures in the two traditional areas are somewhat distinct. Whereas the Alavanyo Traditional Area is governed by a single paramountcy, the Nkonya Traditional Area, on the other hand, is governed by two paramountcies: Nkonya Ahenkro to the north and Nkonya Kadjebi to the south. This has created a north–south divide linguistically, politically and socially between the people in these two areas (Mensah, 2013). Concerning the system of inheritance, the people of Alavanyo inherit from the line of their fathers (patrilineal) while Nkonyas, conversely, inherit from the line of their mothers (matrilineal); similar to that of

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the Akan ethnic group in Ghana (Brempong, 2020; La Ferrara & Milazzo, 2017).

Knowledge of the existing governance structure offers the opportunity for a better understanding of the dynamics of conflict, and efforts aimed at its transformation. The nature of the governance system (political and traditional) in place, to some extent, has played into the protracted nature of the conflict in terms of deepened ethnocentrism and politicisation (Gariba, 2015).

Target Population

The target population for the study comprised third-party actors (both external and internal), and indigenes of Nkonya-Tayi and Alavanyo-Kpeme. The third-party actors comprised external actors from the National and Regional Peace Councils and Civil Society Organisations. Other individuals who have played active roles in the conflict resolution processes. They included representative(s) from the Regional Coordinating Council (RCC), District Security Council (DISEC), and the Diocesan Catholic Bishop of Ho. However, these representatives were not sampled because they could not be reached or declined participation.

The internal actors comprised members of the Joint-Consultative Committee, Insider Mediation Committee (these committees were drawn from different groups and associations at Alavanyo and Nkonya), traditional leaders and indigenes (from Alavanyo-Kpemi and Nkonya-Tayi).

The indigenes of the two conflict communities that formed part of the target population were the local people who have stayed in the community for over 30 years with a minimum age of 45 years. The reasoning behind the 30-year benchmark and the age target was based on the fact that persons with such

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background characteristics have the knowledge and diverse cultural dynamics in the study contexts (Esia-Donkoh, 2011), and would have also observed and experienced the intensity of the conflict as well as the involvement of third-parties towards the transformation of the conflict. It is important to note that even though the indigens were not directly part of the third-party actors, their perspectives were equally important as they have witnessed the third-party activities in the community.

Sampling Procedure

The study employs maximal variation purposive sampling technique to sample institutions/organisations, communities and their corresponding representatives for the study. The criteria were based on status, knowledge of the issues, participation in the conflict transformation, availability, and willingness to participate in the study (Palinkas, Horwitz, Green, Wisdom, Duan & Hoagwood, 2015; Suri, 2011).

A list of institutions/organisations as well as individuals who have played, and continue to play active and diverse third-party roles in the resolution and transformation of the conflict was sourced from the National Peace Council through its Regional Office in the Volta region.

The sampled institutions were the National Peace Council, and Volta Regional Peace Council while the West Africa Network for Peace Building, a civil society organisation. For the communities, Alavanyo, Alavanyo-Kpemi, Nkonya and Nkonya-Tayi were sampled.

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Selection of Participants

The selected participants were drawn from both the institutional/organisational and community levels. The participants were subsequently, categorised into three main groups – key informants, focus groups participants and indigenes. The key informants were made-up of persons (from both institutional and community levels) who have had direct involvement in the efforts aimed at transforming the conflict. In total, they were 18 individuals comprising three representatives from institutions/organisations, eight and five traditional leaders from the Alavanyo and Nkonya traditional areas respectively, and two assembly members (one each from Alavanyo and Nkonya).

The second group (FGD group) was made up of members of the two committees (the joint consultative committee and the insider mediation committees). The membership of the joint consultative committee constituted persons from both Alavanyo and Nkonya. There were two insider mediation committees; one each at Alavanyo and Nkonya. The third group constituted indigenes (modified third parties) who had in-depth knowledge and had observed and experienced diversely, the dynamics of the conflict and the interventions towards conflict transformation efforts. The total number was 28, comprising 14 males and 14 females each from Alavanyo-Kpeme and Nkonya-Tayi.

The number of selected participants per each of the four study contexts is shown in Table 2. At Alavanyo Traditional Area, a total of nine key informants (KIIs) made up of one chief, one queen, one assembly member, two opinion leaders, and four elders were selected for the study. Also, at Alavanyo-Kpeme, 14 indigenes were purposively selected for in-depth interviews.

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With respect to the Nkonya Traditional Area, a total of six key informants comprising one chief, one queen, two opinion leaders and two assembly members were selected. In addition, 14 indigenes made up of seven males and seven females from Nkonya-Tayi were purposively selected. Table 2 shows the breakdown of the selected participants for the study.

Table 2: Purposively selected participants for the study

	Participant Category				
Community	Key Informants	Indigenes (IDIs)	Insider Committee	Joint Committee	Total
Alavanyo	9	-	1		10
Alavanyo-Kpeme	-	14	-		14
Nkonya	6	-	1		7
Nkonya-Tayi	-	14	-		14
Institutional Reps.	3	-	-		3
Alavanyo/Nkonya				1	1
Total	18	28	2	1	49

Source: Fieldwork, 2022

Characteristics of the Study Participants

The participants for the study were put into four categories. These were representatives from public institutions and civil society organisations; traditional authorities and opinion leaders; selected indigenes and committee members of joint consultative committees, and insider-mediation committees.

The participants from the public institutions and civil society organisations were made up of three males – two from the public institutions and one from a civil society organisation. With respect to their ages and educational background, they were above 45 years old and had attained post-graduate education. All of them were full-time employees. The participants had

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been involved in the Alavanyo-Nkonya conflict resolution and transformation processes for over a decade.

The chiefs, elders and opinion leaders were also made up of 13 males and two females. The oldest was 72 years old while the youngest was 34 years old. The chiefs and queens have occupied their royal positions for over a decade. The opinion leaders, on the other hand, were assembly members who had been in office for the second consecutive electoral period.

The indigenes (modified third parties) comprised 14 males and 14 females from the two communities - seven males and seven females from each community. They had lived in their respective communities for three or more decades. Among the males, the oldest and youngest were 80 years old and 37 years old respectively. They comprised retired educationists, former assembly members, farmers, hunters, artisans, and traders. Among the females, the oldest was 68 years old while the youngest was 48 years old. They were made up of women's group leaders, peasant farmers and petty traders or businesswomen.

The committee members were participants from the Joint Consultative Committee (comprising persons from Alavanyo and Nkonya). There were seven-member participants, comprising four from Alavanyo and three from Nkonya. Of the sexes, four were males and three were females. The oldest amongst them was 70 years old and the youngest was 50 years old. Some of them were retired teachers and educationists, former assembly members and leaders of youth and women's groups and associations respectively.

With respect to the participants from the Insider Mediation Committee from each of the two communities (Alavanyo and Nkonya), they comprised five males and two females at the Alavanyo Committee while at Nkonya, they were

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seven made up of five males and two females. The oldest member across the two committees was 76 years old, and the youngest was aged 32 years. The background characteristics were similar to that of the Joint Consultative Committee. These committees were established, and the membership comprised persons with diverse backgrounds within the study communities, who have been trained to facilitate the transformation of the conflict.

Types and Sources of Data

The source of data for the study was primary. Actors and stakeholders who played direct and indirect roles as third-party interveners towards the transformation of the conflict provided the primary data. These comprised local and external individuals, government /non-governmental agencies, groups, and members of committees.

Data Collection Instruments

Three instruments were used to collect the data for the study. These were the key informant interview (KII) guide, in-depth interview (IDI) guide and the focus group discussion (FGD) guide. All three sets of instruments were constructed based on the research design, the objectives and the research questions stated (Creswell, 2012; Kumar, 1989). They were semi-structured into five sections. The first section touches on the background characteristics of the participants. These include the basic demographics (age, sex, marital status, ethnic group, number of years lived in the community, etc). The second section comprises a set of questions that address issues relating to changes that have taken place in the Alavanyo-Nkonya conflict since its evolution. The third section focuses on questions about how third-party interventions have been implemented to transform the conflict. The fourth part of the instrument covers

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the challenges that the actors faced in their efforts towards transforming the conflict, while the final section relates to alternative approaches to the transformation of the conflict.

The KII guide was used to collect the data from the key informants while the IDI guide was administered to collect data from the indigenes who were selected. Lastly, the FGD guide was used to collect data from members of the three committees. The purpose of using the KII guide was to collect data from a wide range of experts including professionals, community leaders and opinion leaders who have first-hand knowledge about the ethnic diversities and contextual characteristics of the study communities, and adequate knowledge about the conflict and its transformation processes (Taylor & Blake, 2015). With respect to the IDI guide, it was used to elicit individual views, knowledge and experiences of persons regarding the evolution, attempts towards the resolution, and interventions towards the transformation of the conflict (Milena, Dainora & Alin, 2008).

Lastly, the FGD guide was used to collect data from members of the Joint Consultative Committee and the Insider Mediation Committees. The guide was designed to stimulate a conversation. As such, the questions were worded in a flexible manner. Largely, the study objectives guided the design of the FGD guide. It was used to collect group-based data from the members which reflected the views, perceptions, and experiences of the residents in the various communities generally, and that of the members of the committee specifically (Milena, Dainora & Alin, 2008).

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Training of Field Assistants

The field assistants for the study were drawn from the Regional Peace Council, the study communities and the University of Cape Coast. Three sets of assistants were therefore identified and trained. The first set comprised one staff from the Regional Peace Council, who was recommended by the National Peace Council office. He assisted in the selection of assistants from the study communities, facilitation of the community entry processes and administration of the informed consent form. Having worked as an official of the Regional Peace Council in the regions, and specifically, the study communities and with other organisations, he was familiar with the study contexts. One day was used to train the assistant on the objectives of the study, how to administer the informed consent form, and observe other ethical and cultural protocols. The contents of the instruments were also discussed. The virtual mode was adopted for the training due to COVID-19 restrictions.

The second set of training was made up of four local assistants; one from each of the study communities. Similarly, they were also familiar with the contextual issues relating to the specific communities they lived and worked. They assisted in the community entry processes, made the necessary contacts with potential and selected participants, and arranged for the data collection to commence. These assistants were equally trained on how to administer the informed consent form. Also, the purpose of the study and the content of the instruments were discussed with them. One day was spent with each assistant, for the training which was organised virtually.

The last group consisted of postgraduate students from the Faculty of Social Sciences at the University of Cape Coast. Three inclusion criteria that

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were used to select them are that; the assistant should be a post-graduate student; have, at least, an experience in qualitative data collection; and should be able to speak any of the local languages (Ewe or Twi/Guan) commonly spoken in the study communities. For this group, a two-day training period was used. The first day was used to discuss all the issues relating to the rationale, objectives and significance of the study. Also, they were trained on ethical issues such as privacy, confidentiality and the administration of the informed consent form, as well as community entry protocols. The second day was used to discuss the instruments, and also to do mock interviews (role plays) in the local languages. These were done to enable the field assistants to be familiar with the contextual issues, research processes, and the use of the instruments in the language commonly spoken by the participants (Stokoe, 2014). The face-to-face mode was adopted for this training.

Data Collection Procedures

The data collection commenced after the University of Cape Coast Institutional Review Board granted the ethical clearance for the study. A week before the fieldwork, the community entry was done and the participants were contacted through the Regional Peace Council and the local field assistants. Subsequently, the informed consent form was administered to each participant. During the interactions with the selected participants, the schedule, the venue and the mode of interview preferred by the participants were determined.

Three methods of data collection were employed. These are the key informant interview (KII), in-depth interview (IDI) and focus group discussion (FGD) (Ali, Lee & Maya, 2014; Femdal & Solbjor, 2018). Based on the schedule and availability of the participants, the KIIs commenced, first with the

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representatives from the public institution and the civil society organisation, Afterwards, the queens, the chiefs, and the opinion leaders were interviewed. On average, each interview lasted for about one and a half hours.

The next data collection was the focus group discussions (FGDs). Three FGDs were conducted in all. The first to be conducted was with the members of the Joint Consultative Committee. The participants preferred a neutral ground for the FGD in order to avoid any 'conflict' associated with conducting the interview at either Alavanyo or Nkonya. They selected Kpando, a town near Ho, the district capital of the Volta region. Seven members made up of five males and two females participated.

Two additional FGDs were conducted separately with the members of the Insider Mediation Committees at Alavanyo and Nkonya. At Alavanyo, seven members, comprising four males and three females participated in the FGD while at Nkonya, six persons made up of four males and two females were involved. There was no need to separate the males from the females since the study was not about gender dynamics. Besides, most of the participants belong to the same insider mediation committee and know each other very well through their committee meetings. In this vein, putting them together does not pose any danger to the quality of data. In addition, the participants did not raise any objection to this arrangement. At each FGD session, two research assistants - a moderator and a note taker conducted the interviews with the participants (Creswell, 2012; Sarantakos, 2005). The duration per each FGD was about two hours, and the venues were the social centres in the respective communities.

The "arc structure" sitting arrangement was used during the FGDs (see Creswell, 2005). This structure afforded the moderator to have eye-to-eye

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contact with each participant, and to observe both verbal and non-verbal communication and cues by the participants and among them (Creswell, 2014; Sarantakos, 2012). The participants consented to the use of the digital recorder to capture the discussion. However, notes were also taken to complement the digital recording.

The IDIs were the last set of interviews that were conducted with the indigenes of Alavanyo-Kpeme and Nkonya-Tayi. At each community, seven males and females participated in the phone interview which, on average, each interview lasted for about an hour.

The interviews (KIIs, FGDs and IDIs) followed Mucchielli's (1973) three-stage model (see Creswell, 2012; Kumar, 1989; Sarantakos, 2012). In the first stage, also known as the warm-up stage, the participants shared their background characteristics. The second stage comprised issues that related to the evolution of the conflict, attempts to resolve and transform the conflict with third-party interventions, and alternative approaches to the transformation of the conflict. This was the confrontation stage. The last, which is known as the resolution stage, marked the concluding part of the interview. Here, the participants were allowed to share any related information that was not discussed. The stage also comprised the closing courtesies.

All the KIIs and the IDIs were conducted via phone. This mode was preferred by the participants, and was largely, due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Whereas this was necessitated due to the circumstances, its shortcoming is that the interviewer does not have access to the non-verbal cues that could be important in offering a contextual understanding of the data. Also, there were some difficulties with network connectivity. This was addressed by having two

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sets of phones with different network providers, offering the option to switch from one to the other whenever there is a connectivity challenge. However, the FGDs were conducted face-to-face with all COVID-19 protocols observed.

Data Processing, Management and Analysis

The data management process started during the data collection. All the electronic data were labelled accordingly and transferred onto a personal laptop computer and saved with a password. Later, the audio-recorded data were individually transcribed verbatim onto MS Word files. The transcripts were processed similarly and saved onto the computer. The "Lock Up" (computer software) was used to generate a password to save the data. The field notes were also kept in a private locker to prevent access to any unauthorised person (Creswell, 2012; Sarantakos, 2012).

The data analysis was guided by Lacey and Luff (2007) five-staged thematic analysis for qualitative data analysis. The five stages are the familiarization of the data, organisation of thoughts and concepts, coding based on data commonalities and differences, mapping and interpreting of patterns, associations, linkages and variations, and triangulation of all the data and information available to establish interpretations.

At the first stage, the audio tapes were listened to thoroughly and transcribed verbatim. The transcripts and all other relevant literature and information about third-party interventions and conflict transformation were observed in relation to the issues in the research instruments, research questions and objectives of the study to identify the thoughts, concepts and ideas.

The thoughts, concepts and ideas were then organised at the second stage. This was done to establish the similarities and variations in the various

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third-party interventions in the conflict transformation. Contextual views, cultural orientations and institutional positions that were common and diverse were noted at this stage. Different colours were used to highlight these similarities and differences. This paved way for the coding of the responses in the third stage.

At the fourth stage, the responses were grouped (based on the codes) to develop themes. Subsequently, the patterns, associations and linkages were interpreted accordingly. The themes that were similar were collapsed into broader themes. Lastly, these interpretations of themes and categories were discussed in light of existing empirical literature. The results were then presented based on the objectives of the study. Relevant quotes from the transcripts were used to complement the findings. The data were analysed manually (Hesse-Biber, 2010).

Ethical Issues

The study complied with the ethical protocols related to scientific research at three main levels: institutional, interpersonal and reporting. At the institutional level, ethical clearance was sought from the University of Cape Coast Institutional Review Board (Reference number: 0990-0279). Again, permission was sought from the National Peace Council, Volta Regional Peace Council, WANEP and the traditional authorities at Alavanyo, Alavanyo-Kpeme, Nkonya and Nkonya-Tayi.

At the interpersonal level, the research team observed all the safety protocols related to the COVID-19 pandemic. Social distancing was observed while the face mask was worn by all the research assistants throughout the face-to-face interactions. Also, handshakes were avoided entirely and regular use of

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alcohol-based hand sanitiser was practised. Relatedly, all the research assistants had been vaccinated, at least, with the first jab before the fieldwork.

In addition, all the participants were duly informed about the purpose and objectives of the study for them to make an informed decision to participate. The informed consent form was administered before and during the data collection. Since the study is for academic purposes, it was explained to the participants that only the research team will be privy to the information they provide. It was explained to them that each had the right to discontinue the interview or refuse to respond to issues that they felt were private.

At the reporting level, all information collected from the respondents were anonymised. Pseudo-names were used to hide the identities of the participants from the reader. Thus, no one could be able to identify the responses or information in the report with any of the respondents. Lastly, all literature that was used was dully acknowledged.

Fieldwork challenges and how they were addressed

Three main challenges militated against the study particularly, during the data collection. The first was the effect of the COVID-19 pandemic which restricted movement and interactions with people in general, and the participants in particular. This affected the earlier scheduled face-to-face interviews to be postponed for close to six months. Some of the participants requested that the interviewer be vaccinated before the interview. Getting the field assistants vaccinated, and getting the participants on schedule delayed the data collection process. This necessitates the use of the phone for the KIIs and IDIs.

The second challenge was the availability of the participants. Some of the participants kept postponing the KIIs and FGDs due to work schedules and

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social commitments. A few of the participants could not be reached with the contacts that were provided by the office of the Regional Peace Council and Volta Regional Coordinating Council, and three refused to be interviewed based on personal reasons.

The last challenge was with internet access for virtual platforms on the part of the FGD participants. The initial arrangement was to use the Zoom platform for the FGDs for COVID-19 reasons. However, it was observed that most of the participants did not have the Zoom application or internet accessibility or both. The participants, therefore, consented to the "face-to-face" with all COVID-19 protocols adhered to. Although these challenges did not affect the quality of the data, they delayed the data collection.

Chapter Summary

This chapter documents the methods that were adopted for the research and justifications were provided for each adopted or adapted method. Among other things, the Chapter contains the research design, and the philosophy underpinning the study (interpretivism). It also provided the study contexts where the four main conflicting communities were described with their various socio-demographic characteristics. Other issues covered in Chapter Three include the types and sources of data, the target population, the selection of participants, and the research instruments that were used to collect the data. Furthermore, the training of field assistants, data collection procedure, data management and analyses, as well as ethical issues about the study were documented.

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A maximum variation purposive sampling technique was adopted to select key informants, in-depth interviewees and focus group discussion participants from the four communities, namely, Alavanyo, Alavanyo-Kpeme, Nkonya and Nkonya-Tayi. A list of all persons who have been involved in the conflict transformation efforts was sourced from the Volta Regional Peace Council. Only participants who have played and continue to play active roles in the transformation process, and have in-depth knowledge and understanding of the evolution and dynamics of the conflict were considered for the study. In all, nine key informants, 28 indigenes and three committees [Joint-Mediation Committee (1) and Insider-Mediation Committee (2)] participated in key informant interviews, in-depth interviews and focus group discussions respectively.

The data was collected at the beginning of August 2021 when the key informant interviews and the focus group discussions were conducted. Later, towards the end of February, 2022 the in-depth interviews with the indigenes, specifically at Alavanyo-Kpeme and Nkonya-Tayi were conducted. The thematic analysis was employed to analyse the data at all levels.

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CHAPTER FOUR

UNDERSTANDING THE ALAVANYO-NKONYA CONFLICT: CONTEXTUAL ISSUES

Introduction

The role of external actors, especially in protracted conflicts is critical in conflict transformation. In the case of the Alavanyo-Nkonya conflict, the conflict transformation continuum includes third-party interventions at various stages of the conflict (Fisher, 2005; Lederach, 1995). This chapter reviews and describes the contextual issues of the Alavanyo-Nkonya conflict, including third-party interventions. Specifically, the review focuses on the evolution of the conflict, causes of conflict in Alavanyo-Nkonya, conflict escalation and the various third-party interventions that were implemented as part of efforts towards transforming the conflict since its breakout about a century ago.

