The Role of Communication in Conflict Management in Ghana A Case Study in Ejura – Sekyedumase District in the Ashanti Region of Ghana.

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DEDICATION

I dedicate this research project to my wife, Mavis and my two children, Currie and Kelvin and all my brothers and sisters who have contributed to my education.

Special dedication to Rev. and Mrs. Awortwi of Ghana for their help, encouragement and support during my education career.

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ABBREVIATIONS

DCE	District Chief Executive
MP	Member of Parliament
NCCE	National Commission for Civic Education
CHRAJ	Commission on Human Rights and Administrative Justice
DA	District Assembly
EC	Electoral Commission
DISEC	District Security Committee
NPP	New Patriotic Party
NDC	National Democratic Congress
FM	Frequency Modulation
GPRTU	Ghana Private Roads and Transport Union
NGO	Non – Governmental Organization
OAU	Organization of African Unity
NPI	Nairobi Peace Initiative
LCP	Local Capacity for Peace
GT	Ghanaian Times
CC	Christian Council
GPC	Ghana Pentecostal Council
AD	"Anno Domini" or "After Death"
TV	Television
PSC	Protracted Social Conflict
MCP	Manifest Conflict Process
AMPC	Aggressive Manifest Conflict Process

ABSTRACT

Ghana's current image of peace and stability is worthy of attention. Compared with its neighbours, Ghana seems to be going through a period of relative stability. Nevertheless the periodic flaring up of conflicts into serious violence has become a source of worry. The recent flaring up of conflicts along ethnic, political and religious lines in various communities in the Ghanaian society is a source of worry among responsible politicians and citizens as it could threaten the relative peace and stability that the country seems to be enjoying. This study seeks to identify the causes of conflict and the role of communication in managing such conflicts in Ghana with a case study in Ejura-Sekyedumase district of Ashanti region. The research analyzed the causes of conflict in the Ghanaian societies, the role communication play in managing conflicts and suggests possible measures for mediation.

Conflict Management, a communication skills approach, presents a communication skills approach toward managing conflicts. It analyses the role communication plays in exacerbating conflicts, and offers communication strategies which promote productive conflict management. Conflict management begins with an assessment of the sources of the conflict, the individual characters involved and their goals, and the communication environment. Parties to the conflict must acknowledge each other's perspective, and assume an attitude of cooperation and participation in the management process.

The way information is communicated can affect the transformation of conflict just as good and effective communication can promote peace, offensive or unclear communication can lead to the escalation of conflicts. The findings revealed that in situations of conflict, no matter the type, disputants have to watch what they say or write. Confrontational language or objectives be avoided as much as possible; rather, each party to the dispute must use language that leaves some room for peaceful settlement of the disputes. The use of unclear language as noted from the findings could lead to the escalation of conflicts. Therefore the parties to a dispute or conflict be made to select their language so that they are not misinterpreted.

Parties may take verbal and nonverbal action to advance their goal. The character of these verbal and nonverbal plays a crucial role in the development of the conflict. Conflict Management provides insight into the ways in which different styles of communication can either exacerbate or help to resolve conflicts.

To collect the empirical data, the case study which includes interviews from individual respondents and focus group discussions was employed. Checklists were developed to collect the data and finally the data analyzed qualitatively using stakeholder analysis and brainstorming.

It is surely easier to prevent a conflict than to stop it once it escalates into violence. This is a major lesson that, political leaders and religious leaders still find very difficult to learn as they go about manufacturing crises for generations yet unborn. Media reports of conflicts situation in Ghana have hardly changed since this period. A lot of biases and prejudices, which of course can only cause more problems, are brought to bear on news reporting in different parts of the country.

The study recommends that during festivals, the chiefs, elders and opinion leaders in the communities use the occasion as a platform to educate the people about the need for ethnic, political and religious tolerance. Politicians of the various political parties during campaigns use the platform to talk peace rather than division.

The empirical evidence of the study indicates that when communication increases or when communication decreases during conflict or crisis, once hostility becomes entrenched, channels of communication quickly degraded. Third parties are often effective at re-establishing channels of communication. It is, therefore, recommended that mediators become channel of communication between parties exploring reconciliation, negotiation, collaboration and dialogue during conflict management.

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

1.0   Background information of the thesis.

Conflict occurs between people in all kinds of human relationships and in all social settings. Because of the wide range of potential differences among people, the absence of conflict usually signals the absence of meaningful interaction. Conflict by itself is neither good nor bad. However, the manner in which conflict is handled determines whether it is constructive or destructive (Deutsch & Coleman, 2000). Conflict is defined as an incompatibility of goals or values between two or more parties in a relationship, combined with attempts to control each other and antagonistic feelings toward each other (Fisher, 1990). The incompatibility or difference may exist in reality or may only be perceived by the parties involved. Nonetheless, the opposing actions and the hostile emotions are very real hallmarks of human conflict. Conflict has the potential for either a great deal of destruction or much creativity and positive social change (Kriesberg, 1998). Therefore, it is essential to understand the basic processes of conflict so that we can work to maximize productive outcomes and minimize destructive ones. This paper will briefly describe some common causes of conflict, the role communication play and the general strategies of approaching conflict that are available.

Continuous deteriorating social and economic conditions as well as unstable political conditions in most African countries have been a source of worry to many responsible politicians and citizens, and have attracted prolific studies by many scholars (See for example, Bombade, 2007; Otite, 2000; Drucker-Brown, 1995; Konate, 2004; Tonah, 2007). This great challenge confronting the region has been attributed to violent ethnic and communal conflicts, which have destabilized many peaceful African countries in the past two decades. The West African sub-region has never been spared this conflict phenomenon. Countries like Liberia, Sierra Leone, Nigeria, Guinea and more recently Cote d'Ivoire in the sub-region have been overwhelmed with and weakened by violent conflict for the past two decades. Most of these conflicts began as internal strife among certain local communal groups or within regions and then spilled over the international borders, spreading in the neighbouring countries. The causes of ethnic conflicts are embedded in historical, socio-economic and political conditions, which motivate the protagonists in the early phases and in later conflict escalation.

Additionally, ethnicity plays a considerable role and sometimes becomes a dominant factor in these conflicts. What are other key factors in addition to ethnicity? Within this troubled region however, Ghana is accorded the image of a country of relative peace and stability. This image is reflected in its past peace-building role as the head of the sub regional economic body, the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), the African Union (AU), and the United Nations (UN) making it a popular venue for peace talks and accords, and other socio-economic and political negotiations for development and security. In spite of its accolade as a politically stable country, the country has been witnessing a series of long standing "tribal" (ethnic, family, ancestral, clannish) and communal conflicts, some of which have quite often resulted in violent confrontations leading to loss of lives and destruction of properties (Brukum, 1995; Tsikata and Seini, 2004; Bogner, 2000). This has become a source of great worry throughout the country.

Almost every community in Ghana has witnessed violent conflicts of any type – inter or intra ethnic conflicts, religious violence (between Islamic factions, Muslims and Christians and Christians and traditional religious groups), political violence between adherents of various political parties, industrial disputes between workers and employers. The most frequent, and by far the most destructive ones, are intra or inter ethnic conflicts. The most prominent of ethnic conflicts include the long established and by far the most devastating and extensive conflict between the Konkombas and the Nanumbas/Dagombas; the protracted Dagbon chieftaincy conflict, the Bawku chieftaincy conflict (currently ongoing), all of which are in northern Ghana. Nevertheless, in Ghana, unlike in other countries in the sub-region, most of these conflicts occur and are restricted to particular traditional areas or regions and have not directly escalated into nation-wide conflicts. But, many of these conflicts have been widely reported by the Ghanaian media and their impacts have been greatly felt by the citizenry and have been a source of worry throughout the country. It could

be pointed out, however, that though conflicts and violent conflicts in Ghana are generally similar to that of other countries in the sub-region, it can be generally concluded, though this will not be specifically investigated in this study, that the cases in Ghana have generally been on a relatively lower level of scale and intensity than others in the sub-region, probably, accounting for the relative peace and stability in Ghana. (See for example Tsikata and Seini, 2004)

The Ghanaian communities are rubbed by many conflict situations. This is because those responsible for the day-to-day affairs of the country are unprepared to handle conflict situations. The overall tone of communities in Ghana has often been characterized by conflicts. Conflict is not naturally bad, but it is the ways in which conflict is managed that determine its outcome. Conflict can play bigger part in all of our lives. It can happen at work, in school, at home, in neighbourhoods, and communities. Conflict in societies and communities can often lead to uncertainty, arguments, aggression, destruction and even violence. There are no winners in conflict of violence. To manage or prevent conflict, the first key is communication.

There are also several categories of localised conflicts in Ghana. Among them are inter-ethnic conflicts over land and political power, intra-ethnic disputes usually over succession to traditional political office or boundary disputes, and religious disputes between factions of Islam, Muslims and Christians, Christians and traditional religion supporters, and sometimes between Christians. Other conflicts involve political violence between supporters of various political factions and/or parties, and industrial disputes between workers and employers. Chieftaincy in Ghana is, however, at the centre of communal conflicts, particularly those related to ethnicity, succession to traditional political office and the struggle over land. The struggle over land and its control is also an important aspect of the ethnic conflict and identity politics. Land tenure and administration in Ghana have serious problems that have exacerbated land tenure insecurity and conflict.

1.1   Research Context

Almost every community in Ghana has witnessed violent conflicts of any type – inter or intra ethnic conflicts, religious violence (between Islamic factions, Muslims and Christians and Christians and traditional religious groups), political violence between adherents of various political parties and industrial disputes between workers and employers. Although Ghana is not a conflict country, however issues about access to and use of natural resources, appointments and elevation to chieftaincy, as well as the use and management of community resources by chiefs have led to a multitude of prolonged community level conflicts nation-wide. The overall tone of communities in Ghana has often been characterized by conflicts. The most frequent, and by far the most destructive and violent ones, are religious, intra and inter ethnic conflicts. These conflicts are usually over succession to traditional political offices or land boundary disputes. Conflict affects everyone. For some, conflicts can cause internal struggles.

A lot of the conflicts in our lives come from how we communicate with others. Ineffective communication creates conflict even in situations where there is no real "conflict issue" or disagreement about a substantive issue. Poor communication causes hurt feelings, anger, frustration, and tends to erode relationships, sometimes to the point where the relationship is not fixable. Many a times we call these situations personality conflicts, when in fact they are a result of poor communication. Therefore, to manage or prevent conflict, the first key is communication. It is upon this background that this thesis seeks to examine the causes of conflicts and the role of communication in managing or preventing conflicts in Ghanaian society.

1.2   Problem

In recent times, there have been many conflicts in communities of Ghana over the election of district chief executives, chieftaincy, ethnicity and religious violence in parts of the country. The recent disputes emerging from decentralization process, ethnic conflicts, religious violence, political violence between adherents of various political parties, industrial disputes between workers and employers in Ghana has been a source of concern and contention among the Ghanaian populace.

Ethnic conflicts and chieftaincy disputes have many bad effects on our country and communities; first, they lead to violence and loss of lives sometimes. Second, they cause division in communities which extended to educational system. Third, they retard development. Fourth, they tie up over-burdened and under-staffed judicial system. These are the issues that are to be explored in this study, in order to understand the causes of conflict and the role of communication in managing such conflicts in communities of Ghana, particularly inter or intra ethnic conflicts, religious and political violence, creation of new districts and election of chief executives in context of hobble decentralization process.

1.3   Research Objective

The objectives of this research are to;
1. examine the role of communication in managing conflict

2. identify the causes of conflict and

3. suggest possible measures for mediating conflicts in Ghana.

1.4   Main research questions and Sub questions

- What communication strategies are used in managing conflict?
  - What are the communication channels that are used in managing conflict in Ghana?
  - Which appropriate communication strategy should be employed in solving conflicts?

- What are the causes of conflict in Ghana?
  - What are the factors that lead to conflict?
  - What factors account for emergence or escalation of protracted nature of conflict?
  - How do political parties influence conflicts?

- What measures can be put in place to reduce conflict?
  - What are the approaches/strategies of managing conflict?
  - How did the community deal with conflicts?

1.5   Relevance of the study

Though there is existing divided sovereignty (the Chiefs and the State) in Ghana, much scholarly work has not been done on modern state expansion and its effect on the Chiefs (the traditional state). The study will contribute to academic knowledge in this field. It will highlight on interaction between local and state institutions generate and escalate conflict based on ethnic idioms. Certain measures will also be suggested for mediating such conflicts.

1.6   Overview of the study

For the analytical purpose and easy understanding of issues raised, the thesis is divided into six chapters. Each chapter focused on a series of the themes. Chapter one is an introductory part of the thesis. It provides information on the background of the study. It further discusses the research problem, research objectives, research questions and relevance of the study. Chapter two focuses on the explanation of the conceptual and theoretical framework within which the fieldwork empirical data are analyzed. In chapter three, the methodological framework within which the study is placed is presented. The presentation focuses on the fieldwork carried out to collect data for the study, types of data collected, methods, tools, procedures used in the data collection and steps taken in processing the data. The chapter also discussed fieldwork experiences and lessons learnt. Fourth chapter explain the description of the study area, including stakeholders involved in the study. The fifth chapter starts presenting the results which were collected from the interview during the case study. This information is presented theme by theme. It also deals with the discussion of findings. The study ends with chapter six on conclusion and recommendations pertaining to findings of the research.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0   Introduction

The theoretical framework that underpins this study is general conflict theory. But for the purpose of developing conceptual discussions based on my research topic, different concepts from more specific discipline-based theories that explain how conflicts generate will also be employed. These will include anthropological theories of ethnicity and structural and psycho-cultural theories that may help explain conflict. The chapter will begin with conceptual explanation of the term conflict. Many of the significant works on ethnicity are anthropologically oriented. Therefore basic insights from anthropology into kinship and its implications for community organization, ethnicity and the very nature of expression of local organization with modern state institutions will be discussed.

2.1   Conflict

Conflict is basically a struggle between individuals or groups over a range of issues such as scarce resource, claims to status, power and prestige, etc. Galtung, (1996) defines the term conflict generally as incompatibility of goals, or a clash of goals or 'mere' disagreement. Coser (1995) also defines social conflict broadly "as a struggle over values or claims to status, power and scarce resources, in which the aims of the conflicting parties are not only to gain the desired values, but also to neutralize, injure or eliminate their rivals. Such conflicts may take place between individuals, between collectives, or between individuals and collectives" (quoted in Tonah, 2007:11). Hagan, 1995 complemented this definition by pointing out that conflicts are not primarily aimed at eliminating the opponent, but rather serve "to determine the relative standing, status, or balance of power or share in scarce resources that divergent interest groups can secure in a given domain of competition. In this kind of conflict, a party may lose a position of dominance but may not be totally denied, or left behind of status, power or resources, or excluded and eliminated from the field of competition"(Ibid). Political scientists also perceive conflict in terms of struggle for access to opportunities and life chances within the existing political order.

Conflict is therefore seen as a competition for rights and privileges that define citizenship within the nation-state. Some of these "rights" and "entitlements" in Ghana according to Ninsin (1995) include land, electoral rules and regulations, taxation, education and health policy, wages and salaries, chieftaincy, the location of development projects, demand for participation, etc. The denial of these "rights" or "entitlements" is a denial of citizenship and an invitation for conflict. In this connection, conflicts therefore, persist since institutionalized inequalities that have been socially and politically imposed exist (Tonah, 2007:12). As it shall be shown, Ejura community believes they are entitle to land, education and health, development projects, demand for participation, election of qualify person for political position in the community and therefore tend to mobilize their group to defend it. Conflict is therefore an expression of life and an unavoidable reality of every society. They are not necessarily socially undesirable. In fact, some conflicts are not only predictable but also vital for social change. When people with different goals and interests work together, the potential for disagreement is always present. Conflicts over ideas, goals, and decision making are now considered as inevitable part of management (Elsayed-Elkhouly, 1996). According to Rahim (1997) conflict is a process in which people disagree over significant issues, thereby creating friction between parties. Any situation in which opposition or argument occurs because of differing goals and values is a conflict. For conflict to exist, Nahavandi and Malekzadeh (1998) mentioned that several factors must be present: people have opposing interest, thoughts, perceptions, and feelings, those involved in the conflict recognize the existence of the different points of view, the disagreement is ongoing rather than a singular occurrence and people with opposing views try to prevent each other from accomplishing their goals. There are two general views of conflict. The first assumes that conflict is dysfunctional and detrimental to organizations. It holds that the struggle over incompatible goals prevents people and organizations from being productive and reaching their potential. The second view suggests that conflict is a natural part of organizational life that can help improve the quality of decision-making and increase effectiveness (Schwenk, 1990).

The prolonged boundary dispute between Nkonya and Alavanyo and also between Tsito and Peki, the ongoing and seemingly irresolvable Anlo chieftaincy conflict and the Akropong-Akwapem land conflict, are all in southern Ghana (Tonah, 2007; Bombade, 2007, Tsikata and Seini, 2004; Brukum, 1995; Fred-Mensah, 1999). Most of these conflicts are very protracted in Ghana, showing that they are not easily resolved. These conflicts, as Fred-Mensah has pointed out, revolved around "open-ended claims that entail continuing negotiations and manoeuvre" (Fred-Mensah, 1999:952). Ethnic conflicts have been very destructive in terms of human lives and properties. For instance, between February 1994 and March 1996, the Konkomba and Nanumba/Dagomba conflict alone which has come to be known as the 'Guinea Fowl War' in which modern weapons such as AK47 were deployed and used claimed more than 2,000 human lives. In addition, 178,000 people were displaced, 18,900 domestic animals and birds were lost, 144 farming villages destroyed and thousands of acres of farmlands, and millions of dollars worth of property belonging to Government and affected communities destroyed (Fred-Mensah, 1999:953; NGO Consortium, mimeo – Jönsson, 2007:18; Brukum, 2007: 99 & 112; Tonah, 2007:4).

