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THE ROLE OF CULTURE IN

THE DAGBON

ETHNOPOLITICAL PEACE

NEGOTIATION

PROCESSES

ABAZAAMI JOSEPH

*Institute for Interdisciplinary Research and Consultancy Services
University for Development Studies, Tamale, Ghana*

and

MATHIAS A. ATENG

*Faculty Officer
University for Development Studies, Navrongo, Ghana*

ABSTRACT

Culture is a significant variable that shapes peace negotiation processes in any type of conflict. It frames the experiences of the parties involved in the conflict about the conflict and more importantly the kind of strategies that could be adopted to manage or address the conflict. This paper explores the role of culture in shaping the peace negotiation processes of the Dagbon ethnopolitical conflict of Northern Ghana. The paper is qualitative and empirical in nature, employing the interpretive constructivist paradigm. Twelve (12) elders from the Dagbon Traditional Area who have an in-depth understanding of the traditions and culture of Dagbon were interviewed using an unstructured interview guide. The unstructured interview examined the respondents understanding of the cultural dimension of Dagbon and how it influenced the peace process especially the selection of the negotiators, issues under negotiation

and the negotiation process. The respondents' description of the culture of Dagbon allows it to be the best-fit for a high-context culture even though years of urbanization and democratization have eroded some of the features that are associated with a high-context culture. Similar to most findings on cross-cultural negotiation processes in high-context cultures, all the negotiators were men; the issues negotiated were largely based on the culture and traditions of Dagbon and finally, the interest and priorities of the negotiators were culturally defined. As with many other ethnopolitical conflicts, the culture of Dagbon was key in shaping the process and outcome of the peace negotiations. It is therefore imperative for cultural issues to be properly understood and addressed satisfactorily in order not to undermine peace negotiation processes.

Key Words:

Culture, conflict, ethnopolitics, negotiation and peace processes.

Introduction

Culture is a unique variable that shapes and influences the meaning society derives from the world. It is the lens that influences what we see and do not see; it characterizes how we perceive and interpret the things around us and where we draw boundaries (Mazrui, 1990). Similarly, Lebaron and Pillay (2006) note that culture is the social fabric that defines the beliefs, norms and goals of every society and shapes its perceptions, attitudes, values, outcomes and behaviours. Also defined as the ideational codes, schemas, metaphors or cognitive models of society, culture serves as the framework for the behaviour of a society as well as its interaction with the outside world (Avruch, 2006).

Many scholars, as well as practitioners of social and human sciences, recognize the role of culture in modelling societies. Among other things, the underlying view is that culture embodies the material, social and ideological fabrics of society and these in turn influence how society functions – in

terms of production, distribution, consumption, and relationships with other societies (Mazrui, 1990). Culture is, therefore, an important component of society; serving as a cross-cutting variable that is essential for development and as the knowledge base and source of meaning of every society (Lederach, 1995).

In view of the foregoing, there is a clarion call for the application of cultural resources - appropriate technology - for the development of societies including in the understanding and peaceful resolution of conflicts (Lederach, 1995). In order to understand conflict and how it can be resolved, the role of culture cannot be overemphasized. Culture shapes how societies understand relationships and how to deal with conflicts present in such relationships. Conflict as a human phenomenon is embedded in relationships that are culturally influenced. The power of culture in conflict resolution and transformation is also widely recognized by a number of scholars (Avruch, 1998; Lederach, 1995; and Lebaron, 2003).

When conflict is defined in terms of resources, power, status, hierarchical relationships, deeper

issues rooted in worldviews, and the relationship between one's self and others, then a confluence of culture and conflict is designated (Lebaron and Pillay, 2006). According to Lebaron and Pillay (2006), these parameters of conflict are culturally driven and therefore to ignore the power of culture in understanding and addressing conflict is analogical to missing the largest part of the iceberg, the part beneath the surface. In conflict resolution efforts, then, culture provides the platform for the practitioner to make more meaningful, intentional and adaptive choices for the peaceful and sustainable resolution of the conflict (Lebaron, 2003). Practitioners are therefore entreated to draw on the richness of culture as a resource in the resolution of conflicts, especially communal conflicts (Lederach, 1995).

One defining area of conflict resolution that has witnessed an ever-increasing role of culture is peace negotiation processes. Negotiation is a process of communication between at least two parties, including between individuals and states, aimed at arriving at a mutually acceptable outcome over an issue (Adair and Brett, 2003 and Garcha, 2007). Communication - an integral component of negotiation - makes it difficult to ignore the human elements of cognition, context and subjectivity, which are all culturally determined (Avruch, 1998). In addition, negotiation involves the participation of negotiators whose conduct and behaviours are culturally influenced (Garcha, 2007) and are manifested in cultural differences and embodiments. In negotiating peace agreements, these elements are brought to bear at/on the negotiation table and are revealed through the positions and actions of the various parties (Garcha, 2007). The increasing utilization of negotiated settlement, as the most sustainable alternative in conflict resolution, serves as an eye opener for practitioners to first consider the imperatives of culture in conflict resolution endeavours. We thus zone in on the following.