Evolution of the Alavanyo-Nkonya Conflict

The Alavanyo-Nkonya conflict is one of the three major long-standing conflicts in the Volta region of Ghana (Kendie et al., 2014). It is an inter-ethnic conflict which started as a resource-based conflict and disagreement over a territorial boundary between Alavanyo-Kpeme and Nkonya-Tayi (Asamoah, 2014). The disputed boundary covers about 6,459.82 acres or 2,616.23 hectares and is rich in timber, fertile for agrarian activities and alleged to have deposits of gold, mercury, and clay (Agyei, 2015; Gariba, 2015; Kendie et al., 2014). Part of the history indicates that around 1905, members of the Alavanyo community were alleged to have trespassed into Nkonya land without performing the appropriate customary rites, thus, leading to the start of a land boundary conflict (Agyei, 2015; Gariba, 2015).

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The dispute is perceived to have heightened in 1913 after a German colonial cartographer, called Hans Grunner, developed a cartographic map to demarcate the entire boundary which connects these two main settlements (Kpormasi, 2013; Tsikata & Seini, 2004). However, the Grunner Map has been a source of contestation between the two groups. Available literature also shows that the dispute has been strengthened by the ethnic dimension between these two communities as people belonging to either side of the ethnic divide took sides (Agyemang, 2017; Gariba 2015; Kendie et al., 2014). As such, the conflict can now be referred to as an ethno-resource conflict.

It is not clear the precise relationship that had existed between the two conflicting ethnic groups. However, available narratives indicate that the Guans of Nkonya settled in the area, including that which is under dispute, around the 16th century before the arrival of the Ewes of Alavanyo in the early 1800s (Awienagua, 2017; Gariba, 2015). Before the conflict evolved, the relations between the two groups were characterised socio-culturally by intermarriages, common celebrations of funerals, festivals, and other social interactive activities (Gariba, 2015; Mahama, 2010). From the account of Ampene (2011), both communities lived in a relatively peaceful environment until the emergence of the land dispute weakened the harmonious relations, leading to challenges associated with cultural and ethnic identity and belongingness.

The conflict has persisted from pre-independence to post-independence and continues to appear on the conflict map of Ghana. The pre-independence conflict started with the demarcation of the land boundary in 1913. This marked the perceived stage of the conflict where both communities were aware that the land was the cause of the conflict but did not resort to violence, partly because

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of four main reasons which have been advanced in the literature. The first is that the conflict was too early to escalate into violence and so restraints were exercised. The second reason was due to the strong socio-cultural ties that existed while the third was that, the scope at the time covered only two communities within the two townships, and therefore, was perceived to be easy to manage by the traditional institutions and authorities (Brock-Utne, 2001; Gariba, 2015; Kendie et al., 2014; Uwazie, 2011).

With respect to the post-independence era, the conflict has been characterised by a series of violence, particularly from 1980 to 2013 (Agyei, 2020; Gariba, 2015; Kendie et al., 2014). For instance, records show that violent conflicts between Alavanyo-Kpeme and Nkonya-Tayi occurred in 1923, 1983, 2003, 2004, 2012, and 2013 (Kendie et al., 2014; Agyei, 2020). The frequency of the violence and persistence of the conflict affected other areas of the life of the people in the two communities. Gariba (2015) accounts that the violence in the two communities during the early 1980s had a significant impact on the socio-economic and political landscape because it exacerbated the existing challenges that the country faced.

The violence also coincided with the coup d'état by the Provisional National Defence Council (PNDC), led by Flt. Lieutenant Jerry John Rawlings; the implementation of the Structural Adjustment Programme; the mass return of Ghanaian youth who had gone to Nigeria in the wake of the oil boom in the 1970s; the drought and famine across most parts of the country; and increased unemployment (Amanor, 1999; Berry 2008). These antecedents provided fertile grounds to trigger violence, and the perceived jobless youth played an active role as perpetrators. Gariba (2015), explains that at Alavanyo, this upheaval led

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to the destoolment of the Alavanyo paramount chief at the time, Togbe Anku Atakora V. The paramount chief was accused of allegedly harbouring persons perceived to be Nkonyas, and selling ammunitions to these persons. The people believed the chief did that because he had blood relations with the people of Nkonya (Gariba, 2015).

The historical account by Gariba (2015) also suggests that the period also marked the beginning of coordinated hostilities and aggravation of the dispute. He points out that the traditional authorities of both communities could not bring these events under control. As a result, the youth and other leaders who were disappointed with their leaders for their lack of consistent effort to end the dispute took the law into their own hands. Some, according to the narratives, were seen with guns and other weapons, and with anger resisted the weak security structure and turned the area into a hostile environment (Mensah, 2013; Tsikata & Seini, 2004).

Other authors have argued that the 1980 era of violence was underpinned by the rejection of the court verdict by the people of Alavanyo in 1957, and the subsequent re-litigation in 1980 (Agyei, 2015; Tsikata & Seini, 2004). The available narratives explain that two main arguments were advanced by the people of Alavanyo to rationalise the rejection of the court ruling and the subsequent re-litigation (see Tsikata & Seini, 2004). Firstly, the Alavanyo people argued that apart from the fact that the 1913 Grunner Map was small in scale and contained inaccuracies, its purpose was not to demarcate boundaries. Secondly, the traditional boundary trees (*anya*) that were planted to demarcate the boundaries between their forefathers and the Nkonya before the drawing of the Grunner boundary were not considered by the courts.

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Post-1990 also presents a series of violent confrontations between the Alavanyo-Nkonya communities. As narrated by Agyei (2012) and Tsikata and Seini (2004), the October 1997 clash, for example, was related to a report that some Alavanyo residents had trespassed Nkonya land and were felling trees and blocking the paths leading to Nkonya farms. Other accounts present it differently. In these, it is reported that some armed people were cutting timber near Alavanyo farms. Although the case was reported to the Police, the clash ensued when some people, suspected to be Nkonyas sawing wood were seen by a group of Alavanyo residents.

Causes and Triggers of the Conflict

Before conflict can be transformed, it is imperative to understand the causes of the conflict. Documented evidence shows that the causes of the Alavanyo-Nkonya conflict have been grouped into four main factors. These are the ownership of the disputed land, shortage of water, rumour peddling or mongering and ambush killing. These causes are discussed in the subsequent sections.

In all societies in the world, land is incontestably vital to human survival, and development. Land unites people across generations and forms the basis of and gives meaning to an enduring sociality, economy, identity, culture and history among groups and individuals (Gariba, 2015). However, it is also true that land use practices can engender violence, hatred and enduring contestation and conflict between individuals and among groups if resources are misappropriated (Birch & Muchlinski, 2018; Browning, Byron, Calder, Krivo, Kwan, Lee & Peterson, 2010).

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In recent times, land as a resource has become a commodity and its availability provokes competition and conflict. Factors contributing to land disputes have been discussed in the literature extensively. In the case of Alavanyo-Nkonya, the major cause of the conflict has been the claim of ownership of land and control over the resources on the land, mainly timber. Before the conflict, the oral narratives have it that the people of Alavanyo were given a portion of land to settle on by the people of Nkonya upon their request when they arrived on the land of Nkonya in the year 1800 (Adjei, 2020; Gariba, 2015).

The people of Alavanyo, as a result of the land given them, paid allegiance to the chiefs and people of Nkonya by offering them cows, yams, and sheep to show their appreciation. Both communities lived in peace and harmony until the ownership of the land became a contention (Tsikata & Seini, 2004). The emergence of the 1913 land dispute was alleged to be a trespass by an Alavanyo man into an Nkonya boundary without performing the proper customary rites, and this led to the start of the land boundary conflict in 1913, which has continued for about a century now without a total resolution between the two communities that once upon a time, lived harmoniously together side by side (Tsikata & Seini, 2004).

The second cause of the conflict has also been attributed to a source of water. Water constitutes a vital necessity of human lives and people who find themselves closer to a source of water hold it in high esteem. It is reported that a source of water activated the existing Alavanyo-Nkonya conflict when water scarcity hit the country in 1983 as a result of a nationwide drought and famine (Gariba, 2015; Tsikata & Seini, 2014). According to Gariba (2015) and Tsikata

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and Seini (2004), the 1983 conflict occurred when a man from Alavanyo-Kpeme and a woman from Nkonya-Tayi fought when they could not agree on who was to fetch the water first at a site between Alavanyo-Kpeme and Nkonya-Tayi. This led to a quarrel between the two which later attracted the entire communities leading to violent clashes, leading to the destruction of human lives and properties (Gariba, 2015; Tsikata & Seini, 2014).

Rumour peddling has also become one of the immediate causes of the Alavanyo-Nkonya conflict after the two major causes relating to land ownership and a source of water. According to the available literature, rumour-mongering or peddling has become one of the major triggers of the conflict about what each side intends to do. It is alleged that upon hints that one side was getting ready to attack, the other side did not wait for proof but will prepare and, at the least, provoke a violent attack (Liff & Wikström, 2021; Zheltukhina, Slyshkin, Ponomarenko, Busygina & Omelchenko, 2016). This has been reported on many platforms on how, as a result of rumour peddling or mongering, one party killed some farmers on their farms with the intention of averting people's attention from the forest to log the timber (Gyamfi, 2009).

Finally, ambush killing is also considered another source or cause of the conflict that has been reported in recent times. Ambush killing has been used by people with perceived criminal intentions either to indulge in logging timber or harvesting marijuana which has been alleged to have become a lucrative business in the area (Gariba, 2015; Higazi, 2016). It is reported that some people with such intentions sometimes hide in the bush leading to the farms of the opponents and shoot, at the least, for provocation. It has also been alleged that these killings are sometimes carried out as a way of retaliation or revenge

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(Gariba, 2015; Oli, Ibekwe & Nwankwo, 2018). This normally happens, especially, when there had been an attack in the past without the arrest of perpetrators and no justice is given to the victims and their families. The shooting and killing have become a source of worry to the two communities and security forces since most of the perceived perpetrators are not arrested to serve as a deterrent to other people (Gariba, 2015; Penu & Osei-Kufuor, 2016).

Escalation of Conflict

Escalation of conflicts is a process that moves step by step – from less forceful and less intricate situations to more forceful and progressively complex situations (Glasl, 1982; Kolb, 2013; Todd, 2005). For a brief period, a conflict may show signs of an escalation and the parties would try to exercise restraints, and not risk provoking further escalation (Todd, 2005). They may witness a fixed threshold with each phase of intensity accompanied by specific characteristics. Descriptively, once a party crossed such a threshold, the conflict moves to a higher level of violence, and the next stage of escalation (Morgan, Mueller, Medeiros, Pollpeter & Cliff, 2008). Notwithstanding, the parties again try to prevent further escalation. Momentarily, the conflict is under some form of control and does not escalate further so far as the parties envisaged what would happen beyond the next threshold.

Of the several models that have been used to explain the escalation of conflict, Glasl (1982) is perceived to be the most prominent (Glasl, 1982). Here, the author divided conflict escalation into three main phases with nine stages. These stages are the 'win-win' phase consisting of the tension stage, debate stage, and actions but not words stage. The second phase comprises coalition, loss of face and threat strategies. The final phase is also broken into three stages

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including limited destruction, total annihilation and 'together into the abyss' stage (Glasl, 1982). Thus, these phases help to explain the escalation of conflicts such as that of the Alavanyo-Nkonya.

The escalation of the Alavanyo-Nkonya conflict can be said to have undergone the three phases stated described by Glasl (1982). That is, the conflict has almost travelled through various phases and stages. Narratively, the tension between the two parties started about a century ago when the parties made known their positions on who owns the disputed land. The tension led to the involvement of third-party intervenors who tried to resolve the conflict but much was not achieved, hence, the escalation. The conflict has, therefore, moved beyond the first phase, that is, 'win-win' (Glasl, 1982).

The second phase of the escalation is seen when conflicting parties developed mistrust and lack of respect as a psychological tool to fight their opponent. With this conflicting parties look for supporters and allies to support their position thereby leading to the broadening of the conflict from one community to another. The two parties then use tactics such as ethnicity as part of their weapons to attack their opponent (Penu, 2016; Sotiropoulou, 2002). The Alavanyo-Nkonya conflict has travelled through this stage. The perception is that the people of Alavanyo are 'enemies' to the people of Nkonya, and vice versa. The parties have also tried to rally support from outside the two conflicting communities based on ethnic affiliations (Asamoah, 2014).

The final phase is where both parties believe they can use any other means to achieve their goal. In the case of Alavanyo-Nkonya, both parties use tactics such as the destruction of lives and property as weapons to have access to the disputed land. Concerning this phase, confrontation and hostility ensue

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with little provocation which leads to the escalation of the conflict (Glasl, 1982). As such, attempts to transform the conflict have not seen the desired outcome (Bedzra, 2019). Even though presently, there is a cessation of violence for a period, this is just temporary as little provocation could lead to violence again (Gariba, 2021).

Attempts at resolving the Alavanyo-Nkonya conflict

Successive government institutions, traditional authorities and other religious organisations, civil society organisations as well as private and non-governmental actors have intervened as third-party actors to attempt to resolve the Alavanyo-Nkonya conflict. This section discusses the various attempts by these third-party actors.

Attempts by government actors

Past and present government actors, including security agencies and National Peace Council, have contributed to the resolution of the Alavanyo-Nkonya conflict since the pre-independence era. Negotiation and mediation were the main interventions that were implemented (Gariba, 2015; Kendie et al, 2014). Available literature connotes that the colonial government, through its local institutions attempted to negotiate with the two communities to reduce tensions and prevent violent clashes (Agyei, 2012; Gariba, 2015).

Subsequently, mediation was used as an extended process of the negotiation (see Fisher, 2005; Brown & Stewalt, 2015) with the use of the Grunnar Boundary Mapping Project in 1923. This map depicts the physical boundaries among six contiguous states, namely, Alavanyo, Nkonya, Gbi, Santrokofi, Akpafu and Bowiri (Agyei, 2012; Gariba, 2015; Tsikata & Seini, 2004). With this intervention, like the case of the Kpandai land conflict between

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the Gonja's and Nawuris in Ghana, as well as the Boran and Garri land conflict in Ethiopia, the use of the Grunnar Map was adopted to forestall the land conflicts and potential ones in the future (Edossa et al., 2007; Kendie et al., 2014).

The objective of the mediation was not achieved, and this could be attributed to several reasons based on arguments presented in the literature (Lederach, 2005; Miall, 2001; Tsikata & Seini, 2004). Firstly, it was underpinned by the structural theory, and therefore, assumed the top-down approach with less consultation and participation of the people of Alavanyo and Nkonya, in the development of the map and the implementation of the intervention (Anmuel, 2018; Gariba, 2015; Tsikata & Seini, 2004). It has been theorised and conceptualised by Lederach and others, that the bottom-up participatory approach is recommended for a protracted conflict, with specific interventions developed to address specific needs and interests at different levels (Lederach, 2005; Miall, 2001).

Secondly, the accuracy and preciseness of the map were doubted and contested by the conflicting parties. This could be attributed to the limited consultation and participation during the construction of the map because of other cultural elements. For instance, local trees used as land demarcation signs were not taken into consideration when the map was drawn, hence, the rejection by the two communities (Gariba, 2015; Kendie et al., 2014). Thus, the mapping project ignored the basic tenets of the indigenous peace-making theory in ethnic-based conflict resolution and transformation (Conteh-Morgan, 2005; Kendie, 2010; Kirby, 2006; Kouassi, 2008; Uwazie, 2011). As a result, the map that was to aid in the resolution rather became a source of conflict (Gariba, 2015; Tsikata

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& Seini, 2004). These notwithstanding, the Grunnar Map is considered a critical resource that provided the basis for mediation (Agyei, 2012; Gariba, 2015).

Afterwards, mediation committees were constituted by successive governments with the same objective. Notable are the Acquah Committee and the Mireku Mediation Committee which were constituted in 1992 and 1995 respectively. The Acquah Committee's work was truncated due to violent clashes while financial constraints affected the work of the Mireku Mediation Committee (Agyemang-Duah, 2008; Darkwa, Attuquayefio, & Yakohene, 2012; Gariba, 2015).

Besides setting up specific committees in an attempt to resolve the conflict, the government also instituted several councils. The setting up of the National Peace Council (NPC), with support from the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) was to complement the attempt by the government to resolve the conflict. Towards its contribution, the NPC set up the Regional and District Councils to engage stakeholders in finding solutions to the conflict. Regional Security Councils and District Security Committees have also been set for the same purpose from the grassroots level to the national level (Anumel, 2018; Kendie et al., 2014).

Military intervention: Take-over of the disputed land

The Alavanyo-Nkonya conflict has persisted with different approaches by national, local, and international bodies trying to bring lasting peace. Over the years, traditional authorities, governmental and non-governmental bodies as well as international communities have all contributed as third parties (Agyei, 2020; Kendie et.al, 2014). In the recent past, the security made up of the police and the military have all intervened to see to an end to the conflict. For instance,

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the military has intervened using peacekeeping strategies whenever there is a violent clash between the two communities. In 1997 for example, joint police and military personnel were called in to restore peace in the area (Agyei, 2012; Gariba, 2015; Tsikata & Seini, 2004).

The military, since 2017 has occupied and possessed the land in contest to curb the sporadic tensions and violent clashes in the two communities. It has been reported that the government intends to convert the contested land into a military training ground for jungle warfare. It is believed that if this intention materialises, the military presence would lead to peace in the area (Agyei, 2015; Gariba, 2015). Although currently, the presence of the security forces has brought relative peace to the area, the underlying conditions still exist and violence associated with the conflict could re-occur due to the deep-rooted and dynamic nature of the protraction (Kpormasi, 2013).

Attempts by traditional authorities and other religious actors

The struggle towards the resolution of the Alavanyo-Nkonya conflict transcends government efforts. Traditional authorities and religious organisations have also served as third-party actors and intervened in diverse ways. As pointed out by Tsikata & Seini, (2004), the traditional authorities have been frontal in the attempts to look for sustainable ways to bring the conflict to an amicable end. Apart from negotiations and mediations, the traditional authorities have used adjudication, especially, relying on court rulings and local decisions to resolve the conflict but without success (Darkwa, Attuquayefio, & Yakohene, 2012; Kendie et. al., 2014; Penu, 2016). Perhaps, the reason could be attributed to the intervention used because adjudication professes a win-lose

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approach which is not collaborative and reconciliatory (Agyei, 2015; Anumel, 2018; Bodtker, 2001; Dudouet, 2006; Gariba, 2015; Spangler, 2003).

Aside from the attempts by the local traditional authorities, other religious organisations such as the Catholic Church and the Presbyterian Church have featured in the negotiation and mediation processes. The literature available suggests that in 1984, the Catholic Priests and Nuns, together with the Presbyterian churches from both sides of the communities provided funding for the peace process. They were also involved in dialogue, negotiation, and mediation with the two communities to reduce tensions, forestall violent clashes and arrive at a lasting peace (Gariba 2015; Mahama, 2010). Unfortunately, their objectives were not achieved due to a couple of reasons including the lack of trust, inadequate in-depth technical knowledge for mediation and negotiation on the part of the committee members, and poor monitoring mechanism to ensure that parties adhere to the principles they agreed to during the mediation process (Okai, Abdallah, Amedzrator, Brewoo & Okyere, 2014; Gariba, 2015; Penu, 2016).

Attempts by Civil Society and Non-governmental Organisations

From the NGO front, both local and international organisations have been involved in the resolution of the Alavanyo-Nkonya conflict. Some of the international organisational actors are the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), United States Agency for International Development (USAID), and UK Department for International Development (DFID) while the local ones include West African Network for Peacebuilding, and Ghana Network for Peacebuilding. These organisations have intervened with varied support including financial assistance, research, and capacity building for

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peacebuilding (Okai, Abdallah, Amedzrator, Brewoo & Okyere, 2014; Gariba, 2015; Mahama, 2010). For example, the UNDP worked closely with the Ministry of Interior to develop and implement the National Architecture for Peace programme (Kendie et.al, 2014; Mahama, 2010).

The role of civil society organisations in undertaking policy research and advocacy toward conflict resolution has also been recognised and recorded accordingly (Anumel, 2018; Gariba, 2015; Abdulah, 2018). One such organisation is the West African Network for Peace (WANEP) which has intervened extensively in the conflict as a key mediating organisation. It has organised several problem-solving workshops and facilitated dialogue among the chiefs, queens, youth and opinion leaders from both traditional areas, and capacity-building workshops in support of mediation efforts. Additionally, WANEP conducted committee surveys with the involvement of the conflicting communities in order to map out the exact area of land that is at the centre of the dispute (Agyei, 2012; Okai, Abdallah, Amedzrator, Brewoo & Okyere, 2014; Kendie et.al, 2014).

Concerning the mapping activity by WANEP, the final round of dialogue to agree on a mutually acceptable land boundary settlement was concluded in November 2008. However, Kendie et.al, 2014 report that the mediation process was stalled in 2009 because there was a misunderstanding over the contested area of land that was surveyed and mapped. The WANEP also in 2013, under the auspices of the Volta Regional Coordinating Council, facilitated a consultative forum that engaged representatives of both sides to re-design the peace process which saw the representatives pledging to embrace dialogue as a means to help resolve the conflict (Abdullah & Amedzrator, 2014).

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The works of civil society organisations had not been successful too due to mistrust between the two conflicting parties as well as a lack of commitment from the parties (Abdullah & Amedzrator, 2014; Gariba, 2014). Table 3 documents the various phases of the conflict, the purported triggers, third-party actors, the corresponding intervention/approach, and the outcome of the intervention.