2.2   Social Conflict Theory

Azar (1985:59) used the term 'protracted social conflict' (PSC) to designate "the type of on-going and seemingly unresolvable conflict". Ryan (1988) also defined protracted conflict as "usually conflict between ethnic groups which have been going on for some time, and which may appear to be unresolvable to the parties caught up in them". According to Azar (1986:305) "the root of PSC are to be found at the interlocking nexus of underdevelopment, structural deprivation (political, economic and psychological) and communal or identity cleavages". This implies that there is no single cause for or dimension to PSC. Many factors account for its emergence and the prolonged nature. The factors may include economic, political, institutional, cultural, geographical, psychological and colonial. Protracted social conflict usually occurs when a specific group is discriminated against by those in authority or deprived of their basic human needs based on their communal identity.

2.3   Structural Conflict Theory

Structural conflict is defined by Woodhouse (1996) as "an outcome of incompatible interests based on competition for scarce resources; it is objective because it is defined as largely independent of the perceptions of participants and emanates from power structures and institutions". The structural theory recognises the competing interests of groups as the most important motivation for conflict. The competing interests however do not necessarily result in conflict between the competing groups and individuals. The emphasis here is the identification of power structures and institutions as causes of conflict. These institutions could be local or state institutions. In other words, they could be formal or informal institutions. The structural factors can be triggered by immediate reasons or what Brown (1996) called the 'proximate causes'. These factors change latent conflict into overt and sometimes violent conflict. Under this study, characteristics such as weakness in decision-making institution or institutional failures, lack of clear-cut decisions on the part of local and national political leaders, or failure to involve traditional authorities in making decisions that concern the areas under their jurisdiction are some of the factors that could be pointed to as constituting the triggers. It may however not explain the intensity and the prolonged nature of that hostile behaviour, but another disposition namely; psycho-cultural may help for better explanation.

2.4   Psycho - Cultural Conflict Theory

Gunther (2004:135) pointed out that what people are negotiating or fighting about is a fundamental question in analysis of conflict. But there is another equally fundamental question that remains poorly understood, namely, who is fighting whom and why? Rural communities and their members are, in fact, connected by "multiple networks and over the range of issues and concerns that constitute social life" (Turner 2004:870). The Psycho - cultural theory according to Ross (1993) "emphasises the role of culturally shared, profound 'we – they' oppositions, the conceptualization of enemies and allies, and deep-seated dispositions about human action stemming from earliest development" of human society (Utterwulghe, 1999:4). Protracted social conflicts quite often have ethnic dimension though the mere existence of ethnicity does not give rise to the conflict. As noted

earlier, protracted conflict could occur as a result of discrimination against or deprivation of a specific group of their basic human needs on the basis of their communal belonging. One aspect of these human needs is the recognition and protection of identity. Identity is about psychological self-conception in which the self is identified with specific social and cultural attributes. It serves as a link between a specific categories or group of people and at the same time differentiate one group from the other (Duijzings, 2000:18; Jenkins, 1996:3&4). From the definition of ethnicity or ethnic group, it is clear that ethnicity is a special form of identification in which group's history and cultural traditions are emphasized.

Ethnicity as a form of identity formation plays an important role in escalation, duration and intensity of conflict. Identities associated with ethnicity constitute part of the psychological process that leads to the formation of psycho-cultural dispositions that cause groups to enter into antagonistic and, worse of it, violent interactions. According to Jenkins (1996:47), "identity is an aspect of the emotional and psychological constitution of individuals, correspondingly, bound up with the maintenance of personal integrity and security, and may be extremely resistant to change". Protracted conflicts, according to Azar (1986), are "identity-driven" (Crighton and Iver 1991:127). In these conflicts, there is the 'fear of extinction' (Horowitz, 1985), 'fear of the future' (Rothschild, 1996), all of which has the same underlying element, 'the fear of threat of loss of identity' (Crighton and Iver, 1991; Utterwulghe, 1999). This usually results from history of humiliation, oppression, victimhood, feeling of inferiority, persecution of one's group and other kinds of discrimination. The histories usually present the origins of different groups, the nature of their relationships, and their place in the social structure.

The role of history, the 'past', in shaping the beliefs of one group over the intention of another cannot be over emphasized. Lake and Rothschild (1996:51) observed that "actors form beliefs subjectively, largely on the basis of past interactions". These subjective beliefs, either real or perceived, are distorted, exaggerated over time and usually portrays one's group as heroic and superior while denigrating the other. When the feeling of inferiority, 'backwardness' and helplessness become part of a group's feeling according to Utterwulghe (1999:5), "it will induce the group to react by initiating violence or using the political system to transform the situation". It is important however to point out that just as one or more structural component(s) cannot be used as the only source of protracted ethnic conflict, so also the psychological disposition cannot be cited solely as a source. Horowitz also argues this out. According to him, "the sources of ethnic conflict are not to be found solely in the psychology of group union, but they cannot be understood without a psychology, an explanation that takes account of emotional concomitants of group traits and interactions" (Horowitz, 1985:181-182). Both structural features of social and political institutions and psychological dispositions together could therefore better explain the source of protracted ethnic conflict.

From ontological point of view, research into the causes and categories of conflict has usually centred around two conflict approaches: the subjectivist and the objectivist approach. The objectivist approaches (Schmid 1968), looks for the origin of conflict in the social and political make-up and structure of society, and considers that the goals at stake can be thoroughly compatible. On the contrary, the subjectivist point of view focuses primarily on the perceived incompatibility of goals and differences. As Deutsch (1991: 30) puts it: "… it is incompatible differences which give rise to conflict. .. It is not the objective incompatibility that is crucial but rather the perceived incompatibility." Incompatibility of goals and interests or at least their perception as incompatible by the parties in dispute, is as well the essence of the political conflicts analysis. The level of incompatibility is the most important variable that impacts the intensity of the dispute and dynamic of conflict phases. Once conflict has emerged, it develops further with certain dynamic and intensity changing its courses and stages. In that sense understanding developing stages of conflict and their categorization is crucial because it may provide indications of what might happen next and what can facilitate the conflict management.

The cornerstone, however, of the recent conflict analysis literature is the COSIMO conflict categorization, developed at the HIIK. At the heart of the methodology stands the dynamic model of conflict, which incorporates five intensity stages, taking into account the phases of non-violent

and violent conflict ranging from latent conflict to war. This categorization was developed upon the escalation dynamic, which was the basic criterion used by Pfetsch (1994: 216) when he established five-types conflict categorization: latent conflict, manifested conflict, crisis, severe crisis, and war. The most important difference between these conflicts is that the first two are of nonviolent nature, while the crisis, severe crisis and war include usage of violence during the conflict. Consequently, the conflicts can be divided into two main categories: nonviolent and violent conflicts. The major shortcoming in the conflict literature is that most of the studies and available data are concentrated on violent conflicts, particularly on wars. Thus, there is lack of information and lack of researches on non-violent conflicts.

2.5   Non-violent conflicts

Absence of violence does not automatically mean an absence of conflict. Conflicting interests can be pursued without violence or coercion. When the conflict already exists this means only an absence of violent methods employed by parties in their struggle to resolve their incompatible differences over issues that are of national relevance for them. Parties do not use force against each other. Yet, the existence of non-violent conflict must be noticed and recognized by the outside world, as well as at least by one of the involved parties. In addition, it should be stressed that violent escalation of every conflict evolves from a non-violent phase of the conflict. Nonviolent conflict has been termed by Sandole (1998) as "manifest conflict process (MCP)" and defined as a situation in which at least two parties, or their representatives, try to pursue their perceptions of mutually incompatible goals by undermining, directly or indirectly, each other's goal-seeking capability. In the same token, his approach defines a latent conflict as pre-MCPs phase. According to above mentioned COSIMO conflict categorization there are two types of non-violent conflicts: latent conflicts, and manifested conflicts. A conflict cannot be detected without existence of some visible signs that show certain position difference or interest opposition between two states over certain commodity. Sometimes conditions for conflict exist, but the parties are not pursuing an overt strategy to achieve their goals. However, at least one party has to have positional differences articulated in some form of demands, and the other party shall be aware of such demands. Following this logic a latent conflict is defined as a stage in the development of a conflict where one or more groups, parties or states question existing values, issues or objectives that have a national relevance. Latent conflicts must carry some identifiable and observable signs in order to be recognized and noticed as such. The positional differences and the clashing interests in a latent conflict must be articulated as demands or claims. The manifest conflict is a stage when tensions are present but are expressed by means below the threshold of violence. Tense relations between the parties can reach a turning-point from where the use of force may become more likely. Economic sanctions, for example, are a means by which a latent conflict can be turned into a manifest. Manifest conflicts are – like latent conflicts – at all stages carried out by non-violent means and without use of armed force. The distinction between objectively latent and manifest conflicts is to be recognized in a sense that "communicative interaction" (Diez/Stetter/Albert 2004: 6) between the parties is required to turn a latent into a manifest conflict.

2.6   Violent conflicts

Conflicts enters a violent phase when parties go beyond seeking to attain their goals peacefully, and try to dominate, damage or destroy the opposing parties' ability to pursue their own interests. For Davies (1973: 251) the existence of frustration of substantive (physical, social - affection, self-esteem, and self-actualization) or implemental needs (security, knowledge, and power) are the essential condition for one non-violent conflict to escalate into violent: "Violence as a response is produced when certain innate needs or demands are deeply frustrated." In political conflict analysis the use of force, physical damages and human casualties are the characteristics of a violent conflict. Battle-related human casualties' thresholds are commonly used to define violent conflict, particularly in respect of war. An "aggressive manifest conflict process (AMPC)" is the term that Sandole (1998) uses to describe violent conflict, which, according to his definition represents: "… a situation in which at least two parties, or their representatives, attempt to pursue their perceptions of mutually incompatible goals by physically damaging or destroying the property and high-value symbols of one another (e.g., religious shrines, national monuments); and/or psychologically or physically injuring, destroying, or otherwise forcibly eliminating one another." In the recently

published Berghof Handbook for Conflict Transformation, Smith (2005: 3), analyzing trends and causes of violent conflicts, employs the term "armed conflicts" when speaking about violent disputes, and defines it as: "… open armed clashes between two or more centrally organised parties, with continuity between the clashes, in disputes about power over government and territory."

2.7   Conflict issues

Clearly, there are number of things over which two parties in conflict can have incompatible goals. For example, humans can fight about a bewildering variety of things: about money, about properties, about football, about politics, about ideas. Yet it is possible to reduce this perplexing variety by classifying these issues into three main sociological categories: wealth, power, and prestige (Weber 1947). Understanding political conflict cannot be accomplished without knowing what are the object, and the issue of the conflict. Moreover, achieving conflict resolution is not possible without understanding the issue and the cause of the conflict. The question is what is commodity or what are commodities the parties in conflict argue for? What is the value at stake? Deutsch (1973), the prominent sociology scientist and conflict researcher, makes distinction between five basic issues over which a conflict could arise: control over resources, preferences and nuisances, beliefs, values, or the nature of the relationship. In respects of conflict causes and issues Singer (1996) points out that "the usual suspects" are to be found in: territory, ideology, dynastic legitimacy, religion, language, ethnicity, self-determination, resources, markets, dominance, equality, and, of course, revenge. Having the interstate conflicts in the focus, Pfetsch and Rohloff (2000: 3) have identified nine commodities that have historically proven to be the most disputed conflict issues between the states: territory (border), secession, decolonization, autonomy, system (ideology), national power, regional predominance, international power, resources and other. In the political science this classification is widely accepted by the conflict scholars.

2.8   Theoretical Approaches to Ethnicity and Ethnic Conflict

2.8.1   The concept of ethnicity

Ethnicity has been a debate, yet useful concept. Its definition typically points to a group of people who can be said to share certain common cultural traits such as common ancestor, culture, language, etc. Its precise conceptualization nevertheless, varied according to different researchers and scholars. Ethnicity involves mobilization of or the creation of differences among social categories and groups. These differences could be real or fictitious. This could be seen as a delineation of the social environment into "we" and "them" classification. Brass (1996) defines ethnic groups in three ways: in terms of objective attribute, with reference to subjective feeling, and in relation to behaviour. For the purpose of this study, I dwell on the first two aspects of how the term is conceptualized. Schilder (1994) also supported this as important elements in defining ethnic groups. The objective definition of ethnicity asserts the existence of distinguishing cultural features that clearly separates one category of people from another. Van Den Berghe (1978:97), who has much influence in the study of ethnicity, defined an ethnic group in an objective sense as a "collectivist that defines itself, and is defined by others, as possessing certain distinguishing cultural attributes in common". These cultural characteristics may include language, religion, kinship pattern, territory, and physical appearance.

In the subjective sense, ethnicity or ethnic groups have to do with the consciousness of belonging to the same group as different from others. Max Weber's (1968) definition of the term emphasized the subjective dimension of ethnicity. According to Weber, ethnic groups are "those human groups that entertain a subjective belief in their common descent because of similarities of physical type or of custom or both or because of memories of colonization and migration" (Quoted in Croucher, 2004:117). The emphasis in this definition with regards to ancestry is not the objective fact of

common blood, but the subjective belief of common descent. From these perspectives, ethnicity as a concept according to Cornell and Hartman (1998) can both be asserted and assigned. Ethnic groups are defined as a community of people who share cultural and linguistic characteristics including history, tradition, myth, and origin. Scholars have been trying to develop a theoretical approach to ethnicity and ethnic conflict for a long time. Some, like Donald Horowitz, Ted Gurr, Donald Rothschild and Edward Azar, agree that the ethnic conflicts experienced today especially in Africa are deep rooted. These conflicts over race, religion, language and identity have become so complex that they are difficult to resolve or manage. Ethnicity has a strong influence on one's status in a community. Ethnic conflicts are therefore often caused by an attempt to secure more power or access more resources. The opinion of this study is that conflict in Ghana is synonymous with inequality. Wherever such inequality manifests among groups, conflict is inevitable. Hence the question, how can we effectively manage conflict in Ghana to avoid further human losses? Is there a blueprint for conflict management?

2.8.2 Causes of Ethnic Conflict

Economic factors have been identified as one of the major causes of conflict in Africa. Theorists believe that competition for scarce resources is a common factor in almost all ethnic conflicts in Africa. In multi-ethnic societies like Nigeria and South Africa, ethnic communities violently compete for property, rights, jobs, education, language, social amenities and good health care facilities. In his study, Okwudiba Nnoli (1980) produced empirical examples linking socio-economic factors to ethnic conflict in Nigeria. According to J.S. Furnival, cited in Nnoli (1980:72-3), "the working of economic forces makes for tension between groups with competing interests."

Another major cause of ethnic conflict is psychology, especially the fear and insecurity of ethnic groups during transition. It has been opined that extremists build upon these fears to polarise the society. Additionally, memories of past traumas magnify these anxieties. These interactions produce a toxic brew of distrust and suspicion that leads to ethnic violence.

Gurr's (1970) relative deprivation theory offers an explanation based on an ethnic groups' access to power and economic resources. This is closely related to Horowitz, (1985) who wrote that group worth is based on the results of economic and political competitions.

According to Lake and Rothschild, (1996) ethnic conflict is a sign of a weak state or a state embroiled in ancient loyalties. In this case, states act with bias to favour a particular ethnic group or region, and behaviours such as preferential treatment fuel ethnic conflicts. Therefore, in critical or difficult political situations, the effectiveness of governance is dependent on its ability to address social issues and human needs.

An important theory on conflict and conflict management is John Burton's (1979, 1997) human needs theory. This approach to ethnic conflict explains that ethnic groups fight because they are denied not only their biological needs, but also psychological needs that relate to growth and development. These include peoples' need for identity, security, recognition, participation, and autonomy. This theory provides a plausible explanation of ethnic conflicts in Africa, where such needs are not easily met by undemocratic regimes.

The human needs theory was introduced to debunk the other theories that attribute causes of conflict to the innately aggressive nature of human beings. (John Burton 1990) The importance of this theory to ethnic conflict management in Africa is that it moves beyond theories that blame African conflicts on a primordial past. Instead, it points to ineffective institutions unable to satisfy the basic human needs of their citizens. Wherever such non-negotiable needs are not met, conflict is inevitable. Obviously, the problem of ethnicity in Africa largely depends on the level of state

effectiveness, accountability, and transparency in handling the demands of diversity. The focus on the human needs theory in this study does not mean the neglect of other theories, which I consider to be equally useful.

According to theorists, conflict management means constructive handling of differences. It is an art of designing appropriate institutions to guide inevitable conflict into peaceful channels. The importance of conflict management cannot be overemphasised. It is when leaders and states fail to address important issues and basic needs that violence brews. Nowhere is conflict management and peaceful resolution of conflict more important than in Africa. African leaders should take a second look at their behaviour and policy choices. Emphasis here should be on discouraging corruption, embracing transparency and good governance.

2.9   Conflict management concept

Conflict management approach has been and continues to be measured by a variety of different taxonomies. There are various styles of behaviour by which interpersonal conflict can be handled. One of the first conceptual schemes for classifying conflict revolved around a simple cooperation competition dichotomy (Deutsch, 1949). However, doubts were raised over the ability of the dichotomy to reflect the complexity of an individual's perceptions of conflict behaviour (Smith, 1987). Blake and Mouton (1964) proposed a two-dimensional mode based on concern for people and concern for production for classifying conflict handling modes. While numerous researchers proposed revisions of this framework, such as Thomas (1976) who suggested the dimensions of assertiveness and cooperativeness in classifying the modes, Rahim and Bonoma's (1979) conceptualization has been one of the most popular. They differentiated the styles of resolving interpersonal conflict on two basic dimensions: concern for self and concern for others. The first dimension explains the degree (high or low) to which a person attempts to satisfy their own concerns, while the second dimension explains the degree to which an individual tries to satisfy the needs or concerns of others.

Combining the two dimensions results in five specific styles of conflict management, Rahim (2000) defined them as:

Integrating: This style is characterized by both high concerns for self and for others. Individuals with this style focus on collaboration, openness, and exchange of information. They prefer to analyze conflict issues thoroughly and openly with all parties. Those with integrative styles confront issues head on, focus on problem solving and finding a win-win solution.

Avoiding*:* This style is associated with both low concerns for self and for others. Individuals with avoiding style approach conflict by suppressing, setting aside, and ignoring the issues. By neither avoiding conflict, they satisfy neither their own nor other people's goals. People who avoid conflict may not acknowledge its existence and refuse to address or deal with issues.

Obliging: This style involves low concern for self and high concern for others. The person with this style of dealing with conflict focuses on the needs of others while sacrificing or ignoring his own needs. This style is also called accommodating or smoothing. Those with an obliging style resolve conflict by focusing on similarities, playing down differences and setting aside their own goals.

Dominating: This style is characterized by high concern for self and low concern for others. The style is also known as forcing or competing because people who use it see conflict as a competition in which their primary goal is to win. Dominating people resolve conflict by imposing their will through formal power or any other available means. This approach creates a win-lose situation that can in the long run exacerbate rather than resolve conflicts.

Compromising: This style is associated with intermediate concern for both self and others. People with this style try to achieve a reasonable middle ground so that all parties win. They explore issues to some extent and move to give and take position where there are no clear losers or winners. Everybody ends up with something, but not everything he or she wants. Compromising focuses on negotiation and diplomacy. It satisfies rather than optimizes.

Based on evidence from confirmatory factor analyses, this five factor model has a better fit with data than any other models of two, three, and four style orientations (Rahim and Manger, 1995). However, it should be noted that the process of conflict handling is often lengthy and dynamic. The entire conflict may go through several phases of negotiations, during which the parties may change their conflict management styles. The conflict management indicates in the first instance the perspective of the so called "third party" (a mediator, conflict advisor, conflict manager, or supervisor), which is called to help, or engages itself after its own incentive, in order to assists both conflict parties (and eventually one of them). One can speak about conflict dealing also, when during conflict both parties look for a consensual solution without asking for an external assistance. The forms of approaching and dealing with conflicts could be of very different nature. In compliance with Reimann (2005: 7) there are consequently three forms of dealing with conflict that are to be outlined: conflict settlement, conflict resolution, and conflict transformation. Furthermore, the case of conflict prevention is additionally mentioned.

2.10   Conflict settlement

The concept of the conflict settlement covers all conflict strategies that aim at definite end of the direct - violence, without necessarily coping with the basic causes of the conflict (Reimann 2005: 8). As examples for this research approach we can point the works of Bercovitch (1984), Zartman (1985), as well as that of Fisher and Ury (1981). In these works the phenomena of conflict is mostly considered as a deficit within a certain political system. Here, the violent conflict is seen as a pure result of the existing incompatible interests or as a consequence of a struggle for scarce recourses or power. Thus, the conflict is understood as zero-sum game. Yet, as the neo-realistic works of Bercovitch and Zartman show, this zero-sum game can be broken depending on the involved party's interests and the stage of the conflict escalation. With their works Fisher and Ury tie up to this perspective and attach the rational choice approach and the game theory an important role.

Generally, large part of the conflict settlement research focuses on the third-party activities in conflict situations finding out the strategies that facilitate the transformation of zero-sum games and consequently the end of the conflict and achievement of the political agreement. Most strategies incorporate a range of peaceful measures like negotiations, mediation or facilitation, as well as coercive measures as military, political or economic sanctions including the threat with them (power mediation). While latter measures usually are of short-term character, the peaceful measures are the basis for a long-term perspective of the conflict settlement (Haft 2000).

2.11   Conflict resolution

The conflict resolution approaches also point out strategies that could be employed to find an exit from the conflict's destroying dynamic and that aim toward achieving satisfying solution for all parties involved. Among the many, Burton (1968) could be regarded as the main representative of this research direction. Further, Kelman and Fisher (2003) and Kriesberg (1998), who brought some very important impulses to this discussion, are also to be mentioned. Burton (1968), contrary to the conflict settlement approaches, considers ongoing conflicts as a result of unsatisfied human needs. This view becomes clear particularly in his approach to problem-solving conflict resolution and respectively in his human-needs theory (Burton 1990). This author differentiates thereby

interests that are changeable or negotiable, from needs. Here, security, justice and recognition are to be mentioned among the others needs and values. These values are regarded universal; they are not to be suppressed and are consequently indivisible. In accordance to this conflict resolution intends not to end the conflict as such, but to transform it into a nonviolent conflict.

Although Burton does not give detailed specifications how all of these fundamental needs could be realized, he offers a wide spectrum of methods (like workshops, discussion groups, or round tables) and procedures (like mediation, negotiations, or arbitration) in order to convert the respective conflict into a situation acceptable for both sides. Basically Burton's point is to improve communication between the conflict parties and to develop a mutual understanding for the interests of the each side. Of central importance are both sides to make to understand that human needs are not limited resources and that negotiation by all means can lead to win-win outcome.

2.12   Conflict transformation

Each conflict settlement is after Galtung (2000) nothing else but a conflict transformation, or with other words each conflict "solution" is more or less only temporary. The notion of conflict transformation has been particularly shaped by the works of Lederach (1995). He has pointed out three conceptual deficits (termed as gaps) of the traditional conflict dealing: the interdependence gap, the justice gap and the process-structure gap (Lederach 1999). Upon the interdependence deficit builds Lederach the distinction between an upper, middle and lower society levels – so called "pyramid model" (Truger 2000: 90).

The second level is composed of middle leader groups (business elite, administration, churches and media). Influential persons from the so called grass-root domain (as local leaders, women organizations and smaller NGOs) represent the actors of the lower society level. After Lederach the actual interdependence deficit is presented by the fact that from the classical conflict-dealing approach the different societal levels have been mostly observed isolated from each other, so different peace building instruments found their application on the respective levels. In the sense of this pyramid-model the vertical peace-building remains usually neglected. So, the understanding of peace only as a process often prevails during the practical conflict dealings, what however riches its limit by the achievement of the agreement by conflict parties, because this agreement must also be at some point structurally implemented. In this context the "peace alliance" concept takes a central place in the transformation research (Paffenholz and Seegräf 2002). In this case, social levels play an extraordinary important role, even when the actors belong to the grass root domains. Consequently, such a network leads to a comprehensive transformation of the conflict context, its structure, the parties involved, the general conflict issues, and finally to a transformation of the individual actors (Väyrynen 1991). Important to underline is that the processes of actors-related transformation brings also a transformation of the general conflict perception. Nevertheless, only the interrelation of the respective transformation process indicates the particular sustainability of the transformation approaches (Miall 2005).

2.13   Conflict prevention

In accordance to the conflict prevention model there are many conflict preventive measures. In peace times preventive measures aim to strengthen the system structure, which is needed for peaceful dealing with conflicts. Thus, peace is not simply equal to absence of violence, but rather a situation of so called "positive" peace (Meyers 1994; Czempiel 1995). In this respect Senghaas (1995) speaks about "peace as civilization project", which refers to a long-lasting civilizing of dealings with conflicts. In his so called "civilization hexagon" this author designates the following six structural principles i.e. conditions for lasting peace: de-privatization of aggression, control over the state violence-monopoly, establishment of the rule of law, social justice, democratic participation of citizens, and finally constructive conflict culture.

Nevertheless, if it comes to tense situations than it is about conflict dealing, which aim is prevention i.e. reduction of the acute violence. In this respect a difference could be made between structural and operational prevention. First one includes measures that are to prevent emergence

of a crisis situation, while the operational prevention is consisted of measures that are applicable to immediate crisis (Matthies 2000; Carnegie Commission on Preventing Deadly Conflict 1997). With regard to possible re-outburst of violence becomes again the after-care on preventive importance, beside the fact that the pre-care measures are the ones considered as genuine and real conflict prevention. For labelling the after-care dealing with conflict, the academic discussions have constructed the phrase "post-conflict peace-building" and the shorter term "peace consolidation" (Matthies 1997).

2.14   Territory and border-conflicts

Conquering of territories and secession of territories have continuously been subjects of political conflicts and central conflict issues of countless disputes, confrontations and wars. The goals could include not only territorial expansion, but also incorporation of ethnic frontiers within the state's one, as well as secession. Secession is here understood as the detachment of territory and the people living on that territory from the sovereignty of an existing state and the establishment of a newly independent state with sovereignty over that territory and its people. Territorial goals, however, are either implicitly or explicitly tied to resources or to ethnic or religious minorities. Conflicts over territory are what Burton (as quoted in Sandole 1998) has termed "classical conflicts." According to Vasquez (as quoted in Sandole 1998), a major issue in war is territory, and consequently he asserts that: "… of all the possible issues that could end in war, issues involving territorial contiguity are indeed the most war prone." However, based upon their recent empirical researches of international conflicts, Pfetsch and Rohloff (2000: 3) claim that interstates rivalries and conflicts about territories have became significantly less frequent. The reason for this trend is perceived to be the disproportion between the considerably higher economic, political and human costs of such violent disputes, and the gains that could be expected from additionally acquired territory.

If we take the EU as an example it is not difficult to conclude that the significance of frontiers and territories almost lost the importance it had possessed in the first half of the twentieth century. The size of territory has lost much of its former significance as an object of national power and prestige. These are the main reasons that influenced the decline of territorial expansionism. As a consequence, today's territory-related conflicts are dominantly conflicts over disputed state frontiers (border conflicts), which mostly arise about disagreements over a specific delineation, rather than about threats of annexation and conquest. Traditionally, borders have been seen as physical lines and border conflicts were, therefore, conflicts of subordination where rules were to be extended beyond the existing geographical borderline. Geographically represented border conflicts are a particularly "stable form of conflict because they provide a clear cut physical distinction between two easily identifiable sides" (Diez, Stetter and Albert 2004: 11). In such conflicts, borders have a 'double function' in that they provide a means of both territorial inclusion and exclusion, but in parallel also for 'functional' inclusion or exclusion.

African countries today face greater challenges to peace and stability than ever before. The countries of sub-Saharan Africa, including Sierra-Leone, Ivory Coast, Liberia and the Democratic Republic of Congo, are a volatile mix of insecurity, instability, corrupt political institutions and poverty. Alarmingly, most of these countries lack the political will to maintain previous peace agreements, and thus have fallen prey to continuous armed ethnic conflict. (Monty Marshall, 2003) This is partly due to ineffective conflict management.

The conflicts in these countries are mostly between ethnic groups, not between states. If not checked, ethnic conflicts are contagious and can spread quickly across borders like cancer cells. Ted Gurr and Monty Marshall have written that most African conflicts are caused by the combination of poverty and weak states and institutions. (Peace and Conflict, 2001:11-13; 2003)

This paper is meant as a contribution towards the ongoing search for new means of managing conflicts in Africa particularly in Ghana. Using Ejura in Ashanti Region of Ghana as case study, it compares the management of conflicts and shows the difficulties in managing deep-rooted and complex conflicts. It is important to note that most of these ethnic conflicts were caused by

colonialism, which compounded inter-ethnic conflict by capitalising on the isolation of ethnic groups. The divide-and-conquer method was used to pit ethnicities against each other, thus keeping the people from rising up against the colonisers. Distribution of economic resources was often skewed to favour a particular group, pushing marginalized groups to use their ethnicity to mobilise for equality. These are the seeds of conflict.

There are some common conflict patterns. They include:

1. The demand for ethnic and cultural autonomy,
2. Competing demands for land, money and power, and
3. Conflicts taking place between rival ethnic groups.

2.15   Sources of Conflict

Early reviews in the field of conflict resolution identified a large number of schemes for describing sources or types of conflict (Fink, 1968; Mack & Snyder, 1958). One of the early theorists on conflict, Daniel Katz (1965, 1999), created a typology that distinguishes three main sources of conflict: economic, value, and power.

1. **Economic conflict** involves competing motives to attain scarce resources. Each party wants to get the most that it can, and the behaviour and emotions of each party are directed toward maximizing its gain. Union and management conflict often has as one of its sources the incompatible goals of how to slice up the "economic pie".

2. **Value conflict** involves incompatibility in ways of life, ideologies – the preferences, principles and practices that people believe in. International conflict (e.g., the Cold War) often has a strong value component, wherein each side asserts the rightness and superiority of its way of life and its political-economic system.

3. **Power conflict** occurs when each party wishes to maintain or maximize the amount of influence that it exerts in the relationship and the social setting. It is impossible for one party to be stronger without the other being weaker, at least in terms of direct influence over each other. Thus, a power struggle ensues which usually ends in a victory and defeat, or in a "stand-off" with a continuing state of tension. Power conflicts can occur between individuals, between groups or between nations, whenever one or both parties choose to take a power approach to the relationship. Power also enters into all conflict since the parties are attempting to control each other. It must be noted that most conflicts are not of a pure type, but involve a mixture of sources. For example, union-management conflict typically involves economic competition, but may also take the form of a power struggle and often involves different ideologies or political values. The more sources that are involved, the more intense and intractable the conflict usually is.

Another important source of conflict is ineffective communication. Miscommunication and misunderstanding can create conflict even where there are no basic incompatibilities. In addition, parties may have different perceptions as to what are the facts in a situation, and until they share information and clarify their perceptions, resolution is impossible. Self-centeredness, selective perception, emotional bias, prejudices, etc., are all forces that lead us to perceive situations very differently from the other party. Lack of skills in communicating what we really mean in a clear and respectful fashion often result in confusion, disagreement and anger. All of which simply feed the conflict process. Whether the conflict has objective, sources or is due only to perception or communication problems, it is experienced as very real by the parties involved.

2.16   Escalation of Conflict

A final source of conflict is more additional than basic, that is, it comes in after the conflict has started. Conflicts have a definite tendency to escalate, i.e., to become more intense and hostile, and to develop more issues, i.e., what the parties say the conflict is about. Therefore, escalating conflicts become more difficult to manage. The process of escalation feeds on fear and

defensiveness. Threat leads to counter threat, usually with higher stakes at each go-round. Selective and distorted perception justifies a competitive and cautious approach as opposed to a trusting and cooperative one. Through Deutsch's crude law of social relations (1973), competition breeds competition, rather than cooperation. The self-fulfilling prophecy comes into play. Each party believes in the evil intentions of the other and the inevitability of disagreement, and therefore takes precautionary actions which signal mistrust and competitiveness (Blake, Shepard & Mouton, 1964). When the other party then responds with a counteraction, this is perceived as justifying the initial precautionary measure, and a new spiral of action and counteraction begins. Through the norm of reciprocity, stronger attempts to control are met not only with stronger resistance, but more contentious attempts to gain the upper hand. With each succeeding spiral of conflict, polarization grows and the parties become more adamant and intransigent in their approach to the situation. Even though the intensity of the conflict may moderate for periods of time, the issues remain, and a triggering event induces conflict behaviour with negative consequences, and the conflict has moved one more step up the escalation staircase. When parties become "locked in" to a conflict they are usually unable to get out by themselves, and the intervention of a third party in the role of arbitrator, mediator or consultant may be required (Fisher, 1972, 1997).

2.17   Levels of Conflict

Conflict can occur at a number of levels of human functioning. Conflict in your head between opposing motives or ideas is shown by your "internal dialogue" and is at the intrapersonal level. Beyond that, the primary concern here is with social conflict, i.e., conflict between people whether they are acting as individuals, as members of groups, or as representatives of organization or nations.

2.17.1 Interpersonal conflict

Occurs when two people have incompatible needs, goals, or approaches in their relationship. Communication breakdown is often an important source of interpersonal conflict and learning communication skills is valuable in preventing and resolving such difficulties. At the same time, very real differences occur between people that cannot be resolved by any amount of improved communication. "Personality conflict" refers to very strong differences in motives, values or styles in dealing with people that are not resolvable. For example, if both parties in a relationship have a high need for power and both want to be dominant in the relationship, there is no way for both to be satisfied, and a power struggle ensues. Common tactics used in interpersonal power struggles include the exaggerated use of rewards and punishments, deception and evasion, threats and emotional blackmail, and flattery or ingratiation. Unresolved power conflict usually recycles and escalates to the point of relationship breakdown and termination.

2.17.2 Role conflict

Involve very real differences in role definitions, expectations or responsibilities between individuals who are interdependent in a social system. If there are ambiguities in role definitions in an organization or unclear boundaries of responsibilities, then the stage is set for interpersonal friction between the persons involved. Unfortunately, the conflict is often misdiagnosed as interpersonal conflict rather than role conflict, and resolution is then complicated and misdirected. The emotional intensity is often quite high in role conflict since people are directly involved as individuals and there is a strong tendency to personalize the conflict.