Table 3: Evolution of the conflict and the outcome of the third-party intervention

Date of conflict	Trigger	Third-party Actors	Intervention /Approach	Status of intervention
1913	Encroachment of land boundary	Traditional authorities	Arbitration	Not successful
1923	Encroachment of land boundary	German Colonial Administration	Arbitration	Not successful
1983	Water shortage	The High court	Adjudication	Not successful
2003	Timber logging	REGSEC	Mediation	Not successful
2004	Timber logging	REGSEC	Mediation	Not successful
2012	Rumour peddling	REGSEC	Mediation	Not successful
2013	Ambush killing	NPC	Mediation, peace committees, military take-over of the disputed land	Stalemate/ relative peace

Source: Desktop Review, 2021

Reasons Alavanyo-Nkonya conflict has protracted

Several perspectives could be advanced to explain the protracted nature of the Alavanyo-Nkonya conflict. One of the relevant theoretical perspectives is the

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one advanced by Azar (1990). According to Azar, a protracted social conflict (PSC) represents the prolonged and often violent struggle by communal groups for such basic needs as security, recognition and acceptance, fair access to political institutions and economic participation. Azar defines four clusters of variables as preconditions for PSCs: These are the communal content of a society, human needs, the state's role and international linkages. He also considers the communal content of society as the most important source of a PSC and discusses how the colonial period saw community groups directly influenced by the colonial policy of divide and rule.

In the post-colonial period, Azar stresses that in many multi-ethnic societies, states emerge and are dominated by a single communal group. This communal group (or a coalition of groups) ignores the needs of other minor communal groups, thereby breeding frustration and polarisation (see also Reimann, 2002). In terms of human needs, Azar argues that all individuals aim at fulfilling their (collective) needs through their collective identity group. Need deprivation, according to other authors, leads to increasing grievances, which individuals express collectively (Grasso & Giugni, 2016). Azar distinguishes between different forms of needs such as political access needs; security needs and acceptance needs. In the case of the Alavanyo-Nkonya conflict, factors such as ethnic differences and resource needs (for example, land) have been the underlying sources of the conflict. These have contributed to the century-old long-standing dispute with mistrust, strained relationships, and violence (Adjei, 2020; Gariba, 2015).

As far as political access needs are concerned, Azar refers to the effective participation of individuals in political, market, and decision-making

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institutions. He further defines security needs as the material needs for physical security, nutrition, and housing, while acceptance needs point to the need for a distinctive identity and its social recognition. Most importantly, Azar's concept of human needs explicitly takes up the idea of power inequalities. He argues that the dominant social group satisfies its political access, security and acceptance needs at the expense of the needs of other social (excluded) groups (see also Azar, 1990). As a result, the dissatisfied social groups become frustrated and feel (more and more) marginalised and excluded from social, economic, and political participation (Azar, 1990s).

The Alavanyo-Nkonya conflict has been described as protracted because its features and dimensions fit the description put up by Azar (1990) and other authors (Agyei, 2012; Azar, 1990; Gariba, 2015; Kendie et al, 2014; Penu, 2016). For instance, Azar's perspective on protracted social conflict explains a conflict that is complex, severe, and enduring, characterised by violence; and referred to as intractable. Azar grouped them into four main features; these are the communal content, deprivation of needs, the role of the state and external forces. The discussion of the protracted nature of the Alavanyo-Nkonya conflict relates to these features. Since 1923, the conflict has been on the resolution table with little success.

Varied reasons have been discussed in the literature. One of the reasons is due to the lack of trust, especially in the judiciary or its rulings. As pointed out by Gariba (2015), judicial rulings have gone in favour of each of the conflicting parties as a result of appeals. Thus, since 1923, the case has been through the corridors of the court system and the conflicting parties have won in turns, and this makes it difficult for one party to claim total victory over the

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judgements (Gariba, 2015). The conflict has mostly been adjudicated based on formal court rulings, and the inconsistencies in the final verdicts have made the parties not only doubt the credibility and trust reposed in the judiciary but also a little chance to develop collaborative or integrative solutions, hence, the periodic violence and subsequent intractability (Mahama, 2010; Penu, 2016).

Trust is essential in third-party interventions, especially in mediation and adjudication, and anytime trust is broken or doubts are entertained, conflicts could be protracted (Corbratta, 2014; Fisher, 2005; Maill, 2001). Other related examples include the North and South Sudan conflict in Sudan, and Kenya and Ethiopia border conflict (Bukari, 2013; Oyeshile, 2017).

The second reason that has been discussed in the literature is the inadequate or lack of punitive measures against persons found to have perpetuated criminal activities such as the destruction of property and lives (Mensah, 2014; Tsikata & Seini, 2004). It has been argued that holding individuals, and by extension, groups accountable for crimes committed during violence contributes to creating peace, which others justify and advocate in the context of justice and peace (Gariba, 2015; Otim, 2012). In their argument, when conflict occurs, other incidences such as violence and crime occur too, and where lives and properties are destroyed without sanctions, these acts (of violence and crime) become legitimised, and impunity leads to protraction (Agyei, 2012; Gariba, 2015; Kendie et al, 2014; Penu, 2016).

Perhaps, this explains the reasons some other conflicts especially those that relate to partisan political parties in the country have also become protracted and the associated violence erupts particularly during election periods (Agyei, 2012; Mahama, 2010; Tsikata & Seini, 2004). Justice is a human rights issue,

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and for that matter, a human need. Therefore, if linked to the human needs theory, then it suffices to argue along with the theorists that peace cannot be achieved unless human needs are addressed (Burton, 1990; Kett & Rowson, 2007; Mayer & Louw, 2012; Stewart, Holdstock & Jarquin, 2002).

Thirdly, greed among parties and conflict entrepreneurs has been mentioned in the available literature (Gariba, 2015; Penu, 2016, Kendie et al., 2014; Tsikata & Seini, 2004). The contested land is said to be rich in minerals and timber as well as being fertile for other agricultural purposes. As such, each of the parties finds it difficult to let it be in the possession of the other, hence, the rejection of adjudication and judicial rulings by both parties is the reason the conflict has persisted (Gariba, 2015; Tsikata & Seini, 2004). Additionally, others take advantage of the conflict to profit from the mineral and other resources including timber on the land. Referred to as conflict entrepreneurs, these persons become allies to both parties with 'hidden vested' interests (Collier, 2000; Gariba, 2015; Mensah, 2013; Tsikata & Seini, 2004). Thus, if the land serves as a source of livelihood for people in the community, and entrepreneurship for others, the admission of the needs theory becomes relevant (Adzahlie-Mensah, 2007; Azar, 1990; Kwawukume, 2006; Maill, 2001; Penu, 2016).

Fourthly, the Alavanyo-Nkonya conflict has been linked to partisan politics. The two main political parties in Ghana, the New Patriotic Party (NPP) and the National Democratic Congress (NDC) have been named as influencing the conflict (Tsikata & Seini, 2004; Agyei, 2012; Agyei, 2020). Both parties have accused one of these two political parties of siding with one against the other, hence, the inability to decisively, apply the judicial rulings or fully

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commit resources for resolution. In fact, it has been perceived that court rulings go in favour of a conflicting party depending on which political party is in power (Agyei, 2012; Tsikata & Seini, 2004).

Lastly, the conflict is also perceived to have been protracted due to the nature of conflict resolution mechanisms that have been adopted. Some have argued that over the years, the interventions that have been implemented to resolve the conflict have barely moved beyond management and resolution or have not been able to address the root cause of the conflict as well as its changing dynamics (Agyei, 2015; Agyei, 2020; Gariba. 2015). As has been argued by Coleman and Vallaccher (2010) that within the lifespan of a conflict, issues relating to the actors and drivers of conflict change. In line with this, they recommend that there should be an implementation of corresponding interventions to meet the changing patterns of the conflict.

Protracted conflict hinges on the attitudinal, behavioural, and positions of the conflicting parties during the conflict's life span. As a result, specific interventions should target these complexities (Miall, 2001; Fisher, 2005). Thus, efforts should not only focus on the underlying factors but also be geared towards transforming their attitudes, behaviours and interests which extend beyond the management of conflicts (Adzahlie-Mensah, 2007; Mahama, 2010).

Chapter Summary

This chapter presented the conceptual issues in the Alavanyo-Nkonya conflict with a focus on third-party interventions in the conflict. The Chapter reviewed, among other things, the evolution of the Alavanyo-Nkonya conflict, causes of the conflict, escalation of the conflict, third-party actors, and their attempts at transforming the conflict. The Alavanyo-Nkonya conflict started as

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a resource conflict but has since evolved and now assumed an ethnic undertone. Various third-parties have been involved in the various phases of the conflict in their attempts to resolve and transform the conflict. The chapter also discussed the attempts by traditional authorities and other religious actors, government actors, military intervention (taking over of the disputed land), civil society and non-governmental organisations. Furthermore, the chapter presents the reasons for the protraction of the Alavanyo-Nkonya conflict. Key among the reasons are trust issues, perceived injustice, and non-implementation of court decisions.

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CHAPTER FIVE

DYNAMICS OF THE ALAVANYO-NKONYA CONFLICT

Introduction

This chapter begins the presentation and discussion of the results of the study. The goal of this chapter is to obtain empirical evidence to either confirm or refute the existing contextual issues. Generally, it focuses on the temporal dynamics of the Alavanyo-Nkonya conflict. The term temporal dynamics is used in this context to depict changes that have occurred in the Alavanyo-Nkonya conflict over time. Firstly, the chapter presents results that relate to the temporal dynamics of the Alavanyo-Nkonya conflict. Specific issues presented and discussed are the dynamics of the conflict, extent of protraction of the conflict, reasons for the protraction, occasional triggers, and broadening of hostilities associated with the conflict.

Dynamics of the Alavanyo-Nkonya Conflict

Understanding the dynamics of conflict is critical to its transformation. The results covered issues regarding the dynamics of the Alavanyo-Nkonya conflict. These issues span across power and the socio-cultural identities of the people involved in the conflict. Specific themes that emerged from the data are; changing patterns of the conflict over time; the protracted nature of conflict; occasional triggers and violence; broadening hostilities; and factors accounting for the broadening hostilities. The themes are presented below.

Changing patterns of the conflict

Conflicts over natural resources such as land are not a new phenomenon in Ghana. Such conflicts have been a mainstay in Ghana over the years and often assume ethnic dimensions (Issifu, 2015; Issifu Mr, 2017; Maasole, 2012). The

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results confirm that the Alavanyo-Nkonya conflict, which is a resource conflict, relating to a disputed land boundary has evolved to also be linked to water resources and currently, an ethnic conflict.

The narratives from the study participants confirm that the conflict started about a century ago as a result of a land border dispute. The first violence linked to the conflict in 1913 between residents of Nkonya-Tayi and Alavanyo-Kpeme communities at the time, was mainly over a piece of land. The KII participants confirmed this assertion.

> *This conflict as far as I know began about 98 years ago. The conflict started when a piece of land which separate the people of Nkonya and Alavanyo became an issue for contention because of a resource that was discovered in the area.* [KII, Male, 52 years, August, 2021]

> *The conflict emerged over a water-body. Initially, the conflict was not in Asakyiri; rather, it was in Tayi and Kpeme. There was a stream of water that served the needs of the people who lived around. The conflict evolved when a disagreement emerged between some people from Nkonya and Alavanyo about who was to fetch the water first [because the water gets polluted easily after fetching]*. [KII, Female, 56 years, August, 2021]

This assertion was also corroborated in the FGDs where participants narrated that the dispute started over a land/community boundary and attempts to resolve the dispute led to violence broke out. They also highlighted that this violence lingered on for a very long time after it erupted over a century ago. With time, the conflict evolved and included disputes over water resource and later assumed an ethnocentric dimension.

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The land border dispute is normally a cause of many resources conflict in Africa. For instance, border disputes between Sudan and South Sudan as well as Land and Maritime disputes between Cameroon and Nigeria have persisted over more than five decades (Boone, 2019; Oduntan, 2015). Contested land boundaries that evolve to assume ethnic dimensions in Ghana are not peculiar to the people of Alavanyo and Nkonya.

There is documented evidence of how land conflict based on boundaries has evolved to assume an ethnic dimension in the north-western part of Ghana (Lentz, 2001). Resource-based conflicts usually evolve with one main cause and associated factors that expand the root cause or become the obvious cause. In the case of the Alavanyo-Nkonya conflict, two root causes are known – land conflict and water dispute with the latter not highlighted in the available literature (Gariba, 2015; Mensah, 2013; Penu & Osei-Kufuor, 2016).

Whereas the conflict began as a land dispute between the people of Alavanyo Kpeme and Nkonya-Tayi, it quickly evolved to assume an ethnic undertone. The ethnic undertone of the Alavanyo-Nkonya conflict was discussed across all the categories of the participants. The narratives they presented show that the ethnic dimension, has, to a large extent, reinforced the root cause of the conflict. For instance, the key informants who have directly been involved in the transformation of the conflict reiterated that the Ewe-Guan ethnic diversity has been interlinked with historical facts about first settlers, ethnic values and superiority. They presented the following accounts:

> *We the Nkonya people are the first who came to settle here before Alavenyo [people] came and were begging for a place to stay. So, our paramount chief and the council of elders decided to give them some*

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portion of land… Our people went to the stream to fetch water so the Alavenyo people didn't allow the Nkonyaa people to fetch the water and this brought about the quarrel. They killed and murdered the Nkonya people and this happened in 1983. We didn't know that it was a plan plotted by the Alavenyo to kill the Nkonnwa people. [IDI, Male, 80 years, February, 2022]

Protraction of the "age-old" conflict

Conflicts that have no lasting, acceptable, and stable resolutions have the tendency to drag on for a long period (Azar, 1990; Mail, 2001). The narratives from the study participants point to the protracted nature of the Alavanyo - Nkonya conflict. Azar (1990) has highlighted those basic needs such as security, recognition and acceptance, fair access to political institutions and economic participation when denied can lead to conflict and if not resolved can prolong the conflict. The participants accentuated that even though there are long periods of overt conflicts and lasting resolution has never been achieved over the years despite several attempts. The participants unanimously asserted that the conflict has persisted for a long time without a lasting resolution.

Several of the participants specifically referred to the year 1913 as the beginning of the conflict, thus making the conflict almost a century-old conflict with several ramifications. The participants also highlighted that due to the protracted nature of the conflict, confrontation keep occurring even in the recent past although almost all the people who originally started the conflict are no more alive. The participants accentuated that if the third-party intervention has been successful, perhaps the conflict would not have lingered on through the ages. The quote below reflects the views shared by the participant.

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> *There was an encroachment by the Alavanyo people on Nkonya land and the case was reported to the then chief of Alavanyo and the dispute was resolved amicably around the year 1913. Unfortunately, the conflict revived in the year 1923 because the root cause was not completely addressed… but this time, the conflict resulted in an exchange of fists among family members from both sides who shared boundaries along the disputed land.* [KII, Male, 46 years, August, 2021]

The above assertion concerning the protracted nature of the conflict was corroborated by some of the key informant participants with specific reference to the very beginning of the conflict, and a narrative of how the conflict came about. This is how one of them put it:

> *The conflict started on 25th May 1923. Yes, 25th May 1923 in this very house (referring to the chief's palace). By then, my grandfather's father was the Paramount Chief.* [KII, Male, 76 years, August, 2021]

The evidence thus gives credence to the fact that the Alavanyo-Nkonya conflict is a protracted one that dates back almost a century ago. The results are supported by the literature, where it has been documented that the Alavanyo-Nkonya conflict has dragged on over several decades (almost a century) (Asamoah, 2014; Duah, 2014; Gariba, 2015). The authors highlighted that the conflict became protracted due to perceived feelings of injustice and failure to implement third-party recommendations.

It is also imperative to note that findings from studies conducted almost two decades ago (see Tsikata & Seini, 2004; Jaha & Francisca Midodzi, 2011) are consistent with the present observation. Available literature further indicates

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that a conflict could be considered 'protracted' when: there are hostile interactions between communal groups based on deep-seated ethnic and cultural hatreds; conflict persists over long periods with sporadic outbreaks of violence; and when a group's identity is threatened and frustrated (Azar, 1990; Pathfenholz, 2001). The Alavanyo - Nkonya conflict can be said to have satisfied all the above conditions and thus, could be described as a protracted conflict.

The participants' narration to the effect that the conflict started on 25th May, 1923 attests to the protracted nature of the conflict even though there had been many interventions put in place as part of efforts aimed at resolution and transformation. As has been expressed by Azar (1990), a conflict that spans over a long period is said to be protracted. This is also consistent with the protracted social conflict theory (Reiman, 2000; Ryan, 1990).

Over a period, the conflict has moved through various phases of tensions and escalations. Attitudes, behaviour, and relationships have also changed from being cordial to becoming strained. Any conflict that normally travels through many phases also changes drivers, rational and motivations which makes it complex and difficult to transform (Andrade, Plowman, & Duchon, 2008). The change in perceptions by conflicting parties may affect the parties' commitment to resolution and transformation (Asara, Otero, Demaria, & Corbera, 2015). To Azar (1990), the denial of any of the basic needs can lead to conflict and if not resolved can prolong the conflict.

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Why the Alavanyo-Nkonya conflict has persisted

Various reasons account for the protraction of conflicts. There could be both internal and external factors that explain why some conflicts become difficult to resolve and transform (Adi & Achwan, 2018; Jawad, 2008;) In the case of the Alavanyo - Nkonya conflict, three main reasons were revealed by the study participants. These relate to trust issues, perceived injustice, and non-implementation of third-party recommendations.

Trust issues

Trust is an important element in conflict resolution and transformation (Elgoibar, Euwema, & Munduate, 2016). The secret to good relationships lies not only in responding to bids in communicating in positive ways but also in conflict resolution and transformation (Dickie, 2015). For relationships to improve there is always an underlying factor that makes it sustainable; and this is trust (Aiello, Puigvert & Schubert, 2018; Levin & Mir, 2015; Yuncu & Karaca, 2017).

Trust is conceptualised as the willingness of one party (the trustor) to become vulnerable to another party (the trustee) on the presumption that the trustee will act in ways that benefit the trustor (Schilke, Reimann, & Cook, 2021). In addition, the trustor does not have control over the actions of the trustee. Trust is also important when third-party actors take it upon themselves to resolve and transform conflicts. Over the years third-party mediation and negotiation have rested on the foundation of trust by which conflicting parties rely on a 'smooth' resolution and transformation (Bercovitch, 1985; Irreera et al, 2015; Ogechi, 2008).

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It emerged from the data that due to the absence of trust among the parties involved in the conflict, there has not been a resolution and transformation of the conflict. As such, the conflict continues to drag on through the ages – almost a century old. Of importance is the seeming lack of trust even among third-party actors that have attempted to resolve the conflict. The participants drawn from both the insider mediation committee and joint consultative mediation committee highlighted that in most cases, the third-party actors (usually a government-constituted committee) were seen as taking sides with either of the conflicting parties involved in the conflict. This seeming lack of neutrality on their part was raised as one of the reasons for the protracted nature of the conflict. Some of the participants expressed these observations:

> *Favouritism on the part of third parties as a government has also made it difficult to deal with the conflict. Government should be neutral and must not listen to only one party. Government rating one party as superior over the other is affecting us in our efforts to transform the conflict. Again, the Government is not making a conscious effort to make sure that the conflict is transformed. That is what I said earlier that, when one party does not agree with the plans of the government, then the government does not continue with its plans. It must not be so. The government has the authority and is accountable to make sure that there is permanent peace.* [KII, Male, 56 years, August, 2021].

> *There is no good relationship between the two parties. We all see each other as a threat and enemy. Even when the relationship between us gets better, it will only last for a short period. [IDI, Female, 45, February,2022]*

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One of the critical characteristics of third-party actors is to be neutral. In any conflict resolution and transformation, conflicting parties look out for these characteristics, especially when it involves external third parties. Fisher (2005), and Gent and Shannon (2011) posit that conflicting parties are deemed to repose confidence in third-party actors to help resolve and transform conflicts. When conflicting parties suspect any foul play in the line of duties of third-party actors it gives them doubt about their impartiality towards conflict resolution and transformation. The results point to the fact that some third-party actors were perceived to be secondary actors of the conflict, otherwise referred to as *conflict entrepreneurs* (Brinkerhoff, 2011; Naude, 2009).

This was highlighted in the various FGDs where participants shared the opinion that there could be a "third-party" behind the scene who benefits from the conflict. The participants were of the opinion that this invisible "third-party" intentionally cause some skirmishes in the community so that they can leverage that to exploit forest resources such as timber. Participants from the FGDs recounted how some people became wood contractors/chain-saw operators or sponsor them to harvest timber from the forest after they might have caused unrest in the community.

In the KIIs, the participants, likewise, acknowledged and echoed the views of the focus group discussants. They reiterated that the seeming lack of trust in the third party by the conflicting parties is a major reason accounting for the protracted nature of the conflict. On many occasions, either side of the conflicting parties feels they have not been treated well. As such, they do not trust the third-party to transform the conflict. The following quote highlights their position on the issue.