2.17.3 Intergroup conflict

Occur between collections of people such as ethnic or racial groups, departments or levels of decision making in the same organization, and union and management. Competition for scarce resources is a common source of intergroup conflict, and societies have developed numerous regulatory mechanisms, such as collective bargaining and mediation, for dealing with intergroup conflict in less disruptive ways. Social-psychological processes are very important in intergroup conflict (Fisher, 1990). Group members tend to develop stereotypes (oversimplified negative beliefs) of the opposing group, tend to blame them for their own problems (scapegoat), and

practice discrimination against them. These classic symptoms of intergroup conflict can be just as evident in organizations as in race relations in community settings. Intergroup conflict is especially tense and prone to escalation and intractability when group identities are threatened. The costs of destructive intergroup conflict can be extremely high for a society in both economic and social terms.

1.17.4 Multi-Party Conflict

Occur in societies when different interest groups and organizations have varying priorities over resource management and policy development. These complex conflicts typically involve a combination of economic, value and power sources. This complexity is often beyond the reach of traditional authoritative or adversarial procedures, and more collaborative approaches to building consensus are required for resolution (Cormick et al, 1996).

2.17.5 International conflict

Occur between states at the global level. Competition for resources certainly plays a part, but value and power conflict are often intertwined and sometimes predominate. The differences are articulated through the channels of diplomacy in a constant game of give and take, or threat and counter threat, sometimes for the highest of stakes. Mechanisms of propaganda can lead to many of the same social-psychological distortions that characterize interpersonal and intergroup conflict.

2.18   Communication concept

When neighbours feud, lovers' quarrel, nation's war, the predictable remedy prescribed by the voices of reason is communication. The prevailing view is that, faced with conflict, communicating is always the right thing to do. The U.N. Security Council encourages hostile countries to hold talks and marriage counsellors advise quarrelling couples to express their feelings. So common place is the prescription that advice to the contrary seems anomalous; it is difficult to imaging Secretary General imploring hostile nations to refrain from dialogue. The positive role of communication is ameliorating conflict seems so obvious that the premise is seldom give serious examination. Why should communicating be so helpful? Under what conditions does communication reduce conflict?

The concept of communication is an important focus for fields as diverse as cell biology, computer science, ethnology, linguistics, sociology, anthropology, philosophy, semiotics and literary theory, each of which employs the term in its unique way. Common to all conceptualization of communication is the idea of information transfer. Information that originates in one part of a system is formulated into a message that is transmitted to another part of a system. As a result, information residing in one locus comes to be replicated at another. "It takes two people working together to play a duet, shake hands, play chess, teach or make love. To succeed, the two of them have to co-ordinate both the content and process of what they are doing...... Communication..... is a collective activity of the first order" (Clark and Brennan, 1991, p.127). Considerable research has shown that the absence of back-channel responses makes communication significantly more difficult (Krauss, 1987). Effective communication requires that listeners be responsive. One of the principles of communication is to be an active listener. This recommendation seems to ask parties involved in an unresolved conflict to behave co-operatively indeed that is precisely what they do.

Communication (including information and education as well) can be defined as diverse, covering a range from the simplest conversation between two people to the most sophisticated mass medium (Wesseler and Brinkman, 2002). In early theoretical models of communication from the 60's simply saw the communication process as an exchange of messages from a sender to a receiver with a lot of importance given to the sender and the channel used for the transmission. Since 70's this model has undergone a 180 degree shift with more emphasis given to the communication process itself, understood primarily as exchange of meanings and of the social relationships that have derived from such exchanges. Currently, communication is considered as a social process designed to bring together actors in a two-way process. Viewed this way, the parties involved in a communication process are both senders and receivers of information and co-creators of knowledge (FAO and GTZ, 2006). Making a communication there involves bringing the sender and receiver into a consensus through negotiation and dialogue, the result of which is a shared

knowledge for the right action (Servaes and Malikhao, 2007). The decision that are taken subsequent to share knowledge is often taken based on the interests, needs, and strength of the parties concern and is always coordinated and responsive to such interest and situation of either the sender or receiver. According to Richardson (2003), two-way communication has been used to coordinate participation in times of conflict situations. Parties involved in conflict are able to negotiate and arrive at a decision to be communicated further. It is therefore reasonable to point out that stakeholders have to communicate, negotiate and arrive at a decision that can be further communicated.

2.19   Communication in conflict zones

To manage or prevent conflict, the first key is communication. Conflict is not inherently bad, but it is the way in which conflict is managed that determines its outcome. Conflict can play a big part in all of our lives. It can happen at work, in school, at home and in our neighbourhoods. Conflict in the communities can often lead to uncertainty, arguments, aggression, destruction and even violence. There are no winners in conflict. Globally this truth has been proven historically. Diplomacy therefore is the order of the day. As the world in which we live becomes increasingly interconnected technologically, economically, and governmentally developing a greater level of meaningful dialogue, heartfelt communication, and mutual understanding shall be necessary. Upholding the dignity of humanity regardless of our ideology, agenda, and aims will best serve us all. For this reason every individual and the global community collectively will benefit enormously from developing the skills of communication, negotiation, and effective conflict dispute resolution. A lot of the conflict in our lives comes from how we communicate with others. Ineffective communication creates conflict even in situations where there is no real "conflict issue" or disagreement about a substantive issue. Poor communication causes hurt feelings, anger, frustration, and tends to erode relationships, sometimes to the point where the relationship is not fixable. Many at times we call these situations personality conflicts, when in fact they are a result of poor communication.

Another institution pressed into service apart from the state and local traditional institutions, which also accounts for the escalation of the conflict, in the conflict zone in Ejura and Ghana as a whole is the media. The role of the media in Ghana as a young country under democratization is very noteworthy. There has been a significant progress in media proliferation and diversity since 1990s due to the increase in freedom afforded to the media by the state. This remarkable transformation has contributed to consolidating democracy in the country by creating the platform for citizens to express their opinions and setting the agenda for public debate on a wide range of issues (See for example Temin and Smith, 2002). However, the conduct of the media in the country has attracted many criticisms over the years due to polarization of the media houses, inauthentic publications, inaccurate reporting and other misconducts.

The blame-game between the parties involved in conflict based on the publications were further deepened by the media, by regular publishing of writing of letters/articles, organising press conferences of interest groups from communities, trying to portray the other as provocateurs and contemptuous of peace, law and order and by organizing confrontational radio phone-in debates. These are issues Ghanaians see as contradictory publications by the media which instead of resolving conflict rather escalate the situation.

2.20   Conclusion

 Conflict is basically conceptualized in terms of disagreement over or competition for scarce resources, status, power, etc. In other words, conflict may occur as a struggle between individuals or groups over what the parties' involved believe is their rights or entitlements. From the above discussion, conflict can be seen in both negative and positive perspectives, since it permeates the fabric of society. It is socially desirable, an indispensable and crucial part of every society. The "objective" characteristics and subjective feeling of a group provide insights in understanding the concept of ethnicity, chieftaincy, religion and ethnic group. They however pose serious analytical challenge as it is difficult to determine boundaries with the "objective" features, and difficult, if not

impossible, to determine how a group of people arrives at the subjective consciousness in the first place.

The introduction of "boundary" concept, which differentiates between the notion of ethnicity and that of culture, provide a more interactional approach to the study of ethnicity. Ethnicity has thus been considered as an alternative form of social organization, but a contingent and changeable. Ethnic groups thus may use ethnicity to make demands in order to alter their status, their economic well-being, their civil rights, etc. in the political arena. The social conflict theory holds primary relevance for the analysis of the study. Notwithstanding its usefulness for understanding the underlying causes of conflicts among contesting parties or groups, the theory fails to help explain the role played by institutional structures in conflicts. The weakness identified with general social conflict theory called for the structural conflict theory and the psycho-cultural theories as supplementary theories to help with the comprehensive analysis and understanding of conflict beyond the remotely interlocking nexus of underdevelopment, structural deprivation, and communal or identity cleavages deprivations propounded by social conflict theories as factors that explain conflicts.

The structural conflict theory highlights failures in institutional structures that lead to the violent eruption of latent generational conflict that had built up within groups as a result of factors better explained by social and psycho-cultural conflict theorists. Psycho-cultural theorists lay emphasis on the politics of identity cleavages as drawing of boundaries of ethnic conflict among groups. It is from the complementary understanding of the independent variables emphasized by these three theories of conflict that the Ejura - Sekyedumase conflict can better be analyzed and understood by the study.

CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

3.0   Introduction

This chapter covers methodology used in this study and has ten (10) sections. The first section offers introduction to field work in Ejura – Sekyedumase**.** The second section also offers research design of the study. The third section covers the sampling procedures used. Section four covers sources of data collection while section five covers qualitative and quantitative research methods. Arriving at Ejura-Sekyedumase and conduction of interviews takes section six and seven respectively. Data processing and preliminary interview analysis covers section eight. The ninth section takes fieldwork challenges and lessons learnt and the last section covers the conclusion of the study.

3.1   Introduction to field work in Ejura – Sekyedumase

Social science research uses the term 'Fieldwork' in two different ways. First, it can be used in a general sense to cover several kinds of qualitative methods. Burgess (1982) described it in that sense as "a style of investigation that is referred to as… qualitative method; interpretive research; case study method and ethnography" (quoted in Payne and Payne, 2004:94; see also Burgess, 1990: ix & Burgess, 2005). It is used in the second way by Payne and Payne (2004:94) to refer to an aspect in the qualitative research process where data are collected, over a period of time, in a naturally occurring setting. However, the term could also be used to refer to any data collection trip, be it in a specific social setting or not. Thus, fieldwork "can mean data collection stage of a project (particularly in the qualitative tradition); or researchers go about collecting data; or more narrowly, data collection in a social setting that tries to reflect the naturally occurring order of events and subjective meanings of those being studied" (Payne and Payne, 2004:94). In explaining what fieldwork entails, some scholars focused on the central role of the fieldworker and of primary data while others emphasized the kind of data or what methods or tools that should be used. For Pole (2005: xx): Fieldwork is a way of doing research where the emphasis is placed on the collection of data at first hand by a researcher. It relies on personal interaction between the researcher(s) and those been researched in the research setting, during which the researcher(s) will use one or a combination of particular methods to collect data over a prolonged period of time Chakravarti (1979: 38) also opined similar view. For him, fieldwork is a personal experience because it involves close interaction or "intimate long-term acquaintance" (Wolcott, 2005:45) between the researcher and the subjects of his research (see also Wolcott, 2005:44).

In this present study, fieldwork is seen and employed as a key method of a qualitative research process. This involves the data collection stage of the qualitative research process. Fieldwork in this study focuses on both collection of first hand data, but not in naturally occurring situations, and the role of the researcher as young native researcher in a 'field' I knew in advance. Doing fieldwork under this study, unlike the classical fieldwork in social anthropological sense, I went to my home region in my native country and collected interview data through personal interaction with my chosen respondents. In other words, I come from the same region and speak the same 'Akan' language, though with dialectical difference, with my respondents. I arranged and met my respondents in their homes, offices, stores and working places. I met them to explain my mission as student doing research for academic purposes and would need their assistance in the form of availing themselves to be interviewed. Fieldwork under this study in contrast to the traditional fieldwork was not conducted over a prolonged period of time (Pole, 2005), neither did it involve "intimate long-term acquaintance" (Wolcott, 2005) though there was some level of close interaction. The fieldwork was carried out for barely three weeks.

3.2   Research Design

This chapter addresses the methodological framework within which the study was conceptualized and undertaken. The chapter focused on the chosen approach to fieldwork that was carried out in Ejura District in the Ashanti Region in order to collect data for the study. The study identified and analysed causes of conflicts and the role of communication in managing conflict in Ghana, using Ejura – Sekyedumase District as case study. The chapter further explained the general research

method that underlies the study. It was focused on explanation of research techniques and procedures used in the data collection. A purposive sampling technique was used for the data collection and face-to-face interview with the respondents. Purpose sampling was used because it is popular in qualitative research Patton (1999), and also targets a particular group of people. Steps to follow in processing the data collected and the analysis was also presented. The chapter finally shared experiences and lessons learnt from the field.

3.3   Sampling procedures

The target population for the study included opinion leaders, the chiefs and elders, political leaders, religious leaders, government officials and the youth in the communities. The political leaders include the district assembly members, the District Chief Executive (DCE) and Member of Parliament (MP) from the constituency. The study initially set out to interview a total of thirty people but my supervisor advised me to reduce the number to be able to get to the in-depth of the study so it was reduced to twenty – five. In all, I had twenty-five (25) informants but twenty (20) in – depth interviews. All the respondents were people who have stayed in the community for not less than five years. The DCE and the MP are also citizens of the community. The gender of the respondents was also taken into consideration in the selection process. But only (3) females out of the total number were interviewed. Most of the females approached either gave excuses that they do not have much knowledge on the conflict issues and therefore refused to be interviewed or were just reluctant to be interviewed. Some of them asked me to rather interview their husbands. Their refusal to take part in the interviews could be due to sex differences, since I am a male researcher and wanted to interview females, or it could be due to gender role expectations. Another reason could be the fact that women are generally reserved and it would take time to have close interaction with them. My short stay on the field is therefore a contributing factor and a limitation to the study.

Table 1: In-depth interview respondents

Respondent	Male	Female	Total
Chiefs and Elders	3	1	4
Opinion Leaders	4	1	5
Political Leaders	2	-	2
Religious Leaders	2	-	
The Youth	2	-	2
District Assembly	2	-	2
Government Officials	2	1	3
Total	**17**	**3**	**20**

(Source: Author, July – August 2009).

With these characteristics, the respondents were selected by the use of purposive sampling techniques. Quite a number of informants especially opinion leaders were recommended by my contact person. I therefore used the purposive technique to select them. This technique was used due to the peculiar characteristics of my respondents that are relevant to the study. I had ten (10) opinion leaders, six (6) elders, three (3) chiefs, and seven (7) youth leaders to select from so some form of arrangement of names was done and out of that I selected them by the count of every two name, I picked the third name. Due to these qualities, I also employed the purposive technique to select some political and government officials for in-depth interviews. Few opinion leaders were also selected outside those recommended by my contact person for verification purposes. In other words, it was intended to ensure that I do not interview only a particular group of people. In all, the

informants represented to a large extent, the population under this study and included persons of both gender and with different status within the Ejura community: the Chiefs, the elders, the district assembly, DCE, MP and commoners including the youth. The opinion leaders, chiefs and elders of the communities are in majority of the respondents as shown in the above table. They formed the core of the respondents since they actively participated in the decision-making processes leading to the conflicts in the district and also had the requisite information on most of the things that I sought for. They are abreast with social and political structure of their parties in conflict and are also the custodians and transmitters of the history of the communities.

3.4   Source of data collection

The research was conducted at Ejura District in the Ashanti Region of Ghana. The study was based on both primary and secondary data sources. The primary data is constituted by interview data or what Silverman (2006) calls researcher-provoked data in contrast to natural occurring data. The researcher-provoked data is very crucial since it allows the collection of unexpected data and other information that could not easily be captured in the natural occurring situation. Interviews were used as the main method to generate data. A semi-structured interview guide was designed and used as a tool to carry out formal interviews to obtain information from the respondents. The use of interviews as a qualitative research technique was used to obtain in depth response from the informants. A flexible semi-structured interview guide would better help capture enough information than a structured questionnaire. I used the semi structured interview guide instead of structured questionnaire because not all the respondents are literates.

The secondary data sources for this study included research from books, newspaper articles, journals, internet materials, individual writings, administrative archives, etc. The primary data was collected through focus group discussion and in-depth interview. The people who were involved in focus group discussion are opinion leaders, chiefs and elders, political leaders, religious leaders, governmental organizations and youth in the communities. And in-depth interview was also carried out with opinion leaders, chiefs and elders, political and religious leaders, governmental organizations and youth in the communities.

3.5   Qualitative and quantitative research methods

There is said to exist two main conventional ways of doing research; quantitative and qualitative. While some scholars see one as more important, others believe that they could be complementary. The two methods are distinguished from each other with regards to how each of them treats data and how data is collected (Brannen, 1992:4). In quantitative research, variables and variable categories are isolated and defined and brought together to generate hypotheses before the data are collected. But qualitative research often starts by defining very general concepts, and changes definitions as the research progresses (Brannen, 1992:4). However, also studies that are mainly qualitatively oriented may make use of hypothesis, which allowed reform to some degree. Those who see quantitative research as very important argue that quantitative research is about counting and it involves statistical techniques. This has to do with controlling of variables. Qualitative research, on the other hand, seeks to "describe actions within a specific setting and invites rather than tries to control the possibility of a rich array of variables" (Holliday, 2002:2). In other words, qualitative research tends to investigate uncontrollable social variables directly instead of reducing them. In light of this, Denzin and Lincoln (2005) pointed out that qualitative research entails interpretive and naturalistic approach to the world. This according to them means, "quantitative researchers study things in their natural setting, attempting to make sense of, or interpret, phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them" (quoted in Creswell, 2007:36). Quantitative and qualitative methods, according to Holliday (2002:5), are two separate fields and "do represent very different ways of thinking about the world". Each of them is a field of enquiry on their own right (Denzin and Lincoln, 2000:2). Each or both may be appropriate depending on the research problem one is interested in. This is supported by Silverman (2005:6) who argued that "in choosing a method, everything depends upon what we are trying to find out. No method of research, quantitative or qualitative, is intrinsically better than any other" (See also Silverman, 2006:34; Hamersley, 1992:51).

The choice of a method for a particular study may also be influenced by other factors such, the available financial resources, skills of the researcher, political orientation of the research team, etc. (See for example Brannen, 1992). Thus the decision to use either of the methodologies is not to assert any distinction or down play the importance of the other. Therefore, the alleged dichotomy between quantitative and qualitative methodologies should be questioned. As Hamersley (1992:39) has argued, any distinction "obscures the breadth of issues and arguments involved in the methodology of social research". With regards to this study, the choice of fieldwork approach to data collection was based on my initial assessment of research questions and my assessment of what could be the appropriate methodology, taking into consideration some constraining factors. The qualitative method of research was basically chosen for this study based on these assessments. The choice of the qualitative method is however not to infer any distinction or relegate the quantitative method to the background. Combining both methods is appropriate for this study but, has been constrained by a number of factors. The choice to rely mainly on qualitative methods for the studies was informed by the limited time at my disposal and inadequate financial resources available to collect the data. I found it appropriate and very crucial to do a fieldwork, however short, in order to get to the key people involved, interview them and gather first hand information. There is also the need for a complex, detailed understanding of the causes of the conflict. As Creswell noted, "This detail can only be established by talking directly with people, going to their homes or places of work and allowing them to tell the stories imaginative by what we expect to find or what we have read from the literature" (Creswell, 2007:40).

3.6   Arriving in Ejura – Sekyedumase

As already mentioned, this study sought to identify and analyse the causes, processes of escalation and the role of communication in conflict management in Ghana, using Ejura - Sekyedumase District as a case study. After choosing Ejura - Sekyedumase conflict as a case for this study, I immediately contacted an official from the National Commission for Civic Education office who comes from the community. Though this officer was born and grew up in this community, I quickly linked up with him before I arrived in Ghana. I arranged and met with my contact person from Ejura. I met my contact person and informed him about details of the study including who could be defined as target population. When I met with my contact person, he also linked me up with some key persons from community who could be of immense help. The role of the contact person and me was very noteworthy, since I was not conversant with any of the members in the community. This facilitated easy access and entry into the homes, offices and work places of the respondents and to a very large extent the success of the fieldwork. It is however important to point out that the contact person between the researcher and the target population could sometimes be problematic. The contact person could lead the researcher to a particular person or group of people who would give information that may not necessarily reflect the views of all those involved. I therefore had to interview few people from the list recommended by the contact person and other people outside the recommended list for reliability and representation. These people outside the recommended list were picked from the street. Every ten people I meet, I select one to interview. Open questions were used to interview those outside the recommended list.

3.7   Conducting of interviews

The interview process actually began with meeting with the contact person mentioned earlier after he had already been informed about this study in his community. The first place of call was the chief's palace where the chief's secretary asked me to show my identity. I therefore showed them letter given to me by my organization in Ghana. They were not convinced with only the letter so they asked me to prove being a student. I then showed my student and staying permit identity cards to the chief and his elders before they finally granted me audience. They were very particular in knowing where I came from. In other words, each wanted to know whether I came from the other community which is Sekyedumase. I made them know that I neither come from any of the two communities nor have I stayed in any before and, that was my first time of coming there. They then gave the go ahead to conduct the interviews. Interviews with the selected respondents from Ejura traditional area and with the district assembly were conducted. Other relevant 'background

materials' on the district was also collected from the assembly within the period. A one-day piloting preceded the actual interview with the respondents with two elders from the chief's palace and two opinion leaders in Ejura. The essence of this piloting was to test the interview guide. This led to removal and reframing of some questions and making the guide a better one. For instance, questions such as 'have you put any measures in place to reduce conflict? If No, why? etc had to be replaced with 'what measures is put in place to reduce conflict'? Though the two interviews were not included in the total number of interviews for the analysis, they were used in verifying claims made by the actual respondents. The semi-interview guide for the piloting was then revised. The revised semi-structured interview guide was used to ask open-ended questions to elicit information from the respondents. Both piloting and the revised interview guide are shown in Appendix 1 and 2. Upon seeking the consent of the respondents and assuring them of confidentiality, the interviews were tape-recorded and key issues were written down as part of field notes.

The interviews were conducted in Ejura Traditional Area in the company of an uncle of my Contact person who lived in the community so many years and served more or less as a research assistant. I always introduced myself and assured them of confidentiality. Assuring them with this confidentiality coupled with the fact that I came from the same region, but not from any of the communities and also spoke the same "Akan" language with them created some kind of confidence and good rapport. While some had that self-confidence in me, others were hard-hearted. One of them expressed it this way after the introduction: "no problem whether you are journalist or sent by government, I will say what I know and the truth, even when they come to arrest me I will one day come back". After the meeting with the committee of opinion leaders from Ejura where general information was given on the conflict issues, some of them were later individually interviewed for detailed information not only on the conflict issues of the district, but also on other issues such as the social and traditional political organization in their community and their personal views.

3.8   Data processing and preliminary interview analysis

Processing and analysis of data for this study began on the field with the record of the interviews. The interviews were transcribed, coded with a well-defined coding system and classified. The classification was done on ethnic, religious, political, chieftaincy litigation and other basis. The reason was to find out the similarity of opinions and views within each group and the shared sentiment and also to find out how they are involved in issues that concern their lives. The transcripts and other documents collected were later read through. It was also evident that some informants were either deliberately concealing information or making claims, which could not be substantiated, which therefore necessitated the need to take the pain to crosscheck information from other informants and documents such as the report of the committees established during the conflict. The next step was therefore to do early interview analysis, start interpreting and verifying claims from the respondents. In this regard, all the in-depth interviews were thoroughly read through one after the other and I identified and wrote down key events explanation by the informants and their time lines. I also made early analytical comments and identified and recorded the needed supplementary primary and secondary data in order to be able to verify the claims by the respondents. This early analysis was done for all the twenty (20) in-depth interviews and responses from the rest of the informants were used as part of other primary sources to ascertain the claims. This exercise, though time consuming, was very helpful in interpreting the data and in organising the data presentation chapters and also to ensure consistency in the writing process.

3.9   Fieldwork challenges and lessons learnt

It is difficult if not impossible to imagine doing fieldwork in an unfamiliar environment without encountering challenges. The three weeks fieldwork in Ejura - Sekyedumase to collect data for this study meets with certain challenges. These include methodological, ethical and moral challenges. This section presents the challenges and lessons learned from the field.

The period of research was very short. It took quite a long time to collect information from respondents in government organizations compared to the other respondents. In some cases respondents were too busy and overloaded by their daily assignments and therefore failed to respond to interview. Researcher decided to use lunch break and things did work out well.

There was the challenge of getting the consent of some of the respondents to interview. As mentioned earlier, some were reluctant to answer questions simply for the fear of later being arrested or having any problem. This problem does not only apply to illiterates but also literates even in democratic dispensation. As stated earlier, I had to meet a committee of opinion leaders to discuss the whole project with them and get their approval before entering into the community to carry out the interviews. Organizing this meeting was a difficult moment. It is really true that I would not have gotten any one in this community to respond to my questions if I had not met with this committee. Though I got the approval from the chief and his elders, it was still a difficult time for me to get the cooperation from the people. This shows how organized the people are and how the subjects have strong allegiance to their opinion leaders. It is therefore very important that in order to have easy access to ones prospective respondents one has to first consult with the leaders. Failure to do so could put the whole study in jeopardy.

The problem was more serious while looking for the DCE and the Members of the district security committee set up to investigate, mediate, intervene and reconcile the parties involved in conflict to interview. It took days for the DCE to book an appointment with me. After she gave the go ahead to be interviewed, I got there only to be redirected to the District Coordinating Director who also complained bitterly about time and asked me to come back later. All attempts to get him afterwards prove futile. I was also not able to interview any member on the Committee set up to resolve the conflict since they were drawn from different parts of the district. Attempt was made to get the Secretary to the committee interviewed but he refused me permission, citing the reason that they have completed their work and have submitted the report to the government and that he does not have even a copy of the report with him and if I needed any information, I should go to the District Assembly where a copy of the report is kept. Though I got the document, these behaviours could seriously affect my study since I might not be able to gather the necessary data. It is also a serious challenge when a researcher is not familiar with the place where he is collecting data, and the people whom he is dealing with. Payne and Payne (2004) expressed the same view and pointed out that the researcher may do things in unfamiliar way, sometimes responding to events that he has not practiced or prepared for.

While on the field, I encountered situations where people were making demands for payment in return for responding to questions. For many people, I am being paid for the work I am doing whether I am a student or not. The fact that I am studying outside the country worsened the situation. In fact, I could not avoid giving some money to a few of them and also offered drinks (Schnapps) to the chief and elders, since it is considered as customarily ethical, though academically it might pose ethical problems. This however poses a great challenge to me since I have to be involved in the field. But one needs to consider how he is involved or detached with the people he studies. This may depend on what the informants expected from the researcher and what he is capable of providing. The challenge is that "researchers' performances and reactions to them must be constantly reviewed, self-interrogated and re-interpreted" (Payne and Payne, 2004:95).

In addition, some also asked "how do we benefit from your research?", "will you help bring peace to the district?", "Are you coming to resolve the conflict for us?" and many other interesting questions. My response to them was all the time "I am not coming to resolve the dispute, neither to help bring peace back to your community. I am a student and the study is for an academic purpose". I sometimes added "it will contribute to knowledge by giving the government, political leaders, religious leaders and chief and elders insights into issues to consider in order to avoiding occurrence of disputes or conflicts". This is in line with Srinivas et al (1979:11)'s observation that an ethnographer does not do fieldwork with the intention of benefiting the people he studied but rather to enhance his own career.

3.10 Conclusion

This chapter basically explained the methodological framework and methods that underpins this study. The study is mainly based on data collected during barely three weeks fieldwork at Ejura - Sekyedumase District. "Fieldwork" as used in this study refers to data collection stage of a research process. The fieldwork was carried out in Ejura community for barely three weeks to collect both primary and secondary data for this study. The primary data were mainly generated by in-depth interviews with the help of a well-designed semi-structured interview guide as a tool. In-depth interviews were carried out with twenty out of twenty-five informants made up of opinion leaders, chiefs and elders, political leaders and commoners. The respondents were selected through purposive sampling techniques based on their gender, religion, political, ethnic group, etc. Official documents such as the Ejura - Sekyedumase District Assembly, committees' reports, press release, newspaper articles, journals, etc served as secondary data sources for the study. The study employed mainly the qualitative research methods. This is due to the fact that the use of mixed (quantitative and qualitative) methods for the study has been constrained by limited time and inadequate financial resources. The three weeks trip to a rural community to collect data for this study was met with certain challenges. These challenges range from methodological, ethical to moral issues.

There were difficulties in getting the consent of some leaders to conduct interviews in their community and also with some respondents especially females to interview. It was also ethically and morally challenging when I have to respond to certain demands made by my respondents. My limited in anthropology made my stay in the field a more challenging experience. It is therefore very important to always first consult and seek approval from leaders of one's prospective informants in order to have easy access to their communities to carry out research. A researcher also has to be careful how s/he responds to demands made by their respondents by reviewing, self-interrogating and re-interpreting their reactions to them.

CHAPTER 4: THE STUDY AREA

4.0   Description of the study area.

The study was carried out at Ejura – Sekyedumase in the Ashanti Region of Ghana. Ejura is the capital town of the Ejura – Sekyedumase District in Ashanti Region of Ghana, 330km north from Accra the capital of Ghana. A town in the heart of the Ashanti Region due to its elevated location, Ejura is a welcome reprieve to the humidity and high temperature of Accra. The district was carved out of the then Sekyere and Offinso districts in Ashanti Region. The district covers a land area of 1782.2 sq.km and is about 7% of the total land area of Ashanti Region. It is located in the northern part of the region and is bounded to the north by Nkoranza and Atebubu district in the Brong Ahafo Region. The eastern part stretches to Sekyere district. To the south, it shares boundary with Afigya Sekyere district and to the west with Offinso district. Ejura is the district capital and Sekyedumase is the second largest town. About one hundred and twenty (120) communities are located in the district. The people are predominantly farmers growing crops such as maize, yam, beans, groundnut etc. In 2007, it was estimated that the population of Ejura is 91,909 according to the 2000 population census. Most of the residents of the district live in the capital (Ejura).

Ejura is a multi-ethnic and multi-religion society. There are about 25 ethnic groups in the Ejura community. The town also consists of Christians, Muslims and traditional religionists. Each of these ethnic and religious groups has peculiar beliefs and values which could ignite anger and violent conflict with ethnic and religious tones.

Ejura-Sekyedumase District has one of the largest markets in the country and the influx of people from all over the country and the neighbouring countries such as (Burkina Faso, Togo, Ivory Coast, Nigeria and Mali) to engage in commercial activities. The main economic activities are farming and trading. The town compose of migrant and the local indigenous people. The migrants occupy about two thirds (2/3) of the whole population. The migrants are mostly farmers and are dominated by the Islamic religion.

There are also governmental institutions and departments in Ejura Township. Such institutions and departments are National Commission for Civic Education (NCCE), whose mandate is to educate the public on programmes and policies of the government, human right abuses, conflict and its effect etc; Commission on Human Rights and Administrative Justice (CHRAJ). CHRAJ is the governmental organization mandated by the constitution of Ghana to intervene in human right abuses, investigate in corruption charges against public officials and settlement of domestic violence and child abuse issues in the district; The security agency such as the Police. The Police are also the umbrella wing of the government to see to it that peace and stability prevail in Ejura and its surrounding areas. Other governmental institutions include Ghana Education Service, the Electricity Company, Volta River Authority, Information Services, the Judiciary, Ghana Health Service, District Assembly and Fire Service. All these bodies are in Ejura because of its volatile environment. Ejura is known as one of the district in Ghana where violent conflict is common and rampant.

4.1   Organizations and institutions involved in the fieldwork as respondents.

Chief and elders – Chiefs play a vital role in the community they serve. Chiefs or elders are the traditional leaders and custodians of the land and have powers to call people to order in their communities. Chieftaincy institution is the centre piece for mobilizing people for communal development. Chiefs are effective link between the people and the central administration. They are recognizes and respected by their people.

National Commission for Civic Education - As the name suggests, the National Commission for Civic Education (NCCE) is responsible for the education of the Ghanaian citizens. It create within the society the awareness of the principles and objectives of the Constitution as the fundamental law of the people of Ghana; educate and encourage the public to defend the Constitution at all

times, against all forms of abuse and violation; formulate for the consideration of Government, from time to time, programmes at the national, regional and district levels aimed at realising the objectives of Ghanaian Constitution; formulate, implement and oversee programmes intended to inculcate in the citizens of Ghana awareness of their civic responsibilities and an appreciation of their rights and obligations as free people. NCCE collaborates with all religious and political parties represented in Ghana to reduce tensions among leaders of the parties' youth organizations. Their programmes are intended to contribute to peaceful co-existence among the various factions without violent conflicts.

Commission on Human Rights and Administrative Justice (CHRAJ) - CHRAJ investigate complaints of violations of fundamental rights and freedoms in both public and private sectors; abuse of power and unfair treatment of any person by a public officer in the exercise of official duties; investigate complaints administrative injustice; investigate complaints concerning fair administration by or a balanced structuring of the Public Service Commission, Administrative Organs of State, District Assemblies, the Armed Forces, the Police Service and the Prisons Service; investigate allegations of non-compliance of the provisions of the Code of Conduct for Public Officers; investigate all instances of alleged or suspected corruption and misappropriation of public monies by public officials.

The District Assembly (DA) – DA is the pivot of administrative and developmental decision making body in the district and the basic unit of government administration assigned with deliberative, legislative as well as executive functions. It is also the planning authority for the district headed by the District Chief Executive (DCE).

 The Security Agency (Police) – The Police is the main law enforcement agency in the district. It prevents and detects crime, apprehend offenders and maintain public order and safety of persons and properties.

Opinion Leaders – They are well respected people in the community who have the authority and power to influence on the community development, programmes and decision making processes. They use their power to influence public opinion and determine community policy. They are much more involved and participate in community issues and affairs. The community also look up to them as their source of information. They are good in influencing decisions and also much more skilful and well respected in the community. They can also mobilize groups to oppose government developments, policies and programmes. They represent the community interests.

Religious leaders – They are the spiritual fathers for which their members take inspirations. They are also respected by their members or followers. They contribute to peace building among their supporters and the community they serve. Religious traditions insist on dialogue, respect and love for peace making. They preach to their member's religious values, norms and practices they believed in. They are also accorded respect not only by their members or followers but the entire community they live.

Political Party Leaders - Political party leaders ensure that their members are disciplined, accountable and transparent in all their activities since the parties are avenues for the training of political leaders. Essentially, political party leaders provide fertile ground for the advancement of the new political experiment and giving impetus to the promotion of rule of law, good governance and national development. So crucial is the contribution of political party leaders to the country's multiparty democracy that it would not be out of place to describe them as the heart beat of the political system. They explain their traditional philosophies to its members and the members draw their source of inspiration from their leaders.

Undeniably, the political party leaders are serving as an umbilical cord between society and the state, ordinary citizens and social groups on the one hand and organs of government on the other hand. They provide psychological anchorage to some Ghanaians at political rallies that are often characterized by music and carnival throw supporters into state of ecstasy and give them a sense

of belonging. They guide their supporters in all their activities to ensure law and order and stability for a law-abiding and hard-working population is a vital resource for peace and nation building.

Political party's leaders support vital state institutions such as the Commission on Human Rights and Administrative Justice (CHRAJ), Electoral Commission (EC), National Commission for Civic Education (NCCE), the police, and government departments and agencies to carry out their functions effectively.