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> *When people feel that they have not been treated well; when they feel that their "people" so to speak are always marginalised or their views not respected, they naturally carry those opinions with them wherever they go. I think that is what is happening. They just don't trust the third-party in terms of resolving the conflict…* [KII, Male, 52 years August, 2021]

According to Zenger & Folkman (2019), there are three elements of trust – positive relationships, good judgement/expertise, and consistency. Positive relationship in this case is concerned with the extent to which third-parties can create positive relationships with the conflicting parties. Concerning good judgement, it relates to the extent to which third-parties are well-informed and knowledgeable. Third parties must understand the technical aspects of conflict transformation as well as the depth of experience in this regard. Consistency is the extent to which third-parties "walk their talk" and do what they say they will do. When these three elements are in place, conflicting parties may develop trust in the third-parties. In the case of the Alavanyo-Nkonya conflict, it appears these essential elements are not well represented.

Trust is critical to conflict resolution and transformation through third-party interventions. This explains the reason the selection of mediators, reconciliators, and arbitrators should be underpinned by trust (Achankeng, 2006; Baber, 2010; Paffenholz, 2014). As evidenced by earlier studies, attempts to resolve some local and international conflicts have been unsuccessful because the conflicting parties continue to reject the third-parties, their interventions or recommendations because of mistrust (Zahar & Mechoulan, 2017; Talamas, 2011; Paffenholz, 2014).

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In the Israel-Gaza violent conflict, the conflicting parties disagreed with the proposal and recommendations of the third-party actors due to trust issues (Alpher, 2014). Similarly, in the Bawku chieftaincy conflict in Ghana, attempts at resolving it failed many times because there was a perceived lack of honesty, commitment, and fairness in the approach to attaining peace in the area. This is because the conflicting parties shared the view that there were no transparency and fairness in the work of the third-parties (Bukari & Guuror, 2013; Kendie et al, 2014). Theoretically, trust is the platform upon which any third-party intervention is built or developed (Miall, 2004; Hoffman, 2009).

Perceived injustice and unequal power relations

It also emerged from the data that one of the reasons for the protracted nature of the Alavanyo - Nkonya conflict relates to the perceived denial of justice for innocent victims of the conflict. The participants indicated that if perpetrators of violence are punished, the innocent victims somewhat would feel comforted. They were of the view that whenever punishment is meted out to the perpetrators of the occasional violence from either side of the conflict, there is a feeling that justice has been served. They made references to past events where people were held liable for their roles in violence as a demonstration of justice being served, and hence, an indicator of lasting peace. However, they perceived that in recent violent episodes, perpetrators have not been held accountable for the roles they played despite general advancement in 21st century investigative processes. One of the participants noted that:

> *I read that "If you want peace, work for justice". This statement is in reference to some issues that took place in 1923. At that time, they arrested at least 38 perpetrators and jailed some of them when the*

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Police at that time did not have sophisticated technology as the Police of today. So, we enjoyed about 50 to 60 years of peace due to that [justice]. But from 1983 to the present, not a single soul has been arrested, prosecuted, or punished after each event of violence in an era where technology has improved. [KII, Male, 65 years, August, 2021]

The feeling of injustice has been documented as one of the reasons for the failure to achieve conflict transformation (Celiku, 2018). Inequality and feeling of injustice on their own do not generate violence. However, they provide fertile grounds for grievances. In the absence of efforts to address grievances, groups may mobilise and resort to violence. It has been noted that prevention efforts ought to give credence to perceptions of inequality and injustice (Nygard, et al., 2017). In Indonesia, conflict escalated in one of the resource-rich provinces due to unresolved grievances emanating from feelings of injustice among people of a specific ethnic identity (Aspinall, 2007).

Another key theme that emerged from the data is the perceived unequal power relations. The study participants were of the view that, perhaps, these perpetrators have not yet been arrested because they are being or have been shielded by persons who have authority or power. With no specific evidence, this view was expressed by one of the key informant participants:

I think one thing that we should do is we must be bold as peacebuilders, not shield wrongdoers. Thus, those that we may know are beneficiaries of this conflict must not be shielded, we must blow their cover off for the police to arrest them so that we could have our peace. I think this is what we must do. So, we should not shield the wrongdoers at all!

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Those that we found to have been plotting a conflict must not be shielded. [KII, Male, 45 years, August, 2021)

This perceived inaction was seen as the main reason underlying some of the counter-violent attacks that have been recorded, at least, in the last six decades. The participants explained that there have been records of violence meted on persons from either of the conflicting communities, and these (violence) were formed based on retaliation. Some of the participants made these observations:

But as I said, most of the people who started the conflict are dead. And now, it is basically an issue of retaliation. So, if, for instance, last year the people of Community A attacked the people of Community B, the young men in Community B will begin targeting the people of Community A, especially if there is no arrest of the perpetrators…and they [Community B young men] do get the opportunity, they will attack. [KII, Male, 42 years August, 2021)

Similar views were expressed by study participants from the FGDs irrespective of the background characteristics. Many of the participants shared the view that the occasional attacks and counter-attacks took place primarily as retaliation or revenge. Persons and families who have lost close relatives due to the conflict often feel aggrieved and look for opportunities to inflict harm on people from the other side of the conflict. Narratives from the FGDs point to the assertion that as a result of pain and bitterness due to past negative experiences (e.g., losing relatives or love ones), people engage in reprisal attacks. This assertion was dominant across the various FGDs. Retaliation or revenge is one

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of the major reasons for conflicts to continue, and in the case of Alavanyo-Nkonya, it has a layer of perceived injustice. These retaliatory actions are normally triggered by past violence perpetrated against one party or another.

Conflicts normally continue when it involves unequal power relationships. This happens when the rights and needs of a weaker group are subordinated to those of the dominant group. This sort of injustice is often rooted in ideologies of exclusion that are deeply embedded in peoples' way of thinking and are difficult to alter (Majenen, 2007; Pruitt, 2009). Such power imbalances limit the bargaining power of the group that suffers from injustice, making it more likely that the group will go to extreme ends to make its voice heard (Maiese, 2003). Hence, the reason the conflict transformational pyramid models emphasises the need for actors of conflict transformation to be identified at different levels of status, power, and influence to address needs and grievances from the grassroots to the elite society (Lederach, 1995; Miall, 2001).

Conflict studies have recorded a couple of cases where no or delayed attempts to bring perpetrators to book have resulted in reprisal actions from the opposing parties (Kett & Rowson, 2007; Stewart, Holdstock & Jarquin, 2002; Tsikata & Seini, 2004). As a result, authors, including Mail (2001), argue that conflict resolution and transformation must have in-built mechanisms that observe, detect, assess, and predict possible violence, and, subsequently, deal with perpetrators according to laid down rules and laws (Jackson & Morelli, 2009; Fisher, 2005). Similarly, the structural social conflict theory established the need for justice especially in protracted conflicts (Haider, 2009; Uwazie, 2001; Richmond, 2009).

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Non-implementation of third-party recommendations

The non-implementation of third-party recommendations also emerged as one of the reasons for the protracted nature of the Alavanyo - Nkonya conflict. Several of the participants highlighted that as part of the efforts towards lasting peace, the parties resorted to the judicial system for a ruling. The expectation was that the court rulings when implemented would ultimately settle the grievances and resolve the conflict. To them, the non-implementation of these rulings has contributed to the protracted nature of the conflict.

The narratives across all the categories of participants explain further that the court rulings were often not accepted by the parties of the conflict. There is documented evidence of the failure of the judicial process to bring to a close the Alavanyo-Nkonya conflict, thereby resulting in heightened tension between people of the two conflicting towns (Kendie, Osei-Kufuor, & Boakye, 2014). As such, adjudication does not present a viable option for resolving a protracted conflict. In some cases, both parties rejected the rulings and blocked implementation efforts. This partly explains why the conflict has not been resolved nor transformed. A key informant and an IDI participant provided these accounts:

> *The court has been intervening. As you know, the court gives judgement and the court in this case has given judgement over this land. The judicial process is part of the rule of law that we all practice or accept as part of the way we resolve issues… But the last judgement that the Supreme Court made was in the 1980s, and after this judgement, there has been a series of attacks and violence. So, that means that the*

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judgement was not accepted by both parties and the reason they continue with the violence... [KII, Male, 52 years, August, 2021]

The government set up some committees such as the Mireku Committee. They worked but the recommendations were not accepted by both parties. In 2006, the Ho Catholic Diocese also started something to initiate peace until the government came in. The government set up the Mediation Committee and the Committee worked from 2006 to 2009. The Committee's recommendations to the government were not accepted by the parties… [IDI, Male, 72 years, February, 2022]

In other jurisdictions in the country and on the continent, it has been observed that non-adherence to decisions and agreements reached, and failure on the part of conflicting parties to implement or follow road maps to the transformation of the conflict prolong the conflicts (Agyei, 2012; Tsikata & Seini, 2004). This is largely because, often, either of the conflicting parties disagrees with the decisions of the court. Therefore, they do not participate in the implementation of the court's rulings. It is for this reason that in the theories of mediation, arbitration, and mediation-arbitration (med-arb), it is explained that agreements jointly reached need to be referred to the court to assist with enforcement (Paffenholz, 2014; Talamas, 2011; Zahar & Mechoulan, 2017). This is where probably to a large extent, the relevance of indigenous peace-making theory in ethnic-based conflict resolution and transformation shows up owing to its appreciable rate of success, particularly in some parts of Africa (Best, 2006; Mwagiru, 2000; Uwazie, 2011). Perhaps, the non-implementation

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of agreements concerning the present conflict bothers on trust issues explained earlier.

Occasional Triggers and Violence

Protracted conflicts are often explained by occasional triggers and violence, thereby relegating peace talks to the background (Szayna, et al., 2017). Common to protracted conflicts, the Alavanyo-Nkonya conflict has, since its emergence, and particularly in the last few decades, experienced occasional triggers leading to violent confrontations. According to the participants, minor provocations from either side often result in violence. They indicated that even in the absence of provocation, occasional attacks and violence take place in the form of reprisal from families and friends, especially, from those who have lost their loved ones as a result of the conflict.

However, aside from the reprisals, accusations of stealing or rumours of thievery were referenced. It was observed from the data that whether the theft case is substantiated or not, as long as it is linked to one of the parties involved in the conflict, it becomes a sufficient opportunity for a violent attack. For instance, anytime a section of the people or individual(s) from either party harvested or was believed to have harvested or engaged in any activity on the disputed land, the action is regarded as stealing. In recent times, the revival of the conflict was mainly due to the logging of timber from the disputed land. One of the study participants, for instance, asserted that:

> *The main cause of recent conflicts between the two parties is over stealing of timbers by some people from Community A on Community B land. So, recently, this is the main problem that occasionally triggers or revives the conflict.* [KII, Female, 68 years, August, 2021].

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Similarly, this assertion was also corroborated by a 58-year-old female participant who concluded and stated that *"...assault, insult, and rumours all over serve as triggers that lead to violence"*. The quotes above can be interpreted that anytime there is a purported stealing of foodstuffs and logging it could trigger violence. This points to the fact that aside from the underlying cause of the conflict (land dispute) other remote factors such as stealing of food stuff and timber constitute conflict triggers at any time. This finding corroborates the work of Fisher et al. (2000) who explains that apart from the underlying cause of a conflict, other remote factors trigger conflicts which make it difficult to develop specific intervention to resolve and transform the root cause of the conflicts.

Miall (2001) explains that conflict transformation is a process, and that, historical antecedents are necessary to guide the implementation of interventions with the conflicting parties. These antecedents also help to predict possible triggers and develop associated interventions to reduce or eliminate them in the process (Azar, 1990; Mail, 2001, Pathfenholz, 2007). Similar to this is the conflict transformation model which indicates that there are challenges to the transformation of conflicts and local 'sensors' should be instituted to observe and isolate them to reduce tension and possible breakdown of the transformation process (Lederach, 2007; Pathfenholz. 2007).

Broadening Hostilities and Scope

Protracted conflicts tend to expand to include other people who may not necessarily be directly involved in the conflict. In this study, it emerged that the conflict has extended to include communities other than Alavanyo-Kpeme and Nkonya-Tayi. The narratives also point to natives of communities living outside

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the country who have become part of the conflict mainly through the financing of arms and ammunition for those back at home. The study further revealed that in recent times, the conflict has extended so much so that it has gradually evolved into an ethnic conflict as more and more neighbouring towns and villages belonging to the two-ethnic divides in the conflict seem to be having a vested interest in it. With broadening hostility and scope, the conflict thus becomes protracted. This statement was made to expatiate the issue of conflict enlargement:

> *Yes, it has been enlarged and broadened because initially, just as I said, it was a community from Nkonya and a portion of the Alavanyo community, but now, virtually almost all of the Nkonya community and Alavanyo community have joined in the conflict; that is what is happening now.* [KII, Male, 48 years, August, 2021]

It could be deduced from the narratives (above) that the conflict has broadened from one community to another given the ethnic and cultural background of the communities. A conflict that has cultural and ethnic undertones usually tends to enlarge due to its associated allies. Since the parties have a similar ethnic background, it becomes easier for one community to align with the other conflicting parties thereby broadening the conflict. To support this, this is how another participant puts it:

> *Just as I said, the communities from Nkonya and just a portion of the Alavanyo community [initially started the conflict] but now, virtually almost all the Nkonya communities and Alavanyo communities in the respective traditional areas have directly or indirectly joined in the conflict.* [KII, Male, 56years, August, 2021]

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In many similar conflicts elsewhere, expansion or broadening of conflict has been identified and analysed. For example, in the conflict between the Kokomba and Nanumbas, it was observed that the enlargement occurred on ethnic lines, while that between Gushiegu and Chereponi was on political lines (Hamza, 2019; Maasole, 2012). Like other authors, Mail (2001) has argued that the emergence of conflict enlargement, usually, is underpinned by activities of *conflict entrepreneurs* and protraction (Gultung, 2000; Miall, 2001).

Chapter Summary

The temporal dynamics of the Alavanyo-Nkonya conflict were explored in this chapter. The goal is to advance the evidence in the literature on the contextual issues reviewed in the previous chapter. The specific themes that emerged from the results are; changing patterns of the conflict over time, protraction of the "age-old" conflict, and why (reasons) the Alavanyo-Nkonya conflict has persisted. Other issues that emerged in this regard were occasional triggers and violence, as well as the broadening of hostility and scope. The results showed that residents, persons of groups outside the conflicting communities and regions, and others outside the country have directly or indirectly been involved in the conflict.

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CHAPTER SIX

ROLE OF THIRD-PARTY INTERVENTION IN THE ALAVANYO-NKONYA CONFLICT

Introduction

Third-party interventions have been used in conflict transformation throughout history but with varying results. Whereas such interventions work in some contexts, in other jurisdictions, they do not achieve the intended objectives. This chapter presents the results of the attempts by third-parties towards the transformation of the Alavanyo-Nkonya conflict. The chapter is structured into two main sections. The first focuses on the profile of the third-party actors as well as their roles in the effort towards conflict transformation. The second part covers the approaches implemented to transform the conflict.

Profile of Third-Party Actors

The study identified various third-party actors that have been involved in the Alavanyo - Nkonya conflict over the years. These were local (traditional authorities, religious bodies, and the conflicting parties), national, and international actors who have been engaged in various phases of the conflict. Their actions towards the conflict transformation started from the onset of the conflict.

Local actors

Several local actors have been involved in the attempts to transform the Alavanyo-Nkonya conflict. Local actors, in this context, include individuals who are not necessarily neutral to the conflict, but play or have played specific roles in the resolution and transformation of the conflict. They comprised traditional leaders, representatives of youth organisations, members of

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mediation committees (joint consultative committee and insider-mediation committee), and religious leaders. These actors, also conceptualised as 'modified' third-parties (Sandal, 2017) were perceived by the study participants as being relevant in the conflict transformation process due to their direct and indirect involvement with the parties to the conflict. The following quotes represent the views shared by the participants:

> *I will first mention the church groups, various representatives of church groupings like the Christian Council, and the traditional leaders such as the chiefs and queen mothers who have been part of the transformation process…The other local third parties are the members of the insider mediation committees that were set up by the National and Regional Peace Councils in collaboration with the traditional authorities.* [KII, Male, 48 years, August, 2021].

It was evident that some of the local actors were prominent people from the two conflicting communities. The involvement of groups from the church and the various traditional leaders is important as these people wield a lot of power and authority, and are respected by the local people. Lar (2017) posits that over the years, communities engaged in violent conflict have resorted to local actors as top-down state third-party actors often fail in conflict resolution and transformation. This gives credence to what Lemay-Hebert (2013) says about the reliance on a structured framework for conflict transformation which makes it difficult if the status quo has to be challenged or modified. In the case of the Alavanyo-Nkonya conflict transformation, the local actors were put together by reputable institutions such as the Regional Peace Councils in collaboration with the traditional authorities with the belief that their

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intervention will help transform the conflict. This strategy is likely to have the backing of the people as the local actors are people from within.

Local actors' involvement in conflict transformation efforts is not new in the field of conflict studies. In Africa, there is evidence to show the immense contribution of local actors in conflict transformation efforts, especially in context-specific conflicts (Lar, 2017). With culture and values forming the fabric of society, local actors are thus considered critical in efforts towards conflict transformation (Palacios, Hernandez, & Mosquera, 2011). From the works of Brock-Utne (2001) and Edossa et al, (2005) it is evident that local actors in conflict resolution and transformation have been useful in the Boran-Garri, as well as the Digodi-Boran conflicts in Ethiopia. Similarly, in Burundi, the religious bodies were instrumental in the transformation of a land dispute between the Kamenge and Buyenzi communities (Edossa et al, 2005).

Conflict transformation, therefore, needs the participation of local actors who understand the cultural dynamics of the people to seek interventions that suit the needs and interests of conflicting parties. This is important because as described and explained by the indigenous peace-making theory, such local actors usually understand the traditional processes of a well-structured, time-proven social system. The knowledge of this system is crucial to the transformation of this kind of conflict that is equally underpinned by identity and ethnic-driven factors (Bamidele, 2014; Bukari, 2013; Mac-Ginty, 2008).

Again, the very nature of conflict transformation will require the active participation of local actors because the local people are directly affected by the conflict, and must therefore embrace the peace process for the conflict to be transformed (Warnecke & Franke, 2010). In addition, local cultures may offer

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opportunities for reconciliation that may otherwise be overlooked by others (Miall, 2001). Given the fact that people from both the Alavanyo and Nkonya sides of the conflict have been directly affected by the conflict, any effort towards transforming the conflict must start from and with the people. The culture of the two communities could also serve as a resource that can be leveraged for lasting conflict transformation.

Local actors are important in conflict transformation to obtain the legitimacy of the measures put in place to ensure that the conflict is transformed. In effect, local actors' adequate involvement has the potential to make efforts by external actors more effective (Garcia, 2002). Also, the involvement of local actors as in the case of the Alavanyo-Nkonya conflict transformation efforts is important because the occasional violence is largely localised. Thus, the people affected by the conflict live in specific communities and efforts to deal with the conflict have to be focused on these communities.

Presented by the conflict transformation theory and framework, and argued by some other authors, actors in 'protracted' conflict transformation are diverse, and include, particularly, local actors who understand the historical and contextual dynamics underpinning the conflict, and its transformation (Galtung, 2000; Lederach, 1997; Miall, 2001).

National actors

The other category of third-party interveners is the national actors. It emerged from the results that since the 1990s, the State has provided diverse support in terms of human, logistics and financial support through national institutions, civil society organisations and mediation committees towards the transformation of the conflict. Notably, the national actors are the Peace

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Councils at the National and Regional levels, National and Regional Security Councils, National Commission for Civic Education (NCCE), West African Network for Peacebuilding (WANEP) and African Youth. The participants, for instance, provided the following information on the national actors:

> *The National Peace Council (NPC) is involved in the attempt to resolve and transform the conflict. Aside from the NPC, there are several of these third-parties including the Regional Security Council, the District Security Council and the Municipal Security Council.* [KII, Male, 48 years, August, 2021]

Through the national actors, the State, since the evolution of the conflict has provided intervention such as mediation, arbitration, negotiation, facilitation, and military intervention. In an effort to transform the Alavanyo-Nkonya conflict, the government also intervened by setting up mediation committees and councils with diverse approaches.

National actors have contributed immensely towards the transformation of conflicts (Lederach, 2007). For example, governments and non-governmental actors were very instrumental in seeking peace for the Bawku chieftaincy conflict (Ibrahim, 2018). Although national actors contribute to conflict transformation, their activities have faced numerous challenges such as perceived biases, financial challenges, and inadequate expertise when it comes to third-party intervention and conflict transformation (Angela, 2019; Rukuni, Machingambi, Musingafi & Kaseke, 2015; Svensson, 2009).

Notwithstanding, civil society organisations as part of national actors continue to contribute immensely towards efforts aimed at conflict transformation. The study participants highlighted how civil society

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organisations have been involved towards transforming the Alavanyo-Nkonya conflict.