4.2   The role of the above organization in settling conflict in Ejura-Sekyedumase.

The heads of the above organizations serve as members of the District Security Committee (DISEC) whose mandate is to mediate and intervene in all conflicts that occur in the communities of Ejura. During the conflict situations, DISEC arrange meetings with the conflicting parties to seek amicable solution to the problem. NCCE and CHRAJ also as their official duties engage in public education programmes in communities where there are conflict to create awareness on the dangers and effects of conflict. They also organise meetings with the leaders of the disputes to seek lasting solution to the conflict. The Police also provide security during conflict to prevent further human casualty and destruction of properties. The chiefs and elders during the disturbances also intervene by inviting leaders of the conflict with face-to-face meeting.

Figure 1: Showing map of Ejura-Sekyedumase District (the study area)
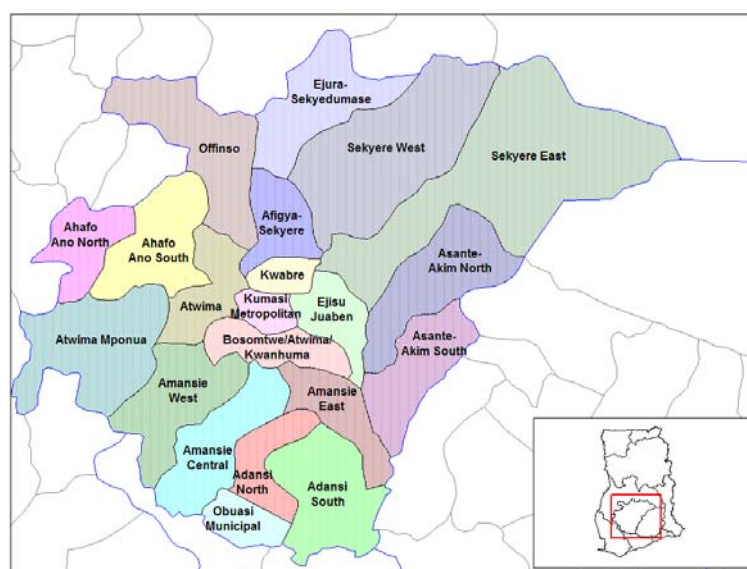**Source:** ghanadistricts.com

Figure 2: Showing map of Ashanti Region Districts including Ejura-Sekyedumase
Source: upload.wikimedia.org

Figure 3: Showing map of Regions in Ghana
Source: livinginghana.wordpress.com

CHAPTER FIVE: RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

5.0   Introduction

This chapter presents the findings of the research. It will also present discussion of the main findings that were demonstrated through individual respondents and informants, document review, focus group discussions and brainstorming analysis of the project stakeholders.

5.1   Results

5.1.1   Perceptions of conflict

From the findings of the interviews, the following perceptions of conflict were expressed by the respondents. To some conflict is a situation where two or more parties perceive that their interest are incompatible, express hostile attitude or pursue their interest through actions that damage the other parties. Others also said that conflict is a misunderstanding and disagreement of issues that leads to violent, disturbances and destruction of properties. Some also gave their perception about conflict as a situation where two or more people are fighting over resources such as land. The rest of the respondents also explained conflict as disagreement and argument that results in wars and battles among people. It was found that respondents had an idea about what conflict is all about. It was also noted that all respondents interviewed related conflict as violence. Once it is conflict that means it is violence. This was a clear indication of conflict in Ejura-Sekyedumase district. There has not been a conflict which can be said as non-violent conflict. When a question was asked at one of the focus group discussion about whether conflict can be non-violent, the answers that came were negative. They explained that all conflicts that have happened in the communities were violent.

5.1.2   Differences among the people in Ejura

The fieldwork results showed that there are differences among the people living in Ejura. The differences according to respondents are political, religious, ethnicity and cultural which includes chieftaincy and land litigation. Ejura is one of the cosmopolitan, multi ethnic, multi religious and multi political districts in Ghana and has one of the largest markets in the country. Because of this market it has influx of people from all over the country as well as people from the neighbouring countries to engage in commercial activities. The differences are as a result of its cosmopolitan nature. According to one respondent, political polarization in Ejura has brought divisions and different opinions among the people. In religious circle, there are differences between Christians and Muslims on the interpretation, practices and teachings of their doctrines There are also religious differences not only between Christians and Muslims but also among the three sects of Muslims, such as, the Tijaniya, Al Sunni and the Alhammadiyas. The difference among these sects of Muslims as one respondent said was about interpretation of the Holy Koran. In political arena, the people belong to different political parties. These political parties have nothing in common in terms of manifesto, political philosophy and ideology, policies and programmes. The political polarization in Ejura has brought divisions, hatred, and vindictiveness of political opponents (those not in political powers). Respondents from all categories said that one of the major differences among the people is cultural because of the influx of people from all over the country and the neighbouring countries engaging in commercial activities. An informant from the chief's palace also revealed that the cultural differences were as a result of migration of people from the different part of the country. These migrants occupied two-thirds of the land in Ejura and have different cultural background. The migrants did not come from one place; they came from different places with different values, norms, customs and traditions said one respondent. These cultural differences according to the respondents have brought a lot of problem on land ownership in the community. "Migrants claiming land ownership in the community they came to meet isn't it funny"? said by one respondent.

5.1.3   Major Conflict in the Ejura communities

All respondents and focus groups interviewed revealed that there had been major conflicts during the past ten years (2000-2009) in the community. They also said that all the conflicts were violent ones where properties, human injuries and loss of lives were recorded. The respondents also revealed that not a single conflict in the area has turn out to be non – violent. They named some of the major conflicts as political indifferences, religious confrontations, motor unions clashes, chieftaincy and land litigation and ethnicity. The findings revealed some of the reasons for the conflict as religious misunderstanding, disagreement during voter registration exercise between the two major political party's supporters, cultural differences, communication failures, struggling for land, economic tension, youth exuberant, intolerance, injustice, discrimination, ethnicity, supremacy over the other, political rivalry, monopoly over resources, vengeance, interpretation of religious doctrine and teachings, cultural practices, land ownership, successors to inherent a stool, wrong acquisition of stool lands and misused of funds belonging to the community.

5.1.4   Causes of conflict in the study zone

From the findings, it was revealed that religious and political conflicts are the number one major conflicts in the district. This is followed by motor unions, chieftaincy and land litigation disputes respectively. Ethnic conflict was also mentioned as one of the conflicts in the study area and is mostly on land use and land ownership.

Religious conflict – It was revealed as one the serious in the community. Ejura community is mostly dominated by the Muslims. During the interviews, it was revealed that one of the causes of religious conflict especially among the Muslims is when the right people are not appointed as leaders. They cited an example that when the leader (IMAM) of Al Sunni one of the Muslims sect died and there was a successor to take his place, the elders did not go through the normal process to appoint the right person, misunderstanding broke between the followers of the one who the respondents think was the right person to have succeeded the late IMAM and the elders favourite. A respondent who is a Muslim said that one of the major causes of conflict among the Muslims is when elders impose on the people leaders without following the due process. Other respondents said that when funds belonging to the religion is misused by the leaders or elders had been the causes of religious conflict. This happened when there is no accountability or when leaders appointed their much loved ones as members of the finance board so that they could manipulate them. Interpretation of the Koran by different sects of Muslims, imposition of the Muslim "Sheria" law, doctrinal differences, offensive and negative remarks of the disputants, unclear information especially when given an offensive and malicious interpretation by the decoder, poor offensive and unclear communication, rumour mongering, distortion of the truth with the intent of destroying a party in dispute, misrepresentation of opinion of one person for the opinion of a group to which he belongs, subjectively quoting people out of context were some of the factors raised by respondents during the interviews as causes of religious conflict.

Table 2: People who died as a result of religious conflict (2000-2009)

Religion	2000	2004	2005	2006	2007
Christian	1	-	-	2	-
Islamic	4	7	9	5	6
Traditional	1	-	-	1	-

(Source: Police report 2008)

Political conflict – The research conducted revealed some of the causes of political conflict as follows; vindictiveness of political opponents, unlawful arrest of former political appointees by the security agencies such as BNI and the Police, harassment of political opponents by the current

government officials, revenge, offensive languages by politicians and their followers. A respondent said that during voter's registration exercise in 2008 prior to the general presidential and parliamentary elections mar the political tensions in Ejura. This voter's registration exercise brought about bloody clashes between the two main political rivalries the New Patriotic Party (NPP) and National Democratic Congress (NDC) each accusing the other of registering the minors to rig the general elections. It was argued by two focus group discussion that at rallies grounds, the kind of language politicians say about their opponents before and during the election period were some of the causes of political conflict. An informant working at NCCE cited a scenario of political clashes between NPP and NDC when they were returning from rallies organized in separate towns. When NPP got to a community along the road they were travelling decided to stop and allowed its members to buy food. When NDC who was coming from the other direction got to where NPP had stopped also decided to stop the same spot. According to the informant, this infuriated members of NPP and resulted into violence where both party members sustaining various degrees of injury and in the process, two people died. What worsens the situation was when a local FM station in Ejura announced that two members of NPP supporters had died as a result of clashes along the route between NPP and NDC, members of both parties took offensive weapons, chatting war songs along the principal street in Ejura. This had been the worse violent conflict in the history of Ejura. People lost their lives, properties wealth millions of Ghana Cedis were destroyed, houses were burnt and the men fled from the community leaving the women, children and the aged. Economic activities were standstill, women could not go to farms, children could not go to school etc. This was terrible said by a respondent.

Table 3: Show victims of political conflict in Ejura-Sekyedumase district.

People	2005	2007	2008
Deaths	4	6	9
Sustained injuries	93	105	186
Displaced	213	229	332

(Source: National Management Disaster Organization (NADMO) documents)

Chieftaincy and Land litigation conflict – Since the colonial period, there have been claims of ownership to land by royal families in Ejura communities. Based on their oral history, the people of Ejura traditional area claimed that they are the original owners of the land. The migrants also claimed that though they are not the original indigenes, they should be allowed to occupy and owned some of the Ejura land since they are the majority in terms of population, which the chiefs and elders in the Ejura traditional areas have rejected. There were, however, claims over specific vast farming land lying in the communities. Respondents said that in 2006 what escalated the land conflict was when the leaders of the migrants openly said to the local chiefs and elders that no one created and brought land and therefore land is the gift of God ignited land conflict. The claims over the land are being made between the migrants, the District Assembly and the indigenous local people. This piece of land was once part of state-owned commercial farm. The farm is no more in existence and the chiefs were demanding that the land be handed over to them. Their reason was that, the land was given to the government for farming purposes and since the commercial farm has collapsed and no more existed, they needed their land back. The land was good for arable farming and vegetables like tomatoes, garden eggs and had sheabutter trees, which are used for economic purposes. Hunting for species such as grasscutter is also done on this land and trees on the land are used for burning charcoal. This piece of land is also being used for cultivation of cassava, yam and groundnut on a large scale.

All the respondents interviewed expressed chieftaincy and land litigation as one of the major conflict in the community. Nana Aning Pambour, an elder at the chief palace explained that chieftaincy as an institution is to unite the people but chieftaincy and land litigation had rather

divided the people in Ejura –Sekyedumase communities. Some of the reasons respondents assigned to land litigation conflicts were that some land owners are not trustworthy, same land are sold to as many people as possible, people struggled for land which is not theirs. The struggle about access to and control over land has been the major causes of land litigation conflict. The fieldwork also revealed that family lands are sold to people without the prior knowledge of the family members who are the owners of the land stool. It was also noted that community lands which chiefs sold to people, or groups of people for development purposes were not accountable to the community. Successors to inherent a stool were also mentioned by respondents as one of the common causes of chieftaincy conflict in the district.

Ethnicity or ethnic conflict - It was noted during the interview that inequity in distribution, use, need desires and consequences of land management has been the sources of tension and inter or intra ethnic dispute in Ejura. It was noted during the interview that land territories and borders have been subjects of ethnic conflict and central issues of countless disputes, confrontations and disagreement among communities in Ejura-Sekyedumase district. It was also noted during the research that one of the causes ethnic conflict was associated with when one ethnic group wants to show superiority over the other in terms of power and wealth and tried to monopolize over resources. Discrimination against the various ethnic factions was some of the reasons assigned by majority of informants as reasons for ethnic conflict especially among the ethnics from the three northern regions. Feelings of inferiority and attempt to secure more power or access more resources were among some of the causes of ethnic conflict Ejura.

Motor (drivers) unions conflict – Majority of the respondents interviewed said that Ghana Private Roads and Transport Union (GPRTU) exercising monopoly and superiority over the other motor unions always created problems. This according to the opinions of the people interviewed has been common in the Ejura area. With separate focus group discussion with members of the motor unions, it was found out that, drivers union conflict was as a result of political influences. The motor union has been politicized as it was observed from the interviews. It was also perceived by majority of the informants interviewed that GPRTU is motivated by the government and because of that always tried to show superiority over the other two unions (cooperative and Protoa) in terms of market dominance. The informants also said in 2006, there was a bloody conflict between GPRTU and Protoa over allocation of land. During the conflict properties wealth millions of Ghana cedis were destroyed, cars were burnt, there were human injuries and casualties and loss of human lives.

Table 4: Show damage caused during motor unions conflict in Ejura-Sekyedumase district.

People	2002	2006
Deaths	4	7
Cars burnt	4	8
Stores burnt	3	6
Sustained injury	84	138

(Source: National Management Disaster Organization (NADMO) documents)

5.1.5 Violent conflict in the study area since 2000

It was noted during the interview that different categories of continuous conflict, some of it violent were identified. These include inter-ethnic conflicts, mostly centred on control over land and other resources and sovereignty issues, what Brukum (1995) has described as wars of emancipation or secession. A second category of conflicts identified were intra-ethnic conflicts mostly over chieftaincy succession and conflicts between state institutions, such as the police and communities, over policing and law and order issues arising from communal conflicts and inter-

personal disputes. There were also religious conflicts between Muslims, between Christians and Muslims, and between Christians and followers of traditional religious practices and conflicts between members of different political parties. According to findings from the interview, it was noted that police-community violence could arise from the policing of a chieftaincy or inter-ethnic dispute and tap into existing mistrust of the police. An answer to a question such as "Did all conflicts mentioned above leads to violent? Almost all respondents interviewed said 'yes'. When respondents were asked to explain what violence is, they mentioned violent as; beatings, arbitrary arrests, rapes and murders, destruction of properties, fighting leading to injuries, wounded from gun shots, loss of human lives as a result of fighting, etc. Majority of the respondents interviewed said that what gave rise to violent conflict in Ejura-Sekyedumase district was as a result of castigation of insinuation, rumours, vandalization of properties, gathering of arms, demonstrations against the government of economic hardship and election rigging was among some of the reasons. Respondents were divided when they were answering question as to whether conflict are rampant. Some said "yes" conflict are rampant, other also said "no" conflicts are not rampant but seasonal. According to findings from the interview, it was discovered that conflict is rampant in the district.

The fieldwork result showed that there were several longstanding inter-ethnic and intra-ethnic disputes among various groups of people in communities across Ejura-Sekyedumase district. The fieldwork result showed that there were several longstanding inter-ethnic and intra-ethnic disputes among various groups of people in communities across Ejura-Sekyedumase district. Four main conflicts were identified among the people who come from the Volta and are now settlers in Ejura. In the Northern Region, there are longstanding often violent inter-ethnic conflicts between the Gonja and the Konkomba (who are also implicated in the Volta) and between Dagombas and Konkomba. In the Brong-Ahafo Region, violent clashes between the Nafana and Ntore ethnic groups at Brohani near Wenchi over land and sovereignty resulted in three deaths and 2,000 persons being rendered homeless. This fight extended to the Ejura community because there are people living in Ejura who come from those regions where there was fighting. Chieftaincy conflicts in which violence has been reported were Dagbon communities (2002); the Mossi communities (2000); the Konkomba communities (1996; 1999); and the Fulani communities in the Ejura-Sekyedumase district. The study also estimated that there are over 10 chieftaincy disputes in Ejura District, several of which have been complicated when politicians and political parties have supported one or the other faction. Majority of respondents interviewed said that land use conflicts have been a source of violence between Fulani herdsmen (the migrants) and local farmers in the Ejura district. While essentially about land use, this class of conflict is manifest as ethnic conflict between locals and migrants, with Ghanaian nationality as a subtext

5.1.6   Attempts at managing conflict in the study zone (area)

According to the opinions of the respondents, Successive governments of Ghana have shown concern whenever conflicts arise in Ejura district. When the Konkomba-Gonja conflict erupted, government set up the Justice Lamptey Committee to investigate the underlying causes and make appropriate recommendations to avert future occurrences. After the conflict involving the Gonjas, the Nawuris and their Konkomba allies, the government again set up the Justice Ampiah Committee to investigate. Again in the wake of the 2000 conflict between Dagombas and Konkomba, the Rawlings (NDC) government set up a Permanent Peace Negotiation Team on conflicts. The team visited many areas of the conflict but never delivered its report. A common thread in all these government efforts is that either the reports are never delivered or the recommendations are never implemented.

Religious bodies and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) were encouraged by government to help resolve some of these conflicts. The Catholic Church was on hand to assist in the 1999 conflict. In the 2000 conflict, government encouraged an inter-NGO consortium and the Nairobi Peace Initiative (NPI) under the umbrella of the Organization of African Unity (OAU) to organize and facilitate a series of peace and reconciliation workshops among the warring groups in the conflict communities in Ejura. Perhaps the most positive results of the efforts at conflict management according to the respondents were the February, 1996 agreements through the

Nairobi Initiative for Peace between the Dagomba on the one hand, and the Konkomba and Basare on the other; and between Nanumbas and Konkombas.