> *These parties are the ones that I have mentioned – regional administration, municipal administration, WANEP, NPC, the Bishop's Conference, and others. The representatives from these departments, institutions and organisations were also part of mediation committees which included persons from Alavanyo and Nkonya who support the transformation process.* [KII, Male, 45 years, August, 2021]

> *There had been an establishment of police and military presence in both Nkonya and Alavanyo. Again, the government sent a delegation which includes the Peace Council, and Regional Coordinating Council to help sustain the peace*. [IDI, Male, 68 years, February, 2022]

The role of civil society organisations towards conflict transformation has been noted in the available literature (Issifu, 2017). The works of Miall, (2001) and Fisher (2005) also reiterate how civil society organisations contributed towards the transformation of the conflict between the Tutsis and Hutus in Rwanda. Civil society organisations as third-party actors also contribute to the effectiveness and accountability of local actors through the provision of technical support. They do this through supporting additional research, knowledge production, and training; and providing expert advice to local and national peace and security actors and institutions (Barnes, 2009; Belloni, 2001; Paffenholz, 2010). Their role is not different from what civil societies played and continues to play in the Alavanyo-Nkonya conflict in an effort towards the transformation of the conflict.

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As explained by the multi-diplomacy theory, civil society organisations are part of non-state actors who constitute members of the society and consider the peace process as a public peace process (Mapendere, 2011; McDonald, 2012). As such, drawing on multiple actors; official and non-official, and a combination of official and non-official actors bring on board various expertise to the fore to help transform the conflict. This theoretical leaning is important in understanding the involvement of the various third-parties in efforts aimed at conflict transformation. Again, from a purely theoretical perspective, the involvement of multiple third-parties in the Alavanyo-Nkonya conflict could be regarded as appropriate.

International actors

The international actors, just like the state actors, participated in the efforts towards the transformation of the conflict. Their efforts were largely about the provision of diverse support to civil society organisations and non-governmental organisations. These supports enable civil society organisations to be able to carry out their activities on the ground with the overall goal of transforming the conflict. Commonly mentioned by the study participants were the German Agency for International Corporation (GIZ), UNDP and the Commonwealth.

> *I will say, the Commonwealth has organised workshops for people from these communities or these areas to train them to be able to reduce and also help in resolving the conflicts.* [KII, Male, 65 years, August, 2021]

> *…. let me add here that UNDP has also offered quite a number of supports in the intervention but always does through a third party like*

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the National Peace Council and WANEP. [KII, Male, 52 years, August, 2021]

The involvement of international organisations as third-parties in conflict resolution and transformation is also not new in conflict studies, especially in Africa where the occurrence of violent conflict is common (Thakore, 2013). In some conflict situations, international organisations have served as third-parties. For example, in the conflict between Liberia and Sierra Leone, ECOWAS, as a regional body, acted as a third-party in the resolution and transformation of the conflict. In all the cases, international third-parties have used mediation and negotiation as part of their approaches to conflict transformation (Vukovic, 2016). Organisations such as UNDP worked closely with the Ministry of Interior in Ghana to develop and implement the National Architecture for Peace programme in Ghana (Okai et al., 2014). Again, the UNDP and GIZ have played third-party actor roles to resolve and transform the Bawku conflict in the Northern Region of Ghana (Okai et al, (2014).

Protracted conflict transformation processes in Africa and elsewhere usually involve similar categories of actors. For instance, local, national and international actors have been employed to transform protracted conflicts in Ethiopia (Boran and Garri conflicts) and Mali (Normadic Tuaregs-Mali Government conflict) in Africa, and outside the region (Uwazie, 2011).

The conflict transformation theory posits that not all conflicts can be resolved, hence, the suggestion of the term 'conflict transformation' rather than conflict resolution. The theory recognises the need to restore broken or destroyed relationships, focus on reconciliation within society and strengthen the potential of society (see Galtung, 2000). In effect, irrespective of where the

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third-parties are coming from – national or international, the focus must be on the local people. Third-party actors cannot achieve conflict transformation without the cooperation of the local people (Byrne, 2001; Folger, Poole & Stutman, 2021; Francis, 2004).

Roles played by third-party actors

Third-party actors play vital roles, especially in protracted conflict transformation. The roles which vary in many ways mostly depend on the stages of the conflicts as well as the cooperation of conflicting parties. In the case of the Alavanyo-Nkonya conflict, the roles of the actors focused on mediation, facilitation, training and education, and funding.

Mediator role

The results showed that all categories of actors were engaged in mediation, at least, at one stage of the conflict transformation process. Thus, the third-party actors at one point or another functioned as mediators. Particularly, at the initial stage of the conflict transformation efforts, most of the actors were local and national actors who were part of various mediation committees that were constituted by the government and with religious institutions like the Catholic Church. The participants highlighted that the principal role of the third-parties at the beginning was to serve as mediators between the people of Alavanyo and Nkonya. The narratives provide additional information.

> *At the beginning of the conflict, the government came to intervene and other individuals also came to our aid. The government set up mediation committees such as the Mireku Committee to mediate between the two conflicting parties. Earlier in 2006, the Catholic Diocese at Ho [the regional capital of Volta Region] constituted a committee to initiate*

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peace until the government came in. The government set up the Mireku Mediation Committee which worked from 2006 to 2009. [KII, Male, 48 years, August, 2021]

The National Peace Council has been acting as one of the mediators between the two communities by providing them with technical support in the process of transformation. [KII, Male, 52 years, August, 2021]

This perspective was also shared by the study participants from the FGDs. They highlighted that the third-parties mainly serve as mediators between the people of Alavanyo-Nkonya. This mediating role has been at the core of the roles of the third-parties over the years. FGD participants accentuated that there have been several mediation committees that governments over the years have put in place to resolve the Nkonya-Alavanyo conflict. Participants specifically mentioned the Catholic Church and WANEP as the most recent third-parties who were involved in the attempt to resolve the conflict.

There had been several mediation committees that governments put in place to resolve the Nkonya and Alavanyo conflict, and these have been in the system since 1987 thereabout; the last one that I witnessed was that of the mediation committee set up by the Catholic Church and WANEP. [FGD, Highlighted by Female, 58 years, August, 2021]

Mediators are important in conflict resolution and transformation. It could be inferred based on the results from the study that the third-parties that were involved to transform the Alavanyo-Nkonya conflict demonstrated such relevance. One of the primary functions of mediators is to facilitate amicable transformation through mediation. Mediation has been used in contemporary

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conflict transformation, especially in ethnic disputes where resolution and transformation are value-centric (Miall, 2001; Pathfenholz, 2014).

Facilitators

The facilitation role was carried out largely by the national actors. It was observed from the results that the facilitation role comprised the provision of relevant educational materials for mediation. They used the materials to train sections of the population (especially the youth) in the conflicting communities to prepare and encourage them to contribute to the transformation of the conflicts. The study participant made references to various instances where the third-parties (actors) facilitated during mediation meetings.

> *The third-parties have been facilitating workshops to train selected participants in the communities. For example, the National Peace Council has engaged the parties, bringing them together from time to time to think about the way forward and how to deal with the issue in the two communities.* [KII, Male, 48 years, August, 2021]

> *The NPC, per its mandate, has been engaging the parties to come out with mechanisms that will sustain peace efforts, so there have been regular engagements with the parties over time. There have been regular engagements and periodic engagements. And this is done by helping the two conflicting parties to come together for a dialogue. Periodically, consultations are done. For example, during International Day of Peace, the National Peace Council brings the two communities together and creates a platform for interaction and contact.* [KII, Male, 52 years, August, 2021]

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Third-party actors normally provide communication and facilitation during mediation processes. As the name implies, when acting as facilitators, they focus more on assisting the parties in communicating more and mutually collaborating while exercising modest control over the actual mediation process (Bercovitch et al. 1991; Bercovitch & Houston 1996). Third-parties regard facilitation as a critical tool in efforts towards conflict transformation. In the writings of some authors including Armengol (2013), the facilitation role prepares the mind and ground for transformation to take off (Ramsbotham, Miall & Woodhouse, 2011; Barsky, 2016). Thus, as argued by Miall (2001), it serves as the springboard for other roles to function towards conflict transformation.

Education and training role

Sometimes third parties offer educational and training workshops to members of the conflicting parties. They often carry this out in schools and community centres to draw attention to the negative effects of conflict, especially on vulnerable ones. It emerged from the results of the study that members from both communities have benefited from training and educational models from these third parties on the effects of the conflict.

During the FGDs, the National Commission for Civic Education (NCCE) was specifically mentioned as one of the institutions (third-parties) that have made efforts in recent times through the chiefs by organising children between the ages of 6-15 years from Alavanyo and Nkonya to unite them and educate them on the need for peace to avoid generational conflict since they constitute the future of the communities.

National Commission for Civic Education, for example, also started something through one of our chiefs, by organising children who were 6-

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15 years old from Nkonya and Alavanyo with the intention of uniting them by educating them on peace in order to avoid generational conflict because they are the future of our communities. (FGD, Highlighted by Male, 46 years, August, 2021]

Participants from the FGDs also highlighted that it got to a time where the people of Nkonya and Alavanyo realised that if they are to contribute to the conflict transformation process, then they have to take part in the education and training to learn and equip themselves with the techniques of conflict transformation. According to them, conflict transformation techniques are necessary if they are to move towards a complete transformation of the conflict. The participants asserted that this was the main reason for the establishment of the insider-mediation committees with the mandate to train and bring together the youth who are usually the ones at the forefront of the hostilities. They also shared the view that if the youth understand the need to resolve the conflict, then transformation can be achieved.

Along the line, the people of Nkonya and Alavanyo realised that if they are to contribute to transformation, they would have to take part in training and education to learn the technique of resolving conflict so that they would meet one on one to talk about issues that would help resolve the conflict. This is the major reason the Peace Council established the Insider-Mediation committees: thus, to train and bring on board the youth; who are normally called in to pick arms to engage in conflict, and for them to understand the need and how to resolve conflicts, so that they will not rather go and engage in it. [FGD, Male, 68 years, August 2021].

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Providing education to children and youth on the effect of violent conflict is crucial if the conflict is to be transformed totally (Schell-Faucon, 2001). Children and youth constitute the largest population in Ghana (Ghana Statistical Service [GSS], 2022), and the future fabric of every society. If society is to embrace peace, then children and youth need to be trained and educated on the repercussions of violence and the need for peace by empowering them to develop critical judgement on interpersonal relationships and community dialogue (Chowdhury, 2018).

Educating and training young people and youth in efforts towards conflict transformation could serve as the driving force of future development. Education as part of the conflict transformation process could ensure a guarantee of personal fulfilment and social transformation. Likewise, education for peace is geared towards institutionalising a peaceful conflict culture and nurturing the structures and values of civil society (UNESCO, 1996; Chetkow-Yanoov, 1997). It is believed that the role of education and training is critical to the achievement of local, national and sustainable development goals in every country, hence, the inclusion of the sustainable development goal on Peace and Justice, Strong Institutions (Goal 16) (Vorontsova, Vasylieva, Bilan, Osrasz & Mayboroda, 2020).

Provision of funds

The study also observed that some of the actors, particularly the national and international interveners, provided funds for the implementation of other roles, including mediation and facilitation. The funds were also used to facilitate meetings and interactions between the conflicting parties as part of the process of transformation. Also, resources such as logistics and materials for training

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and education were made possible through the intervention of the actors. The commentary by the participants expressed this role in detail:

> *On a few occasions, we have tried to provide them with resources. We sometimes rely on the Regional Security Council, Regional Coordinating Council, Hohoe Municipal Assembly, and the Biakoye Municipal Assembly for funds to help bring the two communities together for dialogue. The idea is to work on relations within the community until we reach the point where the conflict is transformed.* [KII, Male, 48 years, August, 2021].

> *WANEP actually took it up on itself with some funding from [National and International] donors to go to the area to mediate and dialogue between the two conflicting communities.* [KII, Male, 46 years, August, 2021].

The roles played by the actors in the Alavanyo-Nkonya conflict are consistent with those documented in the literature where roles such as mediation, facilitation, education and training, as well as provision of funds have been frequently mentioned (Fisher, 2001, 2005; Effendi, 2007; Dudouet, 2006). For instance, in the account of Baber (2010) and the studies by Pathfenholz (2014) and Achankeng, (2006), mediation, facilitation and education roles are commonly played in conflicts in general, and protracted ones in particular. These studies underscore the critical roles third-parties play in efforts towards conflict transformation. Literature point to the fact that these roles are fundamental in conflict transformation. Earlier scholars, including Azar (1990) and Mail (2001) have presented these roles in their studies, write-ups and

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models on conflict resolution and transformation (see Corbetta, 2014; Lederach, 1997).

Similarly, the input-output transformation model (which is the conceptual framework for the study) identifies the role of the third-party actors as a precursor to the outcome of conflict transformation. Based on the ideas of Bracciotti (2017), the model, and in this context, explains that the roles played by the third-party interveners subsequently inform the appropriate approaches to be developed as interventions to achieve transformation. Thus, without these roles, the conflict transformation process cannot be fully conceptualised and realised.

The evidence points to various third-party actors playing diverse roles with various outcomes in the Alavanyo-Nkonya conflict. Table 4 provides a summary of the various third-party actors, highlighting the specific actors, the roles played by the specific actors, and the outcome of the intervention based on the roles played.

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Table 4: Specific third-party actors, roles played and the outcomes

Actors	Specific Actors	Roles played	Outcome
Local Actors	❖ Traditional Leaders	• Mediator role, Facilitator role	• Improved and renewed relationship
	❖ Representatives of Youth Organisations	• Facilitator role	
National Actors	❖ Peace Councils at the National and Regional levels	• Mediator role • Facilitator role • Education and training • Provision of funds	• Change of mindset from violence towards peace
	❖ National and Regional Security Councils	• Mediator role • Facilitator role	• Non-retaliatory behaviour • Reduction in Violence
	❖ District Security Council	• Mediator role • Facilitator role	• Relative peace
International Actors	❖ German Agency for International Cooperation (GIZ) ❖ West African Network for Peace-building (WANEP	• Education and training • Provision of funds	• Change of mindset from violence towards peace • Reduction in violence

Source: Fieldwork, 2021

Approaches towards the Transformation of the Conflict

Different approaches have been used in the efforts towards the transformation of the Alavanyo - Nkonya conflict. Key amongst them are; cessation of violence before dialogue, dialogue, preventive diplomacy and

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periodic peace engagements, mediation, and formation of peace committees. These have been implemented separately or in combination.

Cessation of violence before dialogue

Before transformation could take place, conflicting parties have to ensure that violence stops so as to restore order for dialogue. This in a way calms the tension between the conflicting parties to set a good tone for dialogue because, during violent conflict, it becomes difficult if not impossible for dialogue to take place (Rieker & Thune, 2015). The narratives from the study participants followed the same sequence. That is, the parties to the conflict were conditioned by the third-parties; the military and the police to ensure that violence ceased before dialogue. The NPC worked closely with the military and the police for the cessation of violence so that the NPC can lead the dialogue. The cessation of the violence preceded dialogue and all other approaches. The expressions from the participants provide additional information about the cessation of violence prior to dialogue:

> *Well, in terms of the specific approaches, we ensured that the parties commit to stopping the fights and violence. And once the fighting stops, mediation and dialogue could be implemented.* [KII, Male,48 years; August, 2021].

> *Sometimes they come here to talk to the elders and the youth to calm the tension before they invite the community leaders for dialogue*. [KII, Male, 42 years; August, 2021]

The results about the cessation of violence before dialogue show that before mediation and dialogue could happen, there must be calm between the conflicting parties. The third-party actors have therefore adopted an approach of

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"cease-fire before dialogue" which enabled them to facilitate dialogue in readiness for transformation.

This reflects the role-approach and inter-related domains in the input-outcome transformation model, which explains that both the role of the actor domain and the approach domain are interdependent (Bracciotti, 2017). For instance, in the conflict between Liberia and Sierra Leone, it became apparent that before third-party could contribute to the transformation of the conflict, there was the need for a cease-fire between the conflicting parties to prepare the ground for peaceful negotiation and mediation (Okai et al, 2014; Maill & Wood House, 2001).

Dialogue

In the process of bringing transformation to a conflict, the third-parties used dialogue as an approach. This often preceded all other approaches. The third-party local actors that employed dialogue included the traditional authorities and the religious bodies. At the national level, the NPC was the third-party that employed dialogue as an approach to transform the conflict. The actors committed to listening to the conflicting parties to bring to the fore the grievances that were necessary to be discussed with them. Some of the participants had these to say:

> *The third-party actors [the traditional authorities, the religious bodies and the NPC] actually took it upon themselves, and with funding from local and international donors, to go to the area to dialogue between the two communities, and this, to some extent, reduced the tension between them.* [KII, Male, 46 years, August, 2021].

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> *They [third-party actors] dialogued with key sections of the two communities. They invited us to Ho and we all expressed our grievances and aspirations. The dialogue is still being used to continue with the transformation.* [KII, Female, 65 years, August, 2021]

Third-party actors – the traditional authorities, religious bodies, and the NPC who were involved in the conflict used dialogue by communicating between the two conflicting parties to bring them to the negotiating table to express their grievances about their needs, interest, and position in the conflict. The bottom-up approach also allowed conflicting parties to be heard on their right to a position and allowed the third-party to be informed about the intervention to be put in place to help resolve and transform the conflict.

Dialogue has become one of the common approaches to conflict transformation. In most instances, dialogue is carried out by formal negotiators who initiate a grassroot and a bottom-up approach towards transformation as typified by the conflict transformation pyramid model (Ledrach, 2007; Miall, 2001; Richmond, 2009; Uwazie, 2001). Transforming violent and protracted conflict is a complex one that needs a long-term transformational process. Third-party actors that involve themselves in conflict transformation need a context-specific intervention approach to help them transform the conflict. Arranging a dialogue always affords the negotiator an air of formality (Schultz, Hahn, Ituarte-Lima & Hällström, 2018). Often, the conflicting actors meet with the convener, who sometimes plays a combined but essential function – facilitation and dialogue (Armengol, 2013). The use of dialogue by third-parties in conflict transformation has seen a growing trend globally, with enormous success (Armengol, 2013).

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Preventive diplomacy and periodic peace engagements

Preventive diplomacy and periodic peace engagements have been used by various third-party interveners as an approach to transform conflict from violent states to non-violent ones (Murati, 2018; Zyck & Muggah, 2012). In the case of the Alavanyo-Nkonya conflict, the third parties that employed preventive diplomacy and periodic peace engagement as an approach to the transformation of the conflict include the traditional authorities, religious bodies, and the NPC. Preventive diplomacy is normally done to engage the conflicting parties to understand issues to help prevent escalation of the conflict. It also enables third-parties to identify early warning signs before violence. It was evident from the narratives of the key informants that the third-parties had and continue to use this approach in their efforts to transform the conflict.

> *Periodic peace engagements are done. An example is preventive diplomacy and confidence building. You can term the periodic meetings as inter-group contact engagements that are usually done especially during important days such as International Day of Peace which is held on the 21st of September every year.* [KII, Male, 48 years, August, 2021]

> *The NPC, for example, has been instrumental in engaging the two communities in preventive diplomacy where we bring the two communities together, for durbars, to interact and discuss with them issues that border on peace and the ultimate need to transform the conflict.* [KII, Male, 52 years, August, 2021]

From the results, preventive diplomacy and periodic engagements that the third-parties in the Alavanyo-Nkonya conflict engaged the conflicting parties in the effort to transform the conflict has contributed to the

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transformation process. Preventive diplomacy in this sense sees conflict transformation as a public process and therefore depends on the integration of official and non-official actors in the transformation process (Armengol, 2013). Preventive diplomacy involves other 'modified' third-party actors in transforming the conflict and preventing relapse (Cahill, 2013).

Understanding the drivers of peace, which are intrinsically regarded as the drivers of conflict, is critical for preventing conflict recurrence and enhancing conflict transformation. Also, it allows third-parties to help towards the establishment of the necessary conditions that could pertain to sustained peace (Zyck & Muggah, 2012). Notwithstanding the semantic disagreements over preventive diplomacy, its popularity in conflict management and prevention and transformation continue to grow since the first utterance of the phrase 'preventive diplomacy' in 1960 was made by the former UN Secretary-General, Dag Hammarskjöld (Lund, 2008).

Mediation

The participants highlighted in their narratives that mediation has been the most used approach by the third-parties in their effort to transform the Alavanyo-Nkonya conflict. The third-parties that used mediation as an approach towards transforming the conflict include; the traditional authorities, the religious bodies, and the NPC. For instance, from the onset of the conflict, mediation had been used by both formal and informal third-parties in their efforts towards the transformation of the conflict. Mediation, was thus, perceived as both a role and an approach. Mediation continues to be used by the third-parties as an approach to transform the conflict in the two communities to address the root causes of the conflict. The following statements are from the participants:

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> *Mediation has been one of the most influential approaches we [third-party actors] have used all these while. Actually, the mandate is not generally to settle issues but to go around to advocate for peace. The Peace Council, for instance, has done a lot; they have been visiting Nkonya and Alavanyo and they have been speaking to them about the need for peace, and have been organising workshops for the youth in Nkonya and Alavanyo.* [KII, Male, 48 years, August, 2021]

Mediation involves a process with multiple actors playing different but complementary roles. If comprehensive, the process will run better and will result in the desired effect. The mediator (the third-parties in this case) is a central figure in the process and could be seen as the facilitator too. It is however, important to acknowledge that the facilitator cannot act in isolation, but will need the help of people who also perform other tasks that are just as vital in a peace process, hence, the work of the various committees or local actors and the external actors.

The findings from the study confirm the view that mediation is a common approach used in conflict transformation in most communal conflicts in Africa in general and Ghana in particular. For instance, the Dagbon chieftaincy conflict was mediated by a committee of eminent chiefs chaired by the Asantehene (Ibrahim, 2018).

Mediation has been used in contemporary conflict transformation in various ethnic disputes in the country, and to Miall (2001), it continues to be an effective tool for conflict resolution and conflict transformation. What needs to be considered is that the focus of mediators in the transformation process is not to provide the conflicting parties with a solution, but rather, to assist them to

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find suitable solutions by employing technique-appropriate procedures. Thus, the core of conflict transformation is the mediation of third-parties (Armengol, 2013).

Formation of peace committees

The process of transformation also calls for grassroots participation by the conflicting parties. This has been one of the approaches used by third-parties in making sure that the local communities participate in the transformation process (Miall, 2001; Lederach, 2007). The results showed that the third-party interveners in the Alavanyo-Nkonya conflict have used the formation of two main peace committees as an approach to the transformation process. These are the Joint Consultative Committee comprising members from Alavanyo and Nkonya, and subsequently, the Insider-Mediation Committee in each of the two communities.

The main task was to contribute to the transformation of the conflict by identifying potential triggers and reporting to the security forces and the Regional Peace Council as soon as possible. Indeed, it was evident from the narratives that peace committees in the Alavanyo-Nkonya conflict were instrumental in efforts towards the transformation of the conflict. The participants confirmed the use of peace committees in this regard:

> *There has been an establishment of the Insider-Mediation Committee by the National Peace Council in the two communities to give early warning signs to the security forces and the Peace Council as well.* [KII, Male, 52 years, August, 2021]

> *As these two communities are engaged in the conflict, other parties also came in to see how best this could be transformed. And so there have*

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been various peace committees that have been formed to see to it that the local people participate in the peace process. We have the Joint Consultative-Mediation Committee which is made up of persons from both communities, and now, the Insider Mediation Committee which is in each of the communities. [KII, Male, 46 years, August, 2021].

These approaches adopted by the third-party actors as part of the efforts to transform the Alavanyo-Nkonya conflict are similar to what has been reported in the literature regarding the transformation of protracted conflict (Galtung, 2000; Mitchell 2008). However, in the case of the Alavanyo-Nkonya conflict, the approach has not been entirely successful since the conflict has not been completely transformed. This notwithstanding, theoretical expositions allude to the formation of peace committees as a basic, yet useful approach to dealing with community-based protracted conflicts (Haider, 2009; Pathfenholz, 2007).

Ayat (2018) has argued that the use of dialogue and mediation, for example, have fundamental and essential value to conflict transformation because they not only reduce violence and tension but also prepare the minds of the conflicting parties towards transformation. Also, in their study, Odendaal and Oliver (2008) expatiate the relevance of peace committees, especially in inter-community conflicts that have become protracted. They explained that such committees, when well-constituted, managed and sustained, present signals to the larger population about the need for peaceful co-existence even in times of conflict. There is evidence across the African continent to show that local peace committees are effective in grassroots conflict transformation and peacebuilding (Chivasa, 2019; Nganje, 2021; Omondi, 2021).

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Chapter Summary

In this chapter, the role of third-party intervention in the Alavanyo-Nkonya conflict was analysed. Issues such as the profile of third-party actors, (i.e., local actors, national actors, and international actors) and the specific roles played in the transformation of the conflict were presented. The roles include mediator, facilitator or facilitating, educational and training, and provision of funds. The Chapter also presented the approaches towards the transformation of the conflict. These were the cessation of violence before dialogue, dialogue, preventive diplomacy and periodic peace engagement, mediation, and formation of peace committees.

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CHAPTER SEVEN

TRANSFORMATION OF THE ALAVANYO-NKONYA CONFLICT

Introduction

Transformation of a conflict is a process and deals with how societies deal with their conflicts non-violently. Part of this process is building confidence and developing relationships between conflicting parties through third-party actor interventions to the position where conflict becomes non-violent (Lederach, 2007; Miall, 2001). The third-party actors in the present study have invested time and other resources in this process to achieve this outcome. This chapter presents the transformation process in the Alavanyo-Nkonya conflict in three sections – outcome of third-party intervention, challenges to the conflict transformation and alternative ways to transform the Alavanyo-Nkonya conflict.

Outcome of Third-Party Interventions

Empirically, conflict transformation in protracted conflicts all over the world is usually resource and time-consuming (Boege, 2006). Its focus on achieving a non-violent status in conflicted areas, however, becomes paramount irrespective of the cost implications. In the case of the Alavanyo-Nkonya conflict, the study participants consented that the extent of violence has subsided, at least, in the past five or more years. Renewed mindset, improved relationship, non-retaliatory character, and reduction in violence were the indicators of the outcome of the third-party intervention towards the transformation of the conflict.

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Change of mindset from violence towards peace

Mindset is generally conceptualised as the expression of a belief that an individual embraces (Seabrook, 2017). It could also be explained as a mental attitude or inclination (Schweingruber, 2006). There is therefore a change of mindset when an individual or a group of people embraces a new belief; thus, a reversal of an earlier standpoint or perspective. Concerning a change of mindset, the results show that peace workshops and activities of the peace committees have contributed to, and influenced a change of mindset of the conflicting parties particularly, and the general population. Some of the participants recounted that they have resolved not to engage in any violence, henceforth.

> *I think there [have] been positive outcomes. The efforts they make, I believe, have gone a long way to help build the peace we have been enjoying now. They organized workshops for the youth and for the chiefs and elders. This has contributed to calmness. After these workshops, we also come back and talk to our colleagues, and so since these are going on, we will not engage in any killings again. So, I think I will attribute it to the meetings, workshops, and efforts by these third-parties.* [IDI, Male, 45 years, Nkonya-Tayi, August, 2021]

> *Yes, the change is that we are not fighting again as we used to fight seriously, no shooting and the like because they are still talking to us to stop the fight but until government demarcate the boundaries, the conflict will not end.* [IDI, Male, 48 years, Alavanyo, August, 2021]

Whereas there has not been a total transformation in the Alavanyo-Nkonya conflict, there is a gradual change in mindset from violence to peace. This is a positive signal that the conflict could be transformed in the near future. Given

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this change in mindset, prominent members from either side of the conflict have taken steps to ensure that there is a shift from violence towards peace by fostering better inter-communal relationships. One of the participants explained further:

> *It is quite better now. It is improving because, along the line, we observed that there was complete mistrust between the two parties but gradually people from both sides can get into other communities and so on or even visit one or two people from time to time. So, it has improved… There is no longer appetite for violence.* [IDI, Male, 46 years, Nkonya-Tayi, August, 2021]

Conflict transformation deals with how society solves a violent conflict in a non-violent way. For a society to achieve this success, the involvement of third-party actors becomes necessary and the approaches used to intervene are even more crucial. Approaches such as mediation, dialogue, and preventive diplomacy to bring conflicting parties to a negotiating table to demystify certain perceptions they have about each other are also vital. The participants reiterated that the role of the third-parties, and with the help of "modified" third-party actors have contributed to transforming the conflict.

As explained by the multi-track diplomacy theory, conflict transformation is a public peace process. The nine tracks of the theory, and in this context, the first two, expatiate the use of interconnected contributions of individuals, institutions, and communities in playing the role of third-parties to operate together for a common goal of achieving peace (McDonald, 2012). The evidence from the study conforms with Miall's (2001) assertion that if conflicting parties coexist for more than seven years without violence, then there

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is a change of mindset from violence towards peace. Indeed, the Alavanyo-Nkonya conflict has not witnessed any major violence since the year 2014 when the last major violence took place.

Lederach, (2012) also posits that for conflict to be transformed, there should be a positive change in individual attitudes, behaviour, and improved relationships among others (see also Lange, 2000). It is evident from the results regarding renewed mindset that there is a gradual change in mindset regarding the use of violence as a way of transforming the conflict. This probably shows that the approaches used by third-parties (e.g., the formation of a peace committee, dialogue, preventive diplomacy and periodic engagement etc) in their attempts towards transforming the conflict might be achieving the desired result.

There is also documented evidence to show that transformation from a violent mindset towards peace involves a reorientation in viewpoint and direction even though people may still maintain their basic personality (Garfinkel, 2007). Thus, change in behaviour but identity remains the same. As such, transformation is not an event, but a process. This notwithstanding, change often depends on a relationship with a mentor or friend who supports and affirms peaceful behaviour (Garfinkel, 2007). In this context, the mentor or the friend is the third-party actor.

Renewed and improved relationship

One of the goals embedded in conflict transformation is relationship building. This is done by introducing mechanisms that help bring conflicting parties together to build and develop healthy relationships they had prior to the conflict (Miall, 2001; Lederach, 2007). Improved relationship between

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conflicting parties shows a sign of transformation. From the results, it was observed that this goal has somewhat been achieved as a result of the involvement of third-party actors.

Related to the change of mindset are renewed and improved relationships between the members of the conflicting communities. The participants mentioned that currently, there is, superficially, a renewed relationship that is being experienced in the communities. They emphasised that the youth have, to a large extent, realised that they could live peaceably with one another irrespective of the ethnic orientation of place of stay, diversity, or differences in cultural values. They mentioned that currently, they can organise and have games together in oneness and harmony. Some of them shared their observations:

> *I will say that the relationship has improved by 50 percent. We are good now – I was in Nkonya last weekend where I met some elders of the community [the other side of the conflict], we were happy and we ate and drank together, and they also promised to come to Alavanyo. So, I am hoping to welcome them. There is an improvement.* [IDI, Female, 52 years; August, 2021].

This assertion has been corroborated in the FGDs as participants highlighted that the activities of the third parties have contributed towards the renewed and improved relationship between the conflicting communities. They specifically mentioned that through the efforts of the third-parties, people from Alavanyo went to Nkonya for football games and vice versa. This has contributed to some sort of peace and harmony among the youth of both

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communities. The participants largely attributed the relative peace the communities are enjoying to the efforts of the third-parties.

> *On the part of the youth and women, the activities of the third-parties have contributed to oneness among them. We go there [Nkonya] to play football and they also come here [Alavanyo] too. This has contributed to some form of peace and harmony among the youth of both communities. We have learnt how to live at peace with each other and the importance of peace itself. At least, due to the intervention of third-parties, we are having relative peace because we now have peace of mind, and we were able to go about our everyday activities peacefully.* [FGD, Female, 45 years].

Evidence suggests that forging closer relationships between conflicting parties is a vital step towards conflict transformation. Some authors have argued that improved healthy or good relationships between conflicting parties are critical to conflict transformation in the sense that it contributes to the reduction in violence and sustains peace (Corbetta, 2014; Miall, 2012). Either way of its essence, Galtung and Burton (2000), have emphasised that all efforts towards conflict transformation should aim at establishing a cordial relationship between conflicting parties since that is the element that would provide the platform for such parties to engage even after the exit of the (external) third-party actors.

This position is supported by others who believe that for peace to prevail and be sustained, conflicting parties have to decide to build lasting good relations (Miall, 2001; Pathfenholz, 2014). Peace committees and peace workshops have been used to facilitate improved relationships among conflicting parties in this regard (Odendaal & Olivier, 2008). A cursory review

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of the conceptual framework shows a reflection of the position of these authors in the sense that, improved relationship results due to the roles and approaches of third-party actors (Bracciotti, 2017).

The events and effects of violent conflict and brittleness weaken and, in some instances, destroy the social fabric of societies. The (re)construction of trust, social capital, and interpersonal relationships have been frequently put forward in the literature as a characteristic of community-based approaches (Vervisch, Titeca, Vlassenroot & Braeckman, 2013). This could either be an explicit aim or a by-product of such approaches. The idea is that involvement in common activities, such as service delivery and community development ventures, and structured interaction among previously hostile communities will help to reframe negative perceptions, dismiss negative myths, and facilitate changes in perceptions and attitudes (Haider, 2011). It also provides a safe space to engage in dialogue that can potentially extend beyond the task at hand.

There is documented evidence that the creation of non-violent alternative forms of community organisation, and inclusive collaboration for planning and decision-making at the local level, have contributed to building social capital and bringing together former enemies in conflict-affected and fragile contexts (World Bank, 2006; Strand, 2003; Paffenholz, 2009). Also, the development of a shared vision, cooperation to achieve collective goals, and the creation of safe spaces for dialogue have the potential to lessen tensions, (re)establish interpersonal and collective trust and foster a sense of interdependence (World Bank, 2006; Haider, 2009; Samset & Madore, 2006). As reiterated by others too, acknowledgement of interdependence and interconnectedness are regarded as crucial for drifting away from hostile

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relationships to constructive ones and the development of reconciliatory attitudes (Haider, 2009; Pottebaum & Lee, 2007).

Non-retaliatory behaviour

The third observation by the participants to explain that there has been a sign of positive change is that the youth have learnt to be patient, and not to retaliate even when there is a trigger of conflict or violence. An experience was shared during the FGDs and IDIs which go to confirm that some form of non-retaliatory behaviour has been embraced in recent times which has accounted for the cessation of violence. The following quotes reflect this assertion:

> *We have really seen the positive impact of the peace committees. For instance, on one of the days, we came back from a workshop, and on our return, we heard gunshots. So, we started sharing what we have learnt from the workshop with the youth by calming them down to prevent them from retaliating. After sharing the knowledge and information with them none of our youth took to arms. When those who gave the gunshots [warning shots] realised that our youth did not retaliate, they also left without any further conflict.* [FGD, Male, 55 years, August 2021]

> *We are trying our best to solve the problem because once we can stay for some time without any shooting, it is good. That means we are having a solution to the conflict.* [IDI, Male, 78 years, August, 2021]

An example of a case of non-retaliatory behaviour was shared by one of the participants. The participant recounted:

> *There was a time we were returning from a workshop and we heard the sounds of gunshots in the forest near us. The youth have wanted to pick*

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up guns to go to the forest to engage them. But that would have meant an escalation of violence. Due to the things we've learnt at the peace workshops, I spoke with the youth and they calmed down. [IDI, Male, 48 years, August, 2021]

Dealing with violent conflict comes with retaliatory behaviours where conflicting parties revenge at the least provocation and opportunity available. Sometimes it is out of pain and hurt experienced in the previous clash which propels the retaliatory tendencies (Christensen, 2016; Lindner, 2009). For conflicting parties to ignore provocation from one side of the party which could have generated violence shows a positive sign of conflict transformation. This normally comes about as a result of training and educating the youth who constitute the largest part of the population in the community and are more likely to engage in violent clashes (Barnett & Adger, 2007; Urdal, 2006).

From the narratives on non-retaliatory behaviour, it could be deduced that the youth would have taken to violence if not for the education and training they had on conflict and its repercussion on their livelihoods. This goes to support the point Lederach (2002) raised about the use of education and training as an approach by third-parties in an effort to resolve and transform conflict. As evident in the conceptual framework, the role of education and training by the third-party actors serve as an interlinked catalyst with the various approaches to influence a non-retaliatory position (Bracciotti, 2017).

Reduction in violence

During violence, behaviours and attitudes are bound to change from positive to negative. Conflicting parties see themselves from a different lens as a result of violent conflict (Miall, 2001; Lederach, 2007). One of the levels of

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conflict transformation is to transform violent behaviours and attitudes of conflict actors. Thus, an improved relationship and non-retaliatory behaviour would lead to a reduction in violence (Botes, 2003; Miall, 2004; Lederach, 2007).

It emerged from the data (narratives from the study participants) that violent clashes have reduced. The participants explained that for more than half a decade there had not been violence; an indicator of a reduction in violent conflict behaviour. This outcome was believed to have been achieved largely through the contributions of the third-parties. Some of them had these to share:

> *The use of violence to perpetuate the conflict has reduced. This particular change of behaviour is a result of the contribution of the third-parties. We have not had any violence in a long while. Yes, it [effort] has affected the conflict in terms of the use of violence to perpetuate the conflict. This particular change I believe is a result of the efforts of third-parties.* [IDI, Female, 58 years, August 2021].

This claim was also highlighted in the FGDs where the study participants asserted that they have realised there has been some sort of a change in behaviour towards violence. Their claim was based on their observation that situations have changed as compared to the past as has been seven years since the last outbreak of violence. They referred to frequent outbreaks of violence mostly every year in the past. As such, they shared the view that the establishment of the mediating committees has been very helpful since there has not been any major outbreak of violence in the past seven years.

> *I have realised a transformation in the conflict because this was not the situation in the past, now we have stayed for almost six years without*

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hearing of any conflict. But in the past, we could not live for 2 years without a conflict between us; the maximum was a year and conflict would occur. So, I think the setup of this [mediating] committee is helping us. [FGD, Male, 62 years, August 2021]

The views and experiences shared by the participants are consistent with the literature. For instance, the findings of Botes (2014) and Gariba (2015) show that one of the characteristics associated with the transformation of protracted conflict is the reduction in acts of violent behaviour, usually for seven years. Indeed, in the case of the Alavanyo-Nkonya conflict, there has not been major violence since 2014. One point of the call to conflicting parties from third-party actors is to avoid the use of violence in settling their differences. To Botes (2014), it is one of the signals to determine the success of the transformation process.

Relative peace

Peace is perceived to be the most 'expensive commodity' sought after in every conflict that has lingered on for a long time. For peace to be achieved in conflict, there is the need to introduce interventions that will stop the violence for dialogue and mediation to take place. Peace is also a factor in community development and needs to be sought after. The SDGs place emphasis on this in Goal 16 (Gupta & Vegelin, 2016). Societies that are engulfed in violent conflict normally struggled in development and this affects their ability to create wealth (Bannon & Collier, 2003). From the results, it emerged that due to the various approaches and interventions implemented by the third-party actors in the conflict, there is now 'relative' peace. These were shared by some of the study participants:

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As I said, the [mediation] committees have contributed greatly to promoting peace that we are experiencing now between Nkonya and Alavanyo [the two main conflicting communities] because the training that we have acquired through this committee has helped in advocating for peace in the community. [KII, Female, 58 years, August 2021]

We have really seen a lot of transformation in the conflict, and I think living peacefully for this number of years without any incident of a gunshot, we must say we have some little peace. I believe if we continue to attend the workshops, even aside from the committee, and more youth are enrolled to be trained about the dangers of these conflicts, I think we will enjoy more peace. [IDI, Male, 62years, August, 2022]

The above views were also shared in the FGDs where it was accentuated that there has been relative peace and a lot of changes have taken place in the community as a result of the various interventions put forward by the third-party actors in their attempts to transform the Alavanyo-Nkonya conflict. The excerpts from the FGD highlight this assertion:

Oh yes! At first, no economic activities were going on: no farming activities, no business, and no movement, but since they [third-parties] came in, there is movement of the people; they can go to the farm. With the help of UNDP, the two communities are now back to their economic activities. So, a lot has changed in these two communities, and the youth who are willing to go back to school, they helped them, [youth] and trained them on conflict management. [FGD, Female, 45 years, August 2021]

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The ultimate goal of third-party actors has been categorised into three – short-term, medium-term and long-term sustainable peace (Lederach, 2007; Pathfenholz, 2014). The current study identifies the current outcome of 'relative' peace in the conflicting communities as medium-term peace in the sense that the relative peace has been enjoyed in the communities for seven years or more. As conceptualised in the framework, such an outcome provides evidence that there is a sign of positive transformation; a status that promises the success of third-party interventions in protracted or violent conflicts (Corbetta, 2001; Botes, 2014).

In the account of Miall (2001), early signals of peace, to a large extent, indicate that the parties to a conflict are willing to transform the conflict from a violent to a non-violent one (see Burton, 2000; Lederach, 2009). Again, as has been theorised, almost all the conflict resolution and transformation perspectives see peace as the basis for the continuation of intervention implementation to finally arrive at 'complete peace' (Burton, 2000; Miall, 2016; Paffenholz, 2014). The term conflict transformation embodies the processes of transition from violence to relatively non-destructive conduct and to a link between adversaries that is regarded as largely non-contentious. The actions of adversaries, as well as third-parties, can influence conflict transformations (Gleditsch & Beardsley, 2004).

Kriesberg (2011) puts forward two phases of conflict transformation. The first phase is the transition from destructive to constructive contention, often focusing on ending widespread violence. The second phase deals with fostering an enduring peaceful relationship, including recovering from the destructive conflict and reducing its underlying causes (Kriesberg, 2011). In the opinion of

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this study, and based on the available results, the Alavanyo-Nkonya conflict transformation could be situated within the first phase.

Challenges Faced by Third-Parties in Transforming the Alavanyo-Nkonya Conflict

Third-party actors in conflict transformation face challenges in their day-to-day process of transformation. In the present study, some challenges that have been identified include inadequate funds, inadequate community engagement, inadequate expertise on conflict transformation and attitudes of successive governments.

Inadequate funds

The results showed that although the conflicting parties may be willing to cooperate with interventions, inadequate funds to work with the people was a challenge. Third-parties normally rely on funding and support from a variety of sources including governments and non-governmental organisations within and outside the country to carry out various interventions intended to transform conflicts (Knoop, 2014). Funding, therefore, is an integral resource in third-party activities. It becomes difficult if not impossible for third-parties to implement the various intervention approaches if resources are limited.