It was also revealed that other ways used to contain conflict in the affected communities were collaboration between the leaders of the parties and world vision international local capacity for peace (LCP). LCP is an NGO whose main objective is to mediate during conflict situation. This NGO served as a mediator when there was a conflict between the two sects of Muslims (Tijaniya and Al Sunni) over who should become the next imam after the serving imam died, police were called upon to prevent violence, Ghanaian Times (GT, 15/4/2000). In 2004 and 2006, there were clashes between the Tijaniya and Al Sunni Muslims at Ejura (GT, 6/10/2005; 29/1/2007). The 2006 violence in which four persons died, twenty four others were seriously injured and property destroyed was triggered by a dispute between the two groups over proprietary rights over the Ejura Central Muslim Mosque (GT, 19/1/2006). There was a suggestion by the then Inspector General of Police (IGP) that there could be non-Ghanaians involved in the conflict, when he stated that if foreigners were found to be behind the violence, they would be deported (GT, 27/1/2006). The Tijanniya and Al-Sunni also clashed again where one person died and several were injured (GT 9/12/2006). The Tijanniya and Al-Sunni also clashed at Sekyedumase about the interpretation and passing of the "Sheria law" where six persons died and several were injured (GT 9/12/2005). Mr Iddrisu Biyuomah, one of the respondent said that while there have been violent incidents between Muslims and Christians, such incidents are much reduced. In the period when all the intra-Muslim disputes were reported, there were no reports of violence between Muslims and Christians, he said.

NCCE also undertook film show depicting the effects of conflict to all communities involved in conflict in Ejura-Sekyedimase district. From focus group discussion with members of the District Assembly (DA), it was observed that the district has a mediation committee to mediate in times of conflict situation. The District Security Committee (DISEC) through public education programmes advice the various factions to embrace peace and live happily with another. The findings also revealed that stakeholders meetings were organized during the conflicts mentioned above together with the chiefs and elders to reconcile and negotiate for peaceful solution. DISEC hold monthly meetings in collaboration with NCCE, CHRAJ and LCP to negotiate with conflicts that are not fully managed or resolved.

Figure 4: Shows picture of various political and religious leaders with the mediation team during one of the meetings.

5.1.7   Conflict management strategies used in Ejura

Majority of respondents interviewed revealed that the conflict between the two sects of Muslims (Tijaniya and Al Sunni) and the two main political parties (NPP and NDC) respectively were

managed through negotiation, mediation, arbitration, collaboration and reconciliation. According to findings from the interviews, it was found that the use of dialogue, public education, imposition of curfew the use of the security agencies and the enforcement of the law were among the ways used in dealing with conflict in Ejura-Sekyedumase district.

5.1.8   Communication strategies used in the conflict zone.

The respondents explained that the form of communication strategies used during the conflict situation was the electronic media like the radio, mobile phones; FM stations; printed media such as the daily newspapers; magazines; posters depicting peaceful co-existence; government information van moving from community-to-community, consultations with the parties involved in the conflict; stakeholders meeting; and face-to-face communication with the leaders of various parties. According to Mr. Frank A. Bannor, Director at National Commission for Civic Education explained that rapport was established with feuding parties whereby mediators listen attentively to both sides and acted impartially. It was also established from the interviews that follow-up meetings were conducted regularly with the leaders of the feuding parties and the District Security Committee (DISEC), responsible for mediating conflicts in the Ejura-Sekyedumase district for conflicts that are not fully managed or resolved. Mr. Bannor also explained that for communication to be effective, the government machinery responsible for propagating the message of peace should be equipped. It was also noted that another form of communication strategy used to manage the conflict was the verbal invitation by the chiefs and elders to the disputed parties. A respondent said another strategy used was during Yam Festival which is celebrated every year in Ejura and its communities. During the festival, the chiefs and his elders, opinion leaders in the communities, politicians of the various political parties, religious leaders and leaders of youth organizations used the plat form to communicate to the gathering.

5.1.9   Effects of conflict in the communities

According to the findings from the interviews, it was noted that conflict has affected the communities greatly. It has created factions, divisions and polarized the community, almost every issue is politicized. During the conflict, economic activities were standstill, farmers could not go to farms, schools were closed down, children could not attend school because of the fear of being attack, and women could not go the market because they were afraid of being attack by their enemies. There were physical assaults, people properties were destroyed and burnt, human lives were lost and the labour force was reduced because workers were afraid of their life and therefore left the district. There was hunger and jobless.

Figure 5: Shows picture of a Mosque destroyed during the Muslims conflict.

5.1.10 Measures put in place to reduced conflict

It was noted during the interview that measures has been put in place to reduce conflict in the Ejura-Sekyedumase district. The District Security Council has established mediation team called DISEC to mediate in all conflict situations in Ejura-Sekyedumase district. DISEC also organizes public education programmes on the dangers and effects of conflict and the importance of living peacefully. World Vision International, a Non – Governmental Organization (NGO) has formed a mediation committee, Local Capacity for Peace (LCP) whose main activity is organizes public education and film shows depicting the effects of conflicts. NCCE also organizes public education programmes for the communities especially the youth and the feuding parties. The various religious bodies especially the Christians have been mandated by the Christian Council (CC) to use their pulpit to preach peace and reconciliation to their members. It was also noted during the interviews that the government institutions such the Police, Information Service, CHRAJ, NCCE and the Ghana Education Service also play a significant role in the management of conflict in Ejura-Sekyedumase district. These bodies organises social gathering in the communities where conflict are rampant to educate them on the importance of conflict management and resolution. The chiefs and elders according to findings also played a significant role during the conflict between the two sects of Muslims. The chiefs and elders mediated during the conflict. They did this by invited the leaders of the conflict and asked them to embrace peace. During the mediation process according a respondent, an agreement was reached because the chief allowed each party the opportunity to give their view of the situation. The mediation team also guarantee the conflicting parties confidentiality and promised that agreement reached or signed if written down had no legally binding status but was in good faith. It was also noted that because of the measures put in place and the respect the community accord to the chiefs and elders, no conflict has been recorded this year.

Figure 6: Shows picture of burnt house during the conflicts.

5.1.11 The role of the government in conflict management

From the results, it shows that the government played a significant role during the conflict in Ejura-Sekyedumase district. The government sent security personnel to the conflict zones to maintain peace. It was also revealed that the government pays for the up-keep of the security personnel. The DISEC was set up by the government to ensure that there is peace in Ejura-Sekyedumase district. According to the respondents, though government role was vital, however, could not prosecute culprits because of political reasons.

5.1.12 The role of the media.

It was noted that from the interview that, the unprofessional conduct of some electronic media and printed media was one of the causes of conflict in the district. Programmes and news that were broadcasted during pre-election and voter's registers exercises by some media houses escalated conflicts and disputes. Majority of the respondents said that rumour mongering, distortion of the truth with intent to destroy a party in the pre-election period, misrepresentation of opinion of one party, quoting people out of context, reporting from only one side of the conflict and thus misleading the general public were among some of the factors raised by the respondents as causes of conflict in Ejura by journalists. From the focus group discussions, the informants were of the view that some of the journalists used language that is pervaded by the doctrine of ethnic nationalism, dramatization of conflict situations and theorization of violence with the view of selling more copies of their newspaper and magazines.

5.2   DISCUSSIONS

5.2.1   Violence conflict in Ejura since the 2000s

From the foregoing analysis, it was noted during the interview that different categories of continuous conflict, some of it violent were identified. These include inter-ethnic conflicts, mostly centred on control over land and other resources and sovereignty issues, what Brukum (1995) has described as wars of emancipation or secession. A second category of conflicts identified were intra-ethnic conflicts partly locating of institutions and services, but mostly over chieftaincy succession and conflicts between state institutions, such as the police and communities, over policing and law and order issues arising from communal conflicts and inter-personal disputes. There were also religious conflicts between Muslims, between Christians and Muslims, and between Christians and followers of traditional religious practices and conflicts between members of different political parties. The above classification does not take into account the fact that often, the violent disputes reported by the media have multiple causes and elements. According to findings from the interview, it was noted that police-community violence could arise from the policing of a chieftaincy or inter-ethnic dispute and tap into existing mistrust of the police. In the same vein, an inter-ethnic dispute may be triggered by the locating of a facility by the District Assembly (DA). For example, the DA built a school for two communities and cited the school at one of the communities. The other community refused their children to attend school at where the school was built.

The fieldwork result showed that there were several longstanding inter-ethnic and intra-ethnic disputes among various groups of people in communities across Ejura-Sekyedumase district. Four main conflicts were identified among the people who come from the Northern Ghana and are now settlers in Ejura. There are longstanding often violent inter-ethnic conflicts between the migrant Gonjas and the Konkombas who lived in Ejura. According to the research, this ethnic violent was traced from the northern part of the country and has extended to Ejura. In the Brong-Ahafo Region, violent clashes between the Nafana and Ntore ethnic groups at Brohani near Wenchi over land and sovereignty resulted in three deaths and 2,000 persons being rendered homeless. This fight was extended to the Ejura community because there are people in Ejura who came from the fighting communities and now settlers in Ejura. Attempts by the courts to address the conflict were frustrated when the bailiffs and police were attacked as they tried to enforce a judgment debt against the chief of the Ntore (Ghanaian Times, GT, 2/9/97). Intra-ethnic conflicts in Ghana tend to be either land disputes or more commonly, chieftaincy or succession conflicts. Chieftaincy conflicts in which violence has been reported were Dagbon communities (2002); the Mossi communities (2000); the Konkomba communities (1996; 2000); and the Fulani communities in the Ejura-Sekyedumase district. The study also estimated that there are over 10 chieftaincy disputes in Ejura District, several of which have been complicated when politicians and political parties have supported one or the other faction. Majority of respondents interviewed said that land use conflicts have been a source of violence between Fulani herdsmen (the migrants) and local farmers in the

Ejura district. While essentially about land use, this class of conflict is manifest as ethnic conflict between locals and migrants, with Ghanaian nationality as a subtext

5.2.2   Different conflict perceptions

Already in the sphere of the everyday language the term conflict has no positive accent. Usually dysfunctional observable facts like discord, dispute or fighting are associated with it. From the individual interview, it was revealed that conflict is about violence. Therefore, with the omnipresence of conflicts it is not surprising that the research about this topic takes on significance also in the political science. Although the branch of peace and conflict research owes even a part of its name to this subject, the disagreement over the exact notion of the conflict as a term dominates until today. This is however little amazing because it is about one of the most enigmatic and controversial terms, which itself triggers conflicts very often (Bonacker and Imbusch 2005: 69). From the results, the definition given by the respondents was in accordance with the one explained by Galtung (1996), who defines the term conflict generally as incompatibility of goals, or a clash of goals or 'mere' disagreement. Coser (1995) also defines social conflict broadly "as a struggle over values or claims to status, power and scarce resources, in which the aims of the conflicting parties are not only to gain the desired values, but also to neutralize, injure or eliminate their rivals. Such conflicts may take place between individuals, between collectives, or between individuals and collectives" (quoted in Tonah, 2007:11). Conflict is therefore seen as a competition for rights and privileges that define citizenship within the nation-state. Some of these "rights" and "entitlements" in Ghana according to Ninsin (1995) include land, electoral rules and regulations, taxation, education and health policy, wages and salaries, chieftaincy, the location of development projects, demand for participation, etc. The denial of these "rights" or "entitlements" is a denial of citizenship and an invitation for conflict.

The results also showed that all reported conflicts that had occurred in Ejura-Sekyedumase were violent. Conflicts enters a violent phase when parties go beyond seeking to attain their goals peacefully, and try to dominate, damage or destroy the opposing parties' ability to pursue their own interests. For Davies (1973: 251) the existence of frustration of substantive (physical, social - affection, self-esteem, and self-actualization) or implemental needs (security, knowledge, and power) are the essential condition for one non-violent conflict to escalate into violent: "Violence as a response is produced when certain innate needs or demands are deeply frustrated." In political conflict analysis the use of force, physical damages and human casualties are the characteristics of a violent conflict. Battle-related human casualties' thresholds are commonly used to define violent conflict, particularly in respect of war.

5.2.3   Division among the people in Ejura

As presented in the results, political polarization and ethnicity has brought divisions, hatred, and vindictiveness to political opponents (those not in political powers) among the people living in Ejura. From the individual interview, it was found that inter and intra religious differences and chieftaincy disputes were among the factors that had brought divisions to the people. Claiming of ownership of mosque between the sects of Muslims has created enmity, dislike, and hatred. This is as a result of lack of trust between the Tijaniya and Al Sunni. For conflict to exist, Nahavandi and Malekzadeh (1998) mentioned that several factors must be present: people have opposing interest, thoughts, perceptions, and feelings, those involved in the conflict recognize the existence of the different points of view, the disagreement is ongoing rather than a singular occurrence and people with opposing views try to prevent each other from accomplishing their goals.

5.2.4   Communication and escalation of conflict.

The main objective of this research is to examine the role of communication in conflict management and how the "most' important means of communication namely the use of words, whether verbal (spoken), written or non-verbal could catalyze the escalation of conflict into large-scale civil disorder. The main point to be established is that poor communication can be at the root

of a conflict. Poor communication transform latent conflict into violent. On the other hand, good or effective communication can facilitate peaceful conflict management or resolution. From the results and the purpose of this study, poor communication is divided into two types, offensive and unclear communication. The researcher shows how the two have produced ethnic, religious, political and cultural conflicts in Ghana, especially in the Ejura-Sekyedumase district. Communication is central to the experience and management of conflict. It is through communication that people express their desires, realize differences, and attempt to resolve those differences. Putnam and Poole (1987, p. 552) wrote one of the first reviews of this literature, noting that "communication constitutes the essence of conflict in that it undergirds the formation of opposing issues, frames perceptions of the felt conflict, translates emotions and perceptions into conflict behaviours, and sets the stage for future conflicts".

Offensive communication as used in this chapter means sending out offensive information to the other party while unclear communication means sending out unclear information that could be given malicious interpretation by the decoder, most especially in the situation of an existing social conflict. To illustrate the roles of offensive communication in the escalation of ethnic, religious and political conflicts, some examples are drawn from newspaper report about the disagreement that occurred between the two rivalries Islamic religion and two main political parties in pre-election campaign and registration of voters register exercise in 2007 and 2008. The malicious reporting of this incident by a section of electronic and printed media house contributed significantly to the precipitation of a bloody ethnic and political riot in Ejura in 2007 and 2008. While religious conflicts are not on the scale of other countries in the West African sub-region, there are longstanding religious conflicts, some involving intra- and inter-ethnic rivalries, periodically break into violence. There have been violent incidents among Muslims, especially in the Northern, Ashanti and Brong-Ahafo Regions.

To illustrate the role of unclear communication in the escalation of religious conflict, the researcher draws some insights from the tone of communication between the two main Islamic sects (Tijaniya and Al Sunni) in Ejura communities. The research once more focuses on some religious examples from Ejura community, a town bedevilled by Christians – Muslims and Muslims – Muslims conflicts. The Tijaniya condemned some aspects of the Koran in its traditional state which the Al Sunni did not take lightly. Reference was also made about the unclear information contained in the use of words by the Tijaniyas concerning interpretation of the Muslims "Sheria" law. Whiles Tijaniyas are calling for the abolition of the law; the Al Sunni thought otherwise and always referred to the Tijaniyas as devil incarnates not having human feelings. These utterances by the Al Sunnis ignited the anger of the Tijaniyas against the rivalry counterparts. The encounter was very bloody and civil disorder resulted from poor communication between the two Muslims sects. The Al Sunni thinks that the Prophet Mohammed is the founder of the Islamic religion. No one should declare himself as a Prophet of God except Mohammed. This was rejected by the Tijaniya and that resulted in bloody conflict. Selective and distorted perception justifies a competitive and cautious approach as opposed to a trusting and cooperative one. Through Deutsch's crude law of social relations (1973), competition breeds competition, rather than cooperation. The self-fulfilling prophecy comes into play. Each party believes in the evil intentions of the other and the inevitability of disagreement, and therefore takes precautionary actions which signal mistrust and competitiveness (Blake, Sheppard & Mouton, 1964).

Reference was also made about the unclear information contained in the posters used by Christian Council (CC) during 2006 "Crusade for Christ by the Ghana Pentecostal Council (GPC) in Ejura. The content of the posters and the language used in advertising the proposed Christian outreach ignited the anger of the Muslims community against the Christian crusaders. As presented in the report, the Muslims were probably still wondering about how the Christians would achieve their ambition winning the Muslim community for Christ when some "observant" ones among them noticed the word "crusade" on the poster. This according to the respondents was immediately interpreted to mean religious warfare against the Muslims against the background of the historical crusade that started in 1096 AD, when Peter the Hermit caused more than six million people in Europe to reclaim the birthplace of Christianity from Islamic domination. To worsen the matter, the poster for the crusade according to the respondents interviewed, carried some pictures which the

Muslims considered to be provocative. The results from the findings also revealed that prompt intervention by the Police saved human casualties and injuries. During the three incidents cited above, several hundreds of lives were lost and properties worth millions of Ghana Cedis were destroyed. It was revealed that a religious conflict which has been much reported and debated is between the traditional religious authorities of the Ejura Traditional Area and Christian churches operating in several communities in the district. The annual ban on drumming and dancing which precedes the Yam festival of the Ejura people is the point of conflict as several Christian churches have refused to observe the ban and have been attacked by organized unofficial enforcers of the ban.

Also, land disputes between communities and state agencies have turned violent. These conflicts have arisen from government acquisition of vast tracts of land for which little or no compensation has been paid to the right owners. It was also observed that an Ejura farm which was acquired by the government for commercial activities had been abandoned. When the chiefs and elders demanded that the land be given back to them since the government had failed for the purpose for which the land was acquired, created long term disputes with the agencies that have been assigned the land or the individuals to whom they have allocated the land.

5.2.5 The role of the media

Another institution, which also accounts for the escalation of the conflict, is the media. The role of the media in Ghana as a young country under democratization is very noteworthy. There has been a significant progress in media proliferation and diversity since 1990s due to the increase in freedom afforded to the media by the state. This remarkable transformation has contributed to consolidating democracy in the country by creating the platform for citizens to express their opinions and setting the agenda for public debate on a wide range of issues (See for example Temin and Smith, 2002). However, the conduct of the media in the country has attracted many criticisms over the years due to polarization of the media houses, inauthentic publications, inaccurate reporting and other misconducts. These were evident in the case studied when the local FM station in Ejura announced that two members of NPP had died as a result of the clashes between the two main political rivalries. This announcement generated bloody conflict between the parties. The problem is compounded when the role of the press (media) in a conflict situation is seen to be that of "rumour mongering", distortion of the truth with the intent of destroying a party in the dispute, misrepresentation of the opinion of one person for the opinion of a group to which he belongs, subjectively quoting people out of context, reporting from only one side of the conflict and thus misleading the readers to believe that only that perspective is available and right, use of language that is pervaded by the doctrine of ethnic nationalism, dramatization of conflict situations and theorization of violence with a view to sell more copies of their newspapers or magazines etc.

A case is not being made here for the suppression of the truth by journalists in the attempt to prevent violent conflict, what is advocated is that journalists should be objective in their reporting, though as was recently observed "an objective scientists or journalists cannot exist". In my opinion, I think journalists can achieve a good measure of objectivity by providing unbiased coverage of both sides in the conflict, presenting all facts considered to be true and not taking sides by what they write. The blame-game between the parties involved in conflict based on the publications were further deepened by the media, by regular publishing of writing of letters/articles, organising press conferences of interest groups from communities, trying to portray the other as provocateurs and contemptuous of peace, law and order and by organizing confrontational radio phone-in debates. These are issues Ghanaians see as contradictory publications by the media which instead of resolving conflict rather escalate the situation. In my opinion, unprofessional conduct of some electronic and printed media is one of the causes of conflict in Ghana more especially in the Ejura-Sekyedumase district. Also, programmes on electronic media and printed media have contributed to the escalation of conflicts and disputes in the Ejura environs.

5.2.6 Conflict management strategies

Conflict management approach has been and continues to be measured by a variety of different taxonomies. There are various styles of behaviour by which interpersonal conflict can be handled. One of the first conceptual schemes for classifying conflict revolved around a simple cooperation competition dichotomy (Deutsch, 1949). However, doubts were raised over the ability of the dichotomy to reflect the complexity of an individual's perceptions of conflict behaviour (Smith, 1987). Blake and Mouton (1964) proposed a two-dimensional mode based on concern for people and concern for production for classifying conflict handling modes. While numerous researchers proposed revisions of this framework, such as Thomas (1976) who suggested the dimensions of assertiveness and cooperativeness in classifying the modes, Rahim and Bonoma's (1979) conceptualization has been one of the most popular. In Ghana it has been observed that strategies used in managing conflicts are by arbitration, mediation, compromising negotiations and dialogue. The findings revealed that negotiations, collaboration, dialogue and reconciliation were strategies used in Ejura to manage the conflicts that had existed. Public education campaign and imposing of curfew by the government were among some of the strategies used in the conflict zones.

Compromising, negotiation, collaboration, dialogue and reconciliation are associated with intermediate concern for both self and others. People with these styles/strategies try to achieve a reasonable middle ground so that all parties win. They explore issues to some extent and move to give and take position where there are no clear losers or winners. Everybody ends up with something, but not everything he or she wants. Compromising, negotiation, collaboration focuses on diplomacy. It satisfies rather than optimizes. The conflict management indicates in the first instance the perspective of the so called "third party" (a mediator, conflict advisor, conflict manager, or supervisor), which is called to help, or engages itself after its own incentive, in order to assists both conflict parties (and eventually one of them). One can speak about conflict dealing also, when during conflict both parties look for a consensual solution without asking for an external assistance. The forms of approaching and dealing with conflicts could be of very different nature. In compliance with Reimann (2005: 7) there are consequently three forms of dealing with conflict that are to be outlined: conflict settlement, conflict resolution, and conflict transformation. Furthermore, the case of conflict prevention is additionally mentioned.

5.2.7 Communication strategies used.

The process of communication involves a number of activities, which take into account the technical content of the messages and the education level, information needs, channel and communication behaviour of the stakeholders. The World Bank (2003) reported that implementation of communication activities typically involves distributing, broadcasting of radio and television messages, print media including posters, leaflets, handbooks, and conducting community-based group and interpersonal communication sessions. The availability of new information technologies and media such as internet, rural radio, mobile phones and TV open more channels for communication and give the chance for wide access to information.

To manage or prevent conflict in the Ejura-Sekyedumase conflict zone, the first key is communication. Conflict is not inherently bad, but it is the way in which conflict is managed that determines its outcome. Conflict can play a big part in all of our lives. It can happen at work, in school, at home and in our neighbourhoods. Conflict in the communities can often lead to uncertainty, arguments, aggression, destruction and even violence. There are no winners in conflict. Globally this truth has been proven historically. Diplomacy therefore is the order of the day. As the world in which we live becomes increasingly interconnected technologically, economically, and governmentally developing a greater level of meaningful dialogue, heartfelt communication, and mutual understanding shall be necessary. Upholding the dignity of humanity regardless of our ideology, agenda, and aims will best serve us all. For this reason every individual and the global community collectively will benefit enormously from developing the skills of communication, negotiation, and effective conflict dispute resolution. A lot of the conflict in our lives comes from how we communicate with others. Ineffective communication creates conflict even in situations where there is no real "conflict issue" or disagreement about a substantive issue. Poor

communication causes hurt feelings, anger, frustration, and tends to erode relationships, sometimes to the point where the relationship is not fixable. Many at times we call these situations personality conflicts, when in fact they are a result of poor communication.

5.2.8 Mediation process

It was noted that during mediation of the conflict between the two sects of Muslims (Tijaniya and Al Sunni), DISEC and chiefs and elders as mediators, first visited conflict communities and the parties involved. In that context, they went to see the people in their own homes. After that exercise, the leaders of the conflict were contacted by written letters to meet the District Security Committee and Chiefs and Elders. Face – to – face meeting was arranged for the parties whom they would like mediation. It was also revealed from the findings that, the mediation team first met with the parties to hear what their concerns and thought was about the other party or the events in the past that has led to the disputes. To hear their views about their concerns gave them the opportunity to talk about their concerns without someone disagreeing with them or telling them not to get so upset. The purpose of this is to ensure that the party understand as fully as possible what mediation involves so that they can make an informed decision. The aim at all times is to create a sense of safety and clarity about the process so that the parties can feel confident that it will provide an opportunity to openly discuss their concerns in order to seek genuine resolution. The conflict resolution approaches also point out strategies that could be employed to find an exit from the conflict's destroying dynamic and that aim toward achieving satisfying solution for all parties involved. Among the many, Burton (1968) could be regarded as the main representative of this research direction. Further, Kelman and Fisher (2003) and Kriesberg (1998), who brought some very important impulses to this discussion, are also to be mentioned. Burton (1968), contrary to the conflict settlement approaches, considers ongoing conflicts as a result of unsatisfied human needs. This view becomes clear particularly in his approach to problem-solving conflict resolution and respectively in his human-needs theory (Burton 1990). This author differentiates thereby interests that are changeable or negotiable, from needs. Here, security, justice and recognition are to be mentioned among the others needs and values. These values are regarded universal; they are not to be suppressed and are consequently indivisible. In accordance to this conflict resolution intends not to end the conflict as such, but to transform it into a nonviolent conflict.

Figure 7: Shows picture of some members of the mediation committee, the DISEC

CHAPTER 6: CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.0 Introduction

This chapter provides major conclusions from the results of the study and offers recommendations, based on the findings. The presentation of the conclusion will mainly try to answer the research questions

6.1 Conclusion

6.1.1 Research area

The research was conducted at Ejura-Sekyedumase in the Ashanti region of Ghana. Ejura is a multi-ethnic and multi-religious society consists of Christians, Muslims and Traditional religionists. These ethnic and religious groups have peculiar beliefs, norms and values which could ignite anger and violent conflict with ethnic and religious tones. Ejura also has one of the largest markets in the country and has attracted all manner of people from all over the country and the neighbouring countries such as Burkina Faso, Ivory Coast, Nigeria and Mali to engage in commercial activities like trading. Because of its commercial activities, most of the residents in the district live in the capital (Ejura). It was revealed from the findings that because the people belong to different ethnic, political and religious groups has brought differences and divisions among the communities.

6.1.2 Causes of conflict in the study area.

From the findings, it was revealed that religious and political conflicts are the number one major conflicts in the district. This was followed by motor unions, chieftaincy and land litigation disputes respectively. Ethnic conflict was also mentioned as one of the conflicts in the study area and is mostly on land use and land ownership.

Religious conflict was revealed as one of the common in the community. The findings showed the following as some of the causes of religious conflict: poor, offensive and unclear communication, misinterpretation of doctrines, rumour mongering, distortion of the truth with intent of destroying a party, misrepresentation of opinion of one person for the opinion of a group to which he belongs, when right people are not appointed as leaders and misused of funds. It was also noted that Ejura community is dominated by Muslim and the enmity between the two sects of Muslims (Tijaniya and Al Sunni) is greater than between Muslims and Christians.

Evidence from the views of respondents, revealed that political conflict were caused as a result of vindictiveness of political opponents, unlawful arrest of former political appointees, harassment of political opponents and showing of supremacy. From the findings, 2008 voters' registration exercise prior to the general election mar political conflict between the two main political rivalries (NPP and NDC) each accusing the other for registering minors to rig the general election. From the findings, it was revealed that land territories and borders have been subjects of ethnic conflict and central issues of countless disputes, confrontations and disagreement among communities in Ejura-Sekyedumase district. It was also noted during the research that one of the ethnic conflict was associated with when one ethnic group wants to show superiority over the other in terms of power and wealth and tried to monopolize over resources. Discrimination against the various ethnic factions was some of the reasons assigned by majority of informants as reasons for ethnic conflict. It was noted from the result that, chieftaincy and land litigation conflict arises as a result of unlawful acquisition of land, land owners not trustworthy, people struggling for land which are not theirs etc. It was also revealed that when family lands are sold to people without the prior knowledge of the family members created problems and therefore could lead to violent conflict.

Also, land disputes between communities and state agencies have turned violent. These conflicts have arisen from government acquisition of vast tracts of land for which little or no compensation

has been paid to the right owners. It was also observed that an Ejura farm which was acquired by the government for commercial activities had been abandoned. When the chiefs and elders demanded that the land be given back to them since the government had failed for the purpose for which the land was acquired, created long term disputes with the agencies that have been assigned the land or the individuals to whom they have allocated the land.

The evidence from the views of interviewed respondents and observation of researcher suggest that the way information is communicated can affect the transformation of conflict just as good and effective communication can promote peace, offensive or unclear communication can lead to the escalation on conflicts. The findings revealed that in situations of conflict, no matter the type, disputants should watch what they say or write. Confrontational language has to be avoided as much as possible; rather, each party to the dispute ought to use language that leaves some room for peaceful settlement of the disputes. The use of unclear language as noted from the findings could lead to the escalation of conflicts. Therefore the parties to a dispute or conflict have to select their language in such a manner that they are not misinterpreted.

6.1.3   Strategies used in managing conflict.

The findings revealed that negotiations, collaboration, dialogue and reconciliation were strategies used in managing conflict that had existed in Ejura. Public education campaign, imposing of curfew by the government, the use of security agencies and the enforcement of the law were among some of the strategies used in managing conflict in the district. Compromising, negotiation, collaboration, dialogue and reconciliation are associated with intermediate concern for both self and others. People with these styles/strategies try to achieve a reasonable middle ground so that all parties win. They explore issues to some extent and move to give and take position where there are no clear losers or winners. Everybody ends up with something, but not everything he or she wants. Compromising, negotiation, collaboration focuses on diplomacy. It satisfies rather than optimizes. The conflict management indicates in the first instance the perspective of the so called "third party" (a mediator, conflict advisor, conflict manager, or supervisor), which is called to help, or engages itself after its own incentive, in order to assists both conflict parties (and eventually one of them). One can speak about conflict dealing also, when during conflict, both parties look for a consensual solution without asking for an external assistance.

6.1.4   Communication strategies used in Ejura.

The findings revealed that the form of communication strategies used during the conflict situation was by electronic media like the radio, mobile phones; FM stations; printed media such as the daily newspapers; magazines; posters depicting peaceful co-existence; government information van moving from community-to-community for public education, consultations with the parties involved in the conflict; stakeholders meetings; and face-to-face communication with the leaders of various parties. Rapport was established with feuding parties whereby mediators listen attentively to both sides and acted impartially. It was also noted that another form of communication strategy used to manage the conflict was the verbal invitation by the chiefs and elders to the disputed parties. Another strategy used according to the findings was during Yam Festival which is celebrated every year in Ejura and its communities. During the festival, the chiefs and his elders, opinion leaders in the communities, politicians of the various political parties, religious leaders and leaders of youth organizations used the plat form to communicate to the gathering on conflict situation in the area. The availability of new information technologies and media such as internet, rural radio, mobile phones and TV open more channels for communication and give the chance for wide access to information. As population grows and technology evolves accordingly, these channels of communication changed as well. When communication increases or when communication decreases during conflict or crisis, once hostility becomes entrenched, channels of communication quickly degraded.

6.2 Recommendations

6.2.1 Communication channel

Third parties are often effective at re-establishing channels of communication. It is, therefore, recommended that mediators become channel of communication between parties exploring reconciliation, negotiation, collaboration and dialogue during conflict management or resolution. A third party can carry messages back and forth, and explore ideas for settlement that the two parties could not discuss face-to-face. Third parties have the added benefit of being able to manage the dialogue such that intent and meaning can be communicated without hostile interpretations.

6.2.2 Appropriate communication strategy

From the findings, the study recommends that during festivals, the chiefs, elders and opinion leaders in the communities use the occasion as a platform to create awareness about conflict situation in the area and the need for ethnic, political and religious tolerance. Political leaders of the various political parties during campaigns, use the platform to talk peace rather than division.

6.2.3 Conflict management strategy

It is recommended that mediation be used as conflict management strategies to negotiate dialogue, collaboration and reconciliation during conflict situations among disputants. This strategy from the findings proved to be effective. Reconciliation, collaboration and dialogue are associated with intermediate concern for both self and others. People with these strategies try to achieve a reasonable middle ground so that all parties win. They explore issues to some extent and move to give and take position where there are no clear losers or winners

To this end, it is important for all stakeholders to come together to bring lasting solution to conflict in Ejura-Sekyedumase District.

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ANNEXES

Annex 1

Piloting semi – structured interview check list
Please provide answer(s) to the question that best applies to your situation

Date of interview: Sex:

Occupation: Marital status:

1. Where do you come from?
2. How long have you been living in this community?
3. Are there any differences between the people in the community? If yes give reason(s) for the differences?
4. What is your understanding about conflict?
5. Has there been any major conflict during the past five years (2004-2009) in the community? If yes, name them.
6. What was the reason(s) for the conflict?
7. How was the conflict managed?
8. What type of conflict is common in this community?
9. Did the conflict leads to violence? If yes, what kind of violence?
10. What give rise to conflict in this community?
11. Are conflicts rampant? What is the basis for the conflict?
12. What ways did you used to contain conflict?
13. Did properties and life destroyed during conflict?
14. What do you think are ways to deal with conflict?
15. How did you communicate during conflict?
16. How effective is communication during conflict?
17. What form of communication is used most during conflict?
18. How did you deal with conflict that are not fully managed or resolved?
19. How has conflict affected the community?
20. How should conflict be managed in this community?
21. Have you put any measures in place to reduce conflict? If no, why?
22. What measures is put in place to reduce conflict?
23. What is the government role in managing conflict?
24. Were you satisfied with the government role? Give reason(s)
25. Do you have mediators to mediate in conflict situations? If no, give reason(s)
26. How many conflicts have been recorded this year?

Annex 2

Revised semi-structured interview check list.

Please provide answer(s) to the question that best applies to your situation

Date of interview: Sex:

1. How long have you been living in this community?
2. Are there any differences among the people in this community? If yes give reason(s) for the differences?
3. What is your understanding about conflict?
4. What has been the major conflict during the past ten years (2000-2009) in the community?
5. What was the reason(s) for the conflict?
6. How was the conflict managed?
7. Did the conflict leads to violence? If yes, what kind of violence?
8. What give rise to conflict in this community?
9. How rampant conflict is in the community
10. What ways did you used to contain conflict?
11. Did properties and life destroyed during conflict?
12. What do you think are ways to deal with conflict?
13. How did you communicate during conflict?
14. How effective was communication during conflict?
15. What style of communication is used most during conflict?
16. How did you deal with conflict that are not fully managed or resolved?
17. How has conflict affected the community?
18. What measures was put in place to reduce the conflict
19. What was the government role in managing conflict?
20. Were you satisfied with the government role? Give reason(s)
21. Do you have mediators to mediate in conflict situations? What role do they played...
22. How many conflicts have been recorded this year?