Third-parties that face funding challenges find it difficult to carry out their interventions from short term to long term to achieve sustainable peace in conflict-ravaged settings (Osborn, 2013). The study participants explained that the roles and approaches of third-parties require financial efforts, and these, are often inadequate to sustain the interventions. This is how some of the participants put it:

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It is a challenge in terms of resources. You are looking at conflict transformation and that is a long-term venture which requires many resources to engage in it. Even the vehicle that we have provided to the peace committees, it is our responsibility to provide them with the necessary resources [fuel and maintenance] for them to do the work that we have assigned to them. But in some situations, they lack the fuel to move around and conduct inspections and monitoring and also engage the grassroots people. [KII, Male, 52 years, August 2021].

You know, doing this [intervention] involves money...that is the only challenge I see because we need the money to transport the people to come on board; I told you we have two football teams in the two communities, and they do play together and for that matter, we need transportation and other things and all of these involve money. [KII, Female, 50 years. August 2021]

Promoting peace in a conflict situation such as the Alavanyo-Nkonya conflict that has lingered for a long-time needs continuous provision of funds that will help third parties in their day-to-day activities towards transformation and peace cannot be underestimated. Having a sustained provision of funds is not always the case, especially in Africa, where other needs of the population are numerous. Third-parties that rely on government support sometimes have a challenge of getting cash flow to support them to intervene in violent conflicts and bring about transformation (Duah, 2014). For instance, the Mireku Mediation Committee's work was stalled and truncated due to inadequate funds (Agyemang-Duah, 2008; Gariba, 2015; Darkwa, Attuquayefio, & Yakohene, 2012). The evidence from this study points to such a challenge being

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encountered by third-parties in their effort to transform the Alavanyo-Nkonya conflict.

The conceptual framework provides a domain (monitoring and evaluation) which determines potential and existing challenges to be addressed. The framework explains the influence of challenges to the implementation of the approaches to conflict transformation. What is critical, however, is the extent of the challenge, and how immediately it could be addressed. The emergence of COVID-19 which has substantially eroded the purse of organisations and governments, and the impact of other cases such as climate change (Ibn-Mohammed, Mustapha, Godsell, Adamu, Babatunde, Akintade & Koh, 2021; Farid, Keen, Papaioannou, Parry, Pattillo & Ter-Martirosyan, 2016) and the Russia-Ukraine war (van Bergeijk, 2022), alternative approaches to fund interventions in conflicts such as the Alavanyo-Nkonya need immediate attention.

Inadequate personnel for community engagement

Engaging conflicting parties with the various approaches by third-parties is one of the key characteristics of resolving and transforming protracted conflict. Frequent third-party and conflicting-party engagement builds confidence and trusts in conflicting parties to participate in an ongoing dialogue for transformation (Haider, 2009; Pathfenholz, 2007).

The study participants shared the assertion that continuous dialogue is helpful to continue to calm tension and boost confidence in the ongoing transformation. However, they indicated that this is not done regularly by the third-parties due to inadequate personnel on the field. To the participants, this

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affects the pace of the process of the transformation. This was recorded during a KII interview:

> *Ideally, they should have some community engagements every month to ensure that the people are responding positively to the interventions. But because we are ill-resourced, we are unable to do that. When you go to the Volta Regional Office [Peace Council], it is only about two staff, and I guess a driver or so. This poses a challenge to meeting regularly to organise interactions with the people in the communities.* [KII, Male, 48 years; August, 2021]

Human resource in the area of qualified personnel to carry out intervention is critical in all conflict resolution and transformation. In developing third-party intervention, both local and national (with international) actors prepare to help carry out community-to-community engagements especially if there is the need to meet regularly to discuss issues that have to do with the interest and needs of conflicting parties, and how to come to a consensus on a roadmap towards transformation (Narh, Owusu, Oduro-Apeatu & Narh, 2015). In the works of Tsikata and Seini (2004), mediation as a third-party intervention in Ghana in the 1990s could not work due to inadequate personnel for continuous community engagement with the conflicting parties. The theory of multi-track diplomacy holds the view that conflict transformation is a public peace process and it calls for personnel from all levels of society to help resolve and transform conflict.

One way through which community engagement can bring about lasting peace is the establishment of communication between the conflicting parties (the people of Alavanyo and Nkonya, in this instance). The connections between

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community engagements through communication and conflict resolution cannot be overstated. Dumlao highlights that people use communication to express struggles, offer details from a given perspective, learn from each other, generate workable solutions, and co-create change (Dumlao, 2018). Similarly, it has been pointed out that communication behaviour often creates conflict, reflects conflict, and, importantly, is the vehicle for productive or destructive management of conflict (Hocker & Wilmot, 2014; Matyók & Kellett, 2017). Given the challenge of inadequate personnel for community engagement in the present study, it presents a threat to total transformation.

Inadequate expertise

Third-parties to a protracted conflict transformation are usually actors with expertise and experience. These are needed to understand the contextual issues and inherent dynamics of the conflict (Corbetta, 2014; Fisher, 2005). It emerged from the results that some of the third-parties, particularly the local actors, had inadequate expertise and experience in conflict transformation. Participants frequently mentioned this challenge during the discussions. They explained that persons with some kind of a recognised status were engaged as third-party actors although they had no expertise in the field of third-party activism.

The FGD discussants also shared the same view that many of the third-parties did not have the requisite expertise to deal with the conflict towards complete transformation. For example, they mentioned that the fact that someone is a clergyman did not necessarily mean such a person is an expert in dialogue and mediation. To them, the members of the mediating committee

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should have an in-depth understanding of mediation, dialogue, and conflict transformation, as well as an appreciation of policies to help in the processes.

> *The sad thing is that, if you are a member of the clergy, it doesn't make you an expert in dialogue and mediation. There is a need for them to understand policies to help in the dialogue and mediation. It is something that should be learnt.* [FGD, Female, 55 years, August 2021]

> *The late Vice President, Amissah Arthur once came to Kpando and unilaterally made one of the chiefs a mediator. But we the people of Alavanyo realised that the people of Nkonya will not accept and respect that 'mediator' because he is not gazetted, and hence, does not qualify to mediate between the two communities.* [FGD, Male, 56 years]

Conflict transformation is a specialised field, and therefore, requires specialised skills and expertise. The concern surrounding the level of expertise of local third-parties has been raised in the available literature as well, especially in the area of mediation and negotiation (Okai 2014). It is argued that some lack the capacity to engage in mediation and negotiation. Botes (2014), for instance, argues that a couple of conflicts have not been transformed due to inadequate expertise and experience of the third-party actors (see also Corbetta, 2014; Miall, 2001). With respect to the conceptual framework, the actors' environment, which comprises their knowledge, skills and experience is key to the development, use and implementation of interventions, as well as monitoring the process to assess it to put in place measures towards complete transformation and sustainable peace (Bracciotti 2017; Lederach, 2009; Miall, 2004; Paffenholz, 2013).

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Attitudes of successive governments

Third-parties from the wing of government have been accused of not being proactive in implementing rulings and recommendations related to the Alavanyo-Nkonya conflict. The study participants pointed out that sometimes 'government third-parties' do not give a clear indication of how rulings and recommendations should be implemented. One of the members of the insider mediation committee and one of the key informants had this to say:

> *This issue has been taken to court for rulings several times, but it becomes difficult to implement the ruling by the government. Perhaps one side is not willing to accept the outcome of the ruling.* [KII, Male, 48 years, August 2021]

A committee member in an FGD also corroborated this assertion:

> *Not being firm is one of the challenges we find with the government. I said earlier that, when one party does not agree with the plans of the government, then government discontinues its plans. It must not be so. The government has the authority and should not deviate from implementing its own plans.* [FGD, Male, 72 years, August 2021]

These challenges concerning recommendations by third parties to the government have not been without difficulties. There had been instances where one of the conflicting parties questioned the recommendations by third-parties to the government for implementation. It was explained by the study participants that whenever recommendations went in favour of one party, the other party opposed them citing biases from the third-party actors. This, in a way, has affected the efforts of third-parties towards the transformation of the conflict.

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Financial, personnel and governmental issues have also been highlighted as challenges for governments to implement recommendations. This happens in a way where governments lack commitments in the area of funds and personnel to implement recommendations. These challenges have also been recorded in the studies on the following conflicts: the Kenya-Somalia Maritime conflict and Kenya-Somalia Border Conflict (Dimissie, 2021; E-Gent & Shannon, 2011).

These challenges are prevalent in developing countries, especially in sub-Saharan Africa where there are inadequate funds to address myriad concerns including diseases and poverty. Perhaps, this explains one of the reasons for inadequate funds to also train and equip third-parties, both locally and nationally, to effectively sustain the conflict transformation activities and programmes.

The conceptual framework for the study equally outlines challenges and explains their impacts on the transformation of the conflict. The framework explains that there are expected challenges, and these challenges tend to slow the progress of conflict transformation (Lederach, 2007; Miall, 2001). The role and application of the monitoring component of the framework are to assess the transformation process (actor environment, input, and process variants), identify outcomes and challenges, revise the process if necessary, and proffer possible alternative ways to complement the transformation process (Miall, 2004; Williamson, 2004).

Views of Participants on Alternative Ways of Transforming the Conflict

Many of today's protracted conflicts have seen the conventional approaches to resolution (Broke-Utne, 2001; Uwazie, 2011) and the transformation of many conflicts (Miall. 2004; Dudouet, 2006). However, the

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argument that ways of conflict resolution and transformation are not exhaustive and that alternative ways beyond the conventional approaches should be explored to augment the status quo or replace it has been raised in the literature (Ramsbotham, Miall & Woodhouse, 2011). Three alternative ways to complement the existing approaches emerged in the data. These are victim-centred approaches, the development of a roadmap to complete peace, and the use of contested land (source of the conflict) for development.

Victim-centred conflict transformation

Conflict transformation has to do with re-establishing the behaviours and relationships that existed before conflict. During conflict or aftermath, people get victimised, injured, and lose their lives. The principle of a victim-centred approach to conflict transformation has been echoed in contemporary conflict studies (Robins, 2011). The victim-centred approach is an attempt to place the victim at the centre of conflict transformational intervention, especially in response to their needs and their psycho-social needs. A victim-centred approach thus requires a process either of broad consultation with victims or for victims and their representatives to be engaged at all levels of the planning and implementation of transformational interventions (Robins, 2011; Robins, 2012).

As part of transforming the conflict, the study participants suggested that the process should also focus on and target those who have suffered any kind of injustice or pain as a result of the conflict with specific intervention needs. They consented that the state could support and play an instrumental role in this regard. This was illustrated by some of the participants.

> *... So, I raised the point that people who suffered harm and injuries are less likely to be open to conflict transformation. But it is the state that*

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can handle such matters. And when we consider that, we are looking at retributive justice; punishing those who were participants in the violent acts. But this has not been done for some time. All I am saying is that we need to move beyond that and look at victim-centred conflict transformation approaches. [KII, Male, 52 years, August. 2021]

Well, I believe people who have suffered some injustice, injuries or death, that is, in the family from both sides could have little support from, maybe, the government or any grouping to alleviate the pain and the suffering of the family. I believe this will go a long way to transform the conflict... [KII. Male, 48 years, August. 2021]

Victim-centred approach to protracted conflict transformation has been considered one of the effective ways to contribute to sustainable peace (Robins, 2011; Zehr, 2004). Despite its main critique being how to satisfy adequately (materially and psychologically) persons that have received injustice, lost loved ones, and experienced injuries and pain (Sullivan & Tift, 2001), its associated benefits related to peace are priceless (Robins, 2011; Theissen, 2004).

Third-party actors usually employ a victim-centred approach in protracted conflicts. For example, financial compensation and psychosocial support were provided to victims who suffered various pain, injuries, and loss of families in Boran and Garri in Ethiopia, and to Whites and Blacks in South Africa (Edossa et al., 2005; Leod, 2015). It is believed that this approach reduced tensions, curbed potential reprisal actions, and sustained peace in these countries (Edossa et al., 2005; Leod, 2015). The principal role of victims in the mechanisms that underpin contemporary transitional justice is in the giving of testimony. Whilst this can spur victims' support drive, as it happened in South

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Africa, testifying is an essentially passive interaction that can only involve a minority of victims (ISS, 2020).

Robins (2010) had earlier suggested that the mobilisation of victims is a strategy that will increase their participation in the transitional process and empower them. This, according to him, will promote the creation of a transitional justice that is not violation and perpetrator-centred, but one that is victim-centred and addresses the histories of marginalisation that define the lives of the excluded (Robins, 2010).

Development of a roadmap by the government

A roadmap to conflict transformation has been used severally by third-party interveners in conflict. It helps the third-parties and conflicting parties to be expectant and to be focused on the goals and outcome of the transformation process (Diamond & McDonalds, 1996). Developing road maps towards transformation gives both third-parties and conflicting parties a tentative plan to follow with interventions. This assertion was corroborated by the participants. They explained that such a roadmap would make all persons focus on one direction to achieve the desired intention.

> *The government should hold its position firmly and do what is needed. There should be an action plan. They should not politicise this conflict. It involves lives and properties.* [KII, 48 years, August. 2021]

> *The government must reconsider the recommendations that were made earlier and come out with a concrete solution concerning measures that can be taken with regard to the dispute. Such a plan will make all of us focus on one direction.* [KII, 48 years, August. 2021]

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History concerning transforming protracted conflicts has followed a road map. The need to formulate a comprehensive roadmap by the governments will, in this case, help the conflicting parties to be assured of the way forward towards the transformation of the Alavanyo - Nkonya conflict. The Dagbon crisis, for instance, achieved some level of transformation after a roadmap was developed, implemented, and monitored until peace was achieved (Ibrahim, 2018). Elsewhere, the use of transformation roadmaps has been central in transforming protracted conflict and promoting peace (Brock-Utne, 2001; Edossa et al., 2005).

Lessons can also be learnt from the conflict resolution strategy in northern Ghana which was partly successful due to the development of a clear roadmap to guide the process. The roadmap suggests strategies and mechanisms to reduce conflict, encourage peaceful co-existence and address historical and other pertinent issues that damaged the fragile peace occasionally in the northern part of Ghana (Ibrahim, 2018; Kaye & Béland, 2009). Again, the roadmap put forward actions that could assist in creating the needed positive image and perspectives about northern Ghana with the capacity to attract investments and for the productive use of its vast discovered and yet-to-be-discovered natural resources, agricultural and tourism potentials (Star Ghana Foundation, 2021).

Use of the disputed land for developmental activities

The use of the disputed land by the government of Ghana for developmental projects also came up in the data analyses. Most of the study participants shared the view that the disputed land should be taken over completely by the government and developed into a project such as a factory

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that will benefit both communities. This observation is captured in the following excerpts:

> *The disputed land should be used for something meaningful that could benefit the two parties. Government should become the owner of the disputed land*. [IDI, Male, 66 years, August, 2021]
>
> *The disputed land should be used to establish some industries that could benefit the two parties. These industries can employ the youth who are mostly unemployed and constitute the majority of the population to reduce the incidence of violence.* [KII, Male, 62 years; August, 2021]

Violent conflict involves the destruction of life, health, property, infrastructure and institutions. These losses as a result of conflict can in a way be averted by undertaking a developmental project that will benefit the conflicting parties. Development is inherently a conflictual process and forms part of third-party intervention toward conflict resolution and transformation. The participants' suggested alternative ways to complement the existing approaches draw on the use of the disputed land for a project that will possibly generate jobs for the youth since they form the majority of people in the communities. Whereas this suggestion from the participants may resonate well, it is also important to note that the usage of such a developmental project may be contested, especially if the conflict has not been completely transformed. Indeed, there is documented evidence of delays and conflicts over construction projects due to disagreements with siting of projects, ownership, change orders, and lack of communication/poor relationship (Tariq & Safdar Gardezi, 2023).

Notwithstanding, the suggestion echoes the idea that the *devil finds jobs for an idle hand*. The idea also resonates in most of the development theories,

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models and paradigms including the conflict transformation theory (Boone, 2019; Boege, 2006; Miall, 2004), and Arnstein's ladder of citizen's participation model (Theyyan, 2018; Millar, 2010) which respectively, advocates for addressing the root cause of a given conflict toward transformation, and the involvement of all persons to own any developmental interventions. These theoretical frameworks and models emphasise the role of local people in assessing and identifying their needs and leading the process to implement them according to their contextual characteristics.

As represented in the conceptual framework for this study, the monitoring component is critical to ensuring that the input and process components of the framework lead to the desired outcome. As stated earlier, it assesses these other variants in the transformation process and, where necessary, revises them (input and implementation processes, or even the actors' environment) accordingly, or introduces alternative approaches and interventions (Miall, 2004; Boege, 2006).

Chapter Summary

The Alavanyo-Nkonya conflict has witnessed attempts by several third-party actors – local, national, and international aimed at transforming the conflict. These actors include; local/traditional authorities, religious bodies, government, civil society organisations (CSOs), as well as private and non-governmental organisations. The local actors/ traditional authorities' involvement date back to the onset of the conflict. They have most of the time relied on mediation and preventive diplomacy as an approach for their resolution and transformation of the conflict. Mediation has been the most common approach used by local and traditional authorities in the resolution and efforts

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towards the transformation of the Alavanyo-Nkonya conflict. This approach seems to be working for now since the conflict had been dormant for over seven years now.

The governmental actors/ national actors comprise the National Peace Council (NPC) and the military who have also contributed in diverse ways in efforts towards transforming the conflict. The NPC both at the national and the regional level continue to use mediation and the formation of peace committees with the two conflicting parties as their main approach towards the transformation of the conflict. They have relied on bringing the people together with the use of peace committees in the respective conflicting communities where they meet to dialogue and mediate between the two conflicting parties to restore peace and transform the aged-old conflict in the two communities. They have to some extent through the use of the formation of peace committees and mediation brought some level of transformation to the conflict.

The civil society organisation (CSOs), as well as private and non-governmental organisations, have also contributed towards the transformation of the conflict. They provide funds to the committees and facilitate/train community members on peace with the overall goal of transforming the conflict.

Given the lessons learnt from the third-parties attempt towards conflict transformation in the Alavanyo-Nkonya conflict, one could argue that the best third-party in a protracted conflict is the local actors. Here, the specific local third-party actor that was able to achieve the current relative peace is the Insider Mediation Committee (IMC). The IMCs are made up of persons with varied backgrounds – politics, education, business, agriculture etc. Unlike the Joint Consultative Committee, the IMCs are made up of exclusively people from

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either of the conflicting community. Perhaps, this is why it was relatively effective in transforming the conflict. When local people are at the forefront of the conflict transformation process, they may be more committed to their efforts. The main approach used by the IMC are mediation and dialogue, which has so far seemed effective in transforming the conflict.

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CHAPTER EIGHT

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Introduction

Globally, the quest for sustainable peace and development continues with efforts from third-party actors, including governments and international organisations, who play diverse roles. Since the end of the cold war, governments and non-governmental institutions have increasingly intervened in conflicts. In Ghana, third-party actors continue to intervene in violent conflicts to transform them and establish peaceful societies.

Third-party actors from government agencies, civil societies and conflicting parties have all contributed and continue to contribute toward conflict transformation in Ghana. One such conflict is the century-old Alavanyo-Nkonya conflict which has not only become protracted but has also become difficult to resolve. With the focus now shifted from resolution to conflict transformation, this study was conducted specifically to:

1. explore the temporal dynamics of the Alavanyo-Nkonya conflict;
2. examine the approaches used by third-parties in the Alavanyo-Nkonya conflict;
3. analyse the outcome of third-party interventions in the conflict transformation;
4. explore alternative ways of transforming the conflicts.

This chapter focuses on three main sections. The first section presents the summary of the study including the main findings. The conclusions of the study are presented in the second section These are based on the objectives and the results of the study. The recommendations of the study, which are in line

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with the conclusions that are drawn based on the findings of the study are presented in the last section.

Summary of Key Findings

The study revealed that the Alavanyo-Nkonya conflict started as a result of a land dispute between the people of Alavanyo-Kpeme of the Volta region and Nkonya-Tayi, now in the Oti Region. The conflict started about a century ago over a piece of land and has since then witnessed frequent eruptions of violence and hostility. Apart from the land as the root cause of the conflict, the dynamics of the conflict have changed from between two families to the entire traditional areas of Alavanyo-Nkonya communities, and even beyond, affecting social and economic relationships in the communities. Even though a piece of land was the root cause of the conflict, access to water resources on the disputed land has been a trigger at some point in the conflict.

Three main reasons accounted for the protraction of the conflict, dragging the conflict for a longer period. These are trust issues, perceived injustice, and non-implementation of third-party recommendations. The trust issues stemmed from both the third-party actors and from conflicting parties while the perceived injustice had led to occasional triggers and conflict, thereby, contributing to the protraction of the conflict. Finally, the implementation of third-party recommendations did not meet the expectations of the conflicting parties, hence, the continuation of violence anytime there is a trigger.

The Alavanyo-Nkonya conflict, since its first occurrence as a border dispute between the people of Alavanyo-Kpeme and Nkonya-Tayi, has broadened its hostility to Alavanyo-Nkonya, and across the regions and beyond to include natives of both communities living outside the country who have

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become part of the conflict mainly through financing for arms and ammunition for those back at home. The conflict has, therefore, extended from being a resource conflict to an ethnic-resource conflict.

The third-party actors comprised local, national, and international actors. The local actors included the individuals (both neutral and non-neutral) who in one way or the other have contributed to the transformation of the conflict. The national actors were the governments and their agencies together with non-governmental organisations. The international actors included international agencies such as UNDP, GIZ, the Japanese Embassy and the Commonwealth. These actors have played the role of mediators, negotiators, financiers, and resource persons.

The transformation approaches they adopted are mediation, facilitation, education, and training and provision of funds for the day-to-day activities of the transformation process. In the process, cessation of violence before, dialogue, formation of peace committees, preventive diplomacy and periodic engagements were applied. However, inadequate funds, inadequate personnel for community engagement, inadequate expertise, and failure of successive governments to enforce court rulings are among the challenges faced by third-parties in their efforts toward conflict transformation in the Alavanyo-Nkonya conflict.

The outcomes of the third-party intervention are a change of mindset, renewed and improved relationships, non-retaliatory behaviours, reduction in violent acts and relative peace as a result of third-party intervention processes. These were achieved by the application of third-party approaches used in the transformation processes. The alternative ways suggested to complement the

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existing outcome are the adoption of a victim-centred approach to focus on the social, psychological and material needs of victims of the conflict; using the disputed land for developmental projects that would benefit the conflicting communities; and the development of a road map toward the transformation of the conflict.

Conclusion

The study draws four conclusions based on the findings of the study: The dynamics of the conflict have changed in terms of intensity, scope, and coverage. Its intensity relates to the protracted nature which evolved from a resource dimension to an ethno-resource state. The scope also encompasses primary, secondary, and tertiary conflict actors with respective interests, and the coverage has broadened in terms of space and location. Other factors that drive the dynamics are trust issues, perceived injustice, and non-implementation of recommendations by third-party.

Third-party actors comprised both internal and external individuals and organisations who have and continue to play diverse roles in the transformation process to change the dynamics of the conflict from a violent to a non-violent one. Approaches such as mediation, peace committees and continuous engagement with the conflicting parties have been employed with the participation of the grassroots.

The third-party interventions have led to some positive outcomes such as a change in violent behaviours, improved relationships, and relative peace in the communities. These notwithstanding, there are challenges such as inadequate funds, inadequate personnel for community engagement and inadequate expertise that the third-party actors faced.

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Three alternative ways to enhance the transformation of the century-old Alavanyo-Nkonya conflict are a victim-centred approach, use of the land (source of the conflict) for development, and the development of a roadmap towards complete peace.

Recommendations

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

1. The third-parties need to address the issues of trust, perceived injustice, and non-implementation of recommendations. Specifically, the personnel involved in the transformation need to be retrained, and efforts put in place by the third-party actors, including governmental actors, to deal with the issue of trust. To realise this, constant engagements and transparency in all actions/activities are critical.
2. There should be a conscious effort by the local third-party actors through intense public education using local platforms to explain and conscientise the conflicting parties and the general citizenry to correct the perceived injustice. This could be achieved through the adoption of a neutral posture by the local and national third-parties.
3. The government, together with the other national and international third-party actors could review and consider alternative and sustainable sources of funds locally and internationally, to sustain and expand the process and activities that have contributed to the relative peace in the conflicting communities. Specifically, an appeal could be made to individuals on both sides of the conflict, especially,

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those who commit funds to the conflict to instead channel such resources into a peaceful and transformative process. These persons could equally be targeted as part of the audience for transformation.

4. The third-parties (local, national, international) should take advantage of the relative peace currently prevailing in the conflicting area to intensify efforts to completely transform the conflict. International third parties such as the GIZ should work more closely with the local third parties towards a total transformation of the conflict.
5. The third-parties could review the alternative ways suggested – a victim-centred approach to transformation, use of the disputed land for mutually beneficial development projects, the development of a roadmap, and to implement those that could be applied in the short, medium, and long-term.

Contribution to Knowledge

The study has deepened the understanding of the dynamics of the Alavanyo-Nkonya conflict in terms of intensity, scope and coverage, the roles of third-parties and the outcome of the transformation. Additionally, the study has introduced alternative ways to complement the transformation process – a victim-centred approach, the use of the disputed land for mutually beneficial development projects, and the development of a conflict transformation roadmap.

Theoretically, the study has added to the relevance of the conflict transformation theory and indigenous peace-making theory in understanding protracted social conflicts. For instance, the position of the conflict

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transformation theory which highlights the need to address short-term conflict management and long-term relationship building (see Galtung, 2000), has been found to be critical in the present study. Whereas the theory posits that interventions should focus on coordinating external peace efforts and supporting internal actors, it was however silent on which of them should take precedence over the other. It was evident from the present study that when the local actors (conflicting parties) are at the forefront of the transformation process, it is likely to achieve the desired outcome. The relative peace currently being experienced in the study area has been accredited to the insider mediation committees (IMCs). In this vein, the present study contributes to the theory by adding the "forefront role" of the local actors to the process of transformation.

The major tenet of the indigenous peace-making theory is on rebuilding broken relationships, correcting wrongs, and restoring justice. However, the theory does not specifically state the means through which these can be achieved. Evidence from the present study showed that broken relationships can be rebuilt through attending social events such as funerals, church, and games together. Restoring justice can be achieved by exposing perpetrators to violence and making them responsible for their actions. As such, this study has enhanced the understanding of the theory by explaining the tenets using empirical evidence.

Recommendation for Further Research

Further research could focus on the role and interests of secondary conflict actors, the extent to which their direct and/or indirect participation has prolonged the conflict, and how they could serve as third-party actors.

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Future studies could also explore the interrelationship between and among the various third-party actors and how that can be leveraged towards the complete transformation of the conflict.

The present study identified the various approaches adopted by the third parties – mediation, facilitation, and education. Also, the study documented specific processes undertaken by the third parties in their efforts towards transformation – cessation of violence before dialogue, formation of peace committees, periodic engagements etc. What is not covered in the present study is the link between the approaches and the process and how they can be combined appropriately to achieve the desired outcome. Therefore, future studies should consider this direction to bring out the nuances to help understand conflict transformation better.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1: KEY INFORMANT INTERVIEW GUIDE

THIRD-PARTY INTERVENTION AND CONFLICT TRANSFORMATION IN THE ALAVANYO-NKONYA CONLFICT IN GHANA

Introduction: *this research is about third-party intervention and conflict transformation in the Alavanyo-Nkonya conflict in Ghana. This interview is purposely for research and the identity of the participant will be made confidential. You have been selected because of your expertise and involvement in the conflict transformation process.*

A TEMPORAY DYNAMICS OF THE NKONYA AND ALAVANYO CONFLICT

I will want us to start with the discussion about the general issues and temporal dynamics regarding the Nkonya and Alavanyo conflict.

1. What are the emergence of the conflict? What were the causes, and subsequently, related causes to the conflict?
    a. Who are the **parties** to the conflict, and how did they become parties to the conflict? [probe for how they become parties to the conflict]
    b. What are the **issues** in the conflict? [probe for the main issue during the conflict]
    c. What are the changes underpinning the conflict over time? Describe and explain what have changed and the reasons for the change(s).
2. Can you say that the conflict has been enlarged/broadened? If yes:
    a. How and in what manner did the conflict enlarge?
    b. What have accounted for the enlargement? [probe for reasons]
    c. What changes have occurred over time due to the enlargement of the conflict? [Probe for the introduction of third-party involvement]

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d. What Tactics and behavior have the parties used against each other over the period?

B ATTEMPTS BY THE THIRD-PARTY INTERVENTIONS IN THE CONFLICT

There are instances where there are attempts by third-party interventionists in conflict. I want us to discuss this issue with respect to the Alavanyo-Nkonya conflict.

3. Who are the third-parties who have engaged in the transformation of third-party intervention in Alavanyo-Nkonya conflict? Do you recall the involvement of other parties played in the conflict? If you do:
    a. Who are these third- parties? [Probe for internal and external third-party and their involvement]
    b. Who are the local, national and international third-party intervenors in the conflict?
    c. What have been their role in the conflict? [probe for change in roles over the years]
    d. Explore their activities over the years? [Probe for specific internal and external interventions]
    e. Outcome of their involvement [Probe for both positive and negative outcomes]
    f. Specific approaches that they have been undertaking in the conflict?
    g. What have been their successes/ failures and how did they overcome them?
4. Associated with the conflict? Individual involvement/ organization involvement
    a. Reasons for your involvement?
    b. Specific roles you played in the conflict?
    c. Challenges faced in the performance of your roles, and how did you address them?

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C THIRD-PARTY INTERVENORS AND CONFLICT TRANSFORMATION

The role of third-parties to conflicts are essentially, to transform the conflict from violent to non-violent ones. I will want us to discuss the extent to which the Nkonya-Alavanyo conflict has been transformed.

5. Have any changes occurred in the conflict over the years?
6. What will you say about the outcomes of the attempts by the third-parties to the conflict? [Probe for both positive and negative outcomes]
    a. How have these outcomes affected the conflict?
    b. Do you think these attempts have brought any changes to the conflict? If yes, please specify these changes. [Let the participant provide most-significant change stories]
    c. What can you say about the eventual outcome of the conflict?
7. What are the attempts that have been made in transforming the conflict in Alavanyo-Nkonya conflict?
   Did these attempts at conflict transformation work?
        i. What were the enablers? [Probe for both internal and external; tangible and intangible enablers]
        ii. What were the constraints at transformation?
8. At the moment, would you say that the conflict has been transformed? Why do you say so?
        a. What are the internal changes that have occurred within the conflicting parties? [probe for both positive and negative transformation]
        b. Have the main causes to the conflict been altered? If yes, kindly provide evidence to support this.
        c. Have the norms that the actors used to follow been redefined? If yes, do they currently follow the redefined norms? What can you say about the present relationship between the parties?
    d. Have the perceptions of the parties to the conflict changed? If yes, what is the prevailing evidence to show?

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D ALTERNATIVE WAYS OF TRANSFORMING THE CONLFICT

Finally, let's discuss alternative ways that could facilitate the transformation of the conflict.

9. What do you think can be done to positively transform the conflict? What is /are your reasons
    a. What do you think must be done differently to achieve total transformation of the conflict? How can this be done?
    b. What other new approaches to third-party intervention do you think could be implemented to transform the conflict.
10. Based on your experience, which alternative ways (including personnel and institutions) do you think can be adopted to ensure the total transformation of the conflict?
11. Any suggestion on the way forward towards transformation of the conflict?

CLOSING COURTESIES

I am very grateful to you for your valuable time spent with me and also sharing these rich experiences and knowledge with me. I may call on you again if other emerging issues about the subject come up.

Thank you very much.

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APPENDIX 2: FGD GUIDE

THIRD-PARTY INTERVENTION AND CONFLICT TRANSFORMATION IN THE ALAVANYO-NKONYA CONLFICT IN GHANA

Introduction: *This research is about third-party intervention and conflict transformation in the Alavanyo-Nkonya conflict in Ghana. The discussion is entirely for research purpose. There are no right or wrong answers. You are free to disagree with a participant's position or view. However, our aim is to obtain a perspective that reflects the group.*

To ensure anonymity and confidentiality, each of us will be given a unique ID (A,B,C,D,E, F, G) and that ID has to be quoted before a submission is made by a member of the group.

A TEMPORAY DYNAMICS OF THE NKONYA AND ALAVANYO CONFLICT

I will want us to start with the discussion about the general issues and temporal dynamics regarding the Alavanyo-Nkonya conflict.

1. Please let us talk about the emergence of the conflict. What were the causes, and subsequently the remote causes to the conflict?
    a. Can we now talk about the **parties** to the conflict, and how they become parties to the conflict? [probe for how they become parties to the conflict] *(Encourage as many participants as possible to provide inputs)*
    b. Please let us talk about the **issues** in the conflict? [probe for the main issue during the conflict]
    c. What are the changes underpinning the conflict over time? Please, let us describe and explain what have changed and the reasons for the change(s).

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2. Can we say that the conflict has been enlarged/broadened? If yes:
    a. How and in what ways has the conflict enlarge/broaden? *(Probe for scope)*
    b. What have accounted for the enlargement? [probe for reasons]
    c. What changes have occurred over time due to the enlargement of the conflict? [Probe for the introduction of third-party involvement]
    d. What tactics and behavior have the parties used against each other over the period? *(Encourage as many participants as possible to talk)*

B ATTEMPTS BY THE THIRD-PARTY INTERVENTIONS IN THE CONFLICT

There are instances where there are attempts by third-party interventionists in conflict. I want us to discuss this issue with respect to the Alavanyo-Nkonya conflict.

3. Who are the third-parties who have engaged in the transformation of third-party intervention in Alavanyo-Nkonya conflict? Please let us recall other parties who got involved in the transformational efforts of the conflict.
    a. Who are these third- parties? [Probe for internal and external third-party and their involvement]
    b. Who are the local, national and international third-party intervenors in the conflict?
    c. What have been their role in the conflict? [probe for change in roles over the years]
    d. Explore their activities over the years? [Probe for specific internal and external interventions]
    e. Outcome of their involvement [Probe for both positive and negative outcomes]
    f. Specific approaches that they have been undertaking in the conflict?
    g. What have been their successes/ failures and how did they overcome them?

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4. Who among us got associated with the conflict transformation process? *Individual involvement/ organization involvement etc.*
    e. Reasons for your involvement?
    f. Specific roles you played in the conflict?
    g. Challenges faced in the performance of your roles, and how did you address them?

C THIRD-PARTY INTERVENORS AND CONFLICT TRANSFORMATION

The role of third-parties in conflicts are essentially to transform the conflict from violent to non-violent ones. I will want us to discuss the extent to which the Alavanyo-Nkonya conflict has been transformed.

5. Please let us talk about the changes in the conflict over the years?

- Does that represent the views of the group or someone disagree with something or have something to add?

6. What will you say about the outcomes of the attempts by the third-parties to the conflict? [Probe for both positive and negative outcomes]

- Is that the perspective of the group? *Provide opportunities for those with dissenting views to provide details. Help the group to come close to a point of consensus.*
    a. How have these outcomes affected the conflict?
    b. Do we think these attempts have brought any changes to the conflict? If yes, what specifically are these changes. *[Let the participants provide most-significant change stories]*
    c. What can you say about the eventual **outcome** of the conflict? *[Encourage as many participants as much as possible to express their views]*

7. Let us talk about the attempts that have been made in transforming the Alavanyo-Nkonya conflict? Has these attempts at conflict transformation work?
        i. What were the enablers? [Probe for both internal and external; tangible and intangible enablers]
        ii. What were the constraints at transformation?

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8. At the moment, can we say that the conflict has been transformed? Why do we say so? *(Encourage many participants as much as possible to talk).*
    a. What are the internal changes that have occurred within the conflicting parties? [probe for both positive and negative transformation]. *Do we all agree to that? Does anyone have a different view?*
    b. Have the main causes to the conflict been altered? If yes, can we provide evidence to support this?
    c. Have the norms that the actors used to follow been re-defined? If yes, do they currently follow the redefined norms? What can we say about the present relationship between the parties?
    h. Have the perceptions of the parties to the conflict changed? If yes, what are the prevailing evidence to show? *(Remember to encourage as many participants as much as possible to talk).*

D ALTERNATIVE WAYS OF TRANSFORMING THE CONLFICT

Finally, let's discuss alternative ways that could facilitate the transformation of the conflict.

9. What do we think can be done to positively transform the conflict? What is /are your reasons? *Let each participant back his/her claim with reasons.*
    a. What do we think should be done differently to achieve total transformation of the conflict? How can this be done? *[Do we all agree with this perspective?]*
    b. What other new approaches to third-party intervention do we think could be implemented to transform the conflict.
10. Based on our experiences, which alternative ways (including personnel and institutions) do we think can be adopted to ensure the total transformation of the conflict? *(Encourage each participant to speak)*

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11. Any suggestion on the way forward towards transformation of the conflict?

CLOSING COURTESIES

I am very grateful to you all for your valuable time spent with me and also sharing these rich experiences and knowledge with me. I may call any of you again if other emerging issues about the subject come up.

Thank you very much.

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APPENDIX 3: IDI GUIDE

THIRD-PARTY INTERVENTION AND CONFLICT TRANSFORMATION IN THE ALAVANYO-NKONYA CONLFICT IN GHANA

***Introduction**: This research is about third-party intervention and conflict transformation in the Alavanyo-Nkonya conflict in Ghana. This interview is purposely for research and the identity of the participant will be made confidential. You have been selected because of you knowledge about the dynamics of the conflict and issues relating to its transformation.*

A TEMPORAY DYNAMICS OF THE NKONYA AND ALAVANYO CONFLICT

I will want us to start with the discussion about the general issues and temporal dynamics regarding the Alavanyo-Nkonya conflict. I want you to provide details of your narrative. You are reminded of your anonymity and confidentiality so feel free to express your views.

1. Can you recount to me what you know about the emergence of the Alavanyo-Nkonya conflict? What were the causes, and subsequently, related causes to the conflict?
    b. Who are the **parties** to the conflict, and how did they become parties to the conflict? [probe for how they become parties to the conflict]
    c. What are the **issues** in the conflict? [probe for the main issue during the conflict]
    d. What are the changes underpinning the conflict over time? Describe and explain what have changed and the reasons for the change(s).
2. Can you say that the conflict has been enlarged/broadened? If yes:
    e. How and in what ways has the conflict **enlarged?**
    f. What have accounted for the enlargement? [probe for reasons]
    g. What changes have occurred over time due to the enlargement of the conflict? [Probe for the introduction of third-party involvement]

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h. What Tactics and behavior have the parties used against each other over the period?

B ATTEMPTS BY THE THIRD-PARTY INTERVENTIONS IN THE CONFLICT

There are instances where there are attempts by third-party interventionists in conflict. I want us to discuss in details these issues with respect to the Alavanyo-Nkonya conflict.

3. Who are the third-parties who have engaged in the transformation of third-party intervention in Alavanyo-Nkonya conflict? Do you recall the involvement of other parties and the roles played in the conflict? If you do:
    i. Who are these third- parties? [Probe for internal and external third-party and their involvement]
    ii. Who are the local, national and international third-party intervenors in the conflict?
    iii. What have been their role(s) in the conflict? [probe for change in roles over the years]
    iv. What have been their activities over the years? *[Probe for specific internal and external interventions]*
    v. What has been the outcome of their involvement *[Probe for both positive and negative outcomes]*
    vi. Tell me about the specific approaches that they have undertook or has been undertaking in the conflict?
    vii. What have been their successes/ failures and how were they overcome?
4. Are you in anyway associated with the conflict? *Individual involvement/ organization involvement*
    i. Please can you tell me the reasons for your involvement?
    j. What are the specific roles you have played in the conflict?
    k. What challenges have you faced in the performance of your roles, and how did you address them? *(For each challenge*

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recounted, let the participant talk about how it was addressed)

C THIRD-PARTY INTERVENORS AND CONFLICT TRANSFORMATION

The role of third-parties to conflicts are essentially, to transform the conflict from violent to non-violent ones. I will want us to discuss the extent to which the Alavanyo-Nkonya conflict has been transformed.

5. Tell me about the changes in the conflict over the years?
6. What will you say about the outcomes of the attempts by the third-parties to the conflict? [Probe for both positive and negative outcomes]
    i. How have these outcomes affected the conflict?
    b. Do you think these attempts have brought any changes to the conflict? If yes, please specify these changes. [Let the participant provide most-significant change stories]
    c. What can you say about the eventual outcome of the conflict?

7. What are the attempts made in transforming the conflict in Alavanyo-Nkonya conflict?

- Has these attempts at conflict transformation work?
    i. What were the enablers? [Probe for both internal and external; tangible and intangible enablers]
    ii. What were the constraints at transformation?

8. At the moment, what can you say about the conflict transformation? Why do you say so?
    i. What are the internal changes that have occurred within the conflicting parties? *[probe for both positive and negative transformation]*
    ii. Have the main causes of the conflict been altered? If yes, kindly provide evidence to support this.
    iii. Have the norms that the actors used to follow been redefined? If yes, do they currently follow the redefined norms? What can you say about the present relationship between the parties?

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iv. Have the perceptions of the parties to the conflict changed? If yes, what is the prevailing evidence to show?

D ALTERNATIVE WAYS OF TRANSFORMING THE CONLFICT

Finally, let's discuss alternative ways that could facilitate the transformation of the conflict.

9. What do you think can be done to positively transform the conflict? What is /are your reasons
    a. What do you think must be done differently to achieve total transformation of the conflict? How can this be done?
    b. What other new approaches to third-party intervention do you think could be implemented to transform the conflict.
10. Based on your experience, which alternative ways (including personnel and institutions) do you think can be adopted to ensure the total transformation of the conflict?
11. Any suggestion on the way forward towards transformation of the conflict?

CLOSING COURTESIES

I am very grateful to you for your valuable time spent with me and also sharing these rich experiences and knowledge with me. I may call on you again if other emerging issues about the subject come up.

Thank you very much.

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