In March 2002, a chieftaincy conflict between two royal clans (Andanis and Abudus) of Dagbon in the

Northern Region of Ghana resulted in the murder of the Overlord of Dagbon, Yaa-Naa Yakubu Andani and about forty of his subjects. Although this was a communal affair, the March 2002 occurrences became a national issue as the state was accused of not protecting the lives of the Chief and his followers (Tonah, 2012). In an effort to finding a lasting solution to the conflict which has persisted since colonial times, the Government of Ghana appointed a Committee of Eminent Chiefs in 2003 to negotiate a peaceful resolution of the traditional chieftaincy difference between the two factions (Ahorsu and Gebe, 2011). With support from the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), as the main facilitator, together with the Ministries of Interior and Chieftaincy, and based largely on consultations with the various parties to the conflict and interpretations of traditional issues, the Committee came out with a peace agreement known as the 'Dagbon Roadmap' with five key benchmarks for the return of peace to Dagbon (Tonah, 2012).

In view of the established views above about culture as an influential variable in negotiation processes, the question we ask is: How was culture prominently featured in the Dagbon Peace Negotiation Processes and its outcome, the roadmap? In effect, this paper seeks to interrogate the role that culture played in the negotiation process of the Dagbon ethnopolitical conflict in the Northern Region of Ghana. We argue that culture was a key variable in influencing and shaping the Dagbon Peace Process and how the roadmap was designed. The process of negotiation, the issues that were negotiated, and the negotiating parties were all culturally defined based on the culture of the people of Dagbon.

THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVE

High-context / Collectivistic and Low-context / Individualistic Cultures

The influence of culture on peace negotiation processes is largely determined by the cultural dimension or cultural starting point of the society in question. Cultural dimension, according to

Hofstede (2001), is **“an aspect of a culture that can be measured relative to other cultures”** (p.31). It provides the means for the explanation of cross-cultural patterns. For the purpose of this paper, two dimensions will be discussed: high-context/collectivism and low-context/individualism.

High-context (Collectivism) and low-context (Individualism) cultures focus to a large extent on how relationships are established and held in society (Hall, 1976 as cited in Lebaron, 2003). Low-context (Individualistic) cultures pertain to societies where ties between individuals are loose: everyone is expected to look after himself or herself and his or her immediate family. High-context (collectivistic) **“cultures pertain to societies in which people from birth onward are integrated into strong, cohesive in-groups, which throughout people’s lifetime continue to protect them in exchange for unquestionable loyalty”** (Hofstede et al, 2010, p. 92). Similarly, relationships and status in collectivist cultures are very important. As such, issues relating to losing or saving face are critical factors as one person’s reputation and status do not only affect the individual but the larger cultural group. In such environments, face becomes more important than material gains (Hall, 1976 as cited in Lebaron, 2003). In individualistic cultures, however, self-respect is defined from the point of view of the individual as the counter characteristic to face (Hofstede et al., 2010). In other words, face is defined by the society, while self-respect is defined by the individual. Shame and guilt are two features which help to define collectivistic and individualistic cultures (Augsburger, 1992). Individual feelings of shame within collectivistic societies are deemed as shame on the whole society and a disrespect of the norms and rules of that society (Lebaron, 2003). In individualistic societies, however, such a feeling is expressed only in guilt (Hofstede et al, 2010). These standpoints guide the understanding and generalization of the influence of culture in conflict resolution processes including negotiation.

Employing the high-context and low-context cultural dimensions, Adair and Brett (2004) and Fauren and Rubin (1993) developed different models to explain the contextual cues of culture in conflict resolution especially in peace negotiation processes across cultures. Adair and Brett (2004) argue that culture affects the negotiation processes through three major frames: beliefs, goals and norms respectively. With respect to beliefs, Adair and Brett(2004) observe that in some cultures, negotiation is about the distribution of resources while in others, negotiation is viewed as a strategy that is task and relationship focused. Culture is an underlying variable that influences the negotiators’ assumption that negotiation is largely a process of building, reconstructing, and maintaining relationships or a process of distributing resources (Markus and Kitayama, 1991 as cited in Adair and Brett, 2004). Negotiators from a low-context culture view negotiation as a process of distributing resources and not about relationships. Negotiators from high-context cultures, on the other hand, tend to place priority on relationship building over resource distribution during negotiation processes. This, therefore, suggests that negotiators from high context cultures are probably likely to view negotiation within the frame of relationships; as such their negotiation goals are guided by this frame. However, negotiators from low-context cultures largely view negotiation in terms of resource distribution and outcome, and therefore any goals that are brought to the negotiation table are guided by this principle.

Goal, according to Adair and Brett (2004), refers to the motive of the negotiator in the negotiation process, be it cooperative or competitive. Negotiators who are cooperative- oriented focus on integrative outcomes or joint value creation, while negotiators who are competitive- oriented are more inclined to the distributive or value-claiming aspects of negotiation. The culture of the negotiator determines the kind of goal to pursue in the negotiation process. The belief of negotiators from high-context cultures is that negotiation is primarily about relationships; as such

the interplay between cooperative and competitive goals seeks to create a long-term relationship that is not too cooperative but has enough social distance to justify claiming value (Adair and Brett, 2004). In low-context cultures, negotiators believe the process of negotiation is basically about the distribution of resources. The primary cooperative goal may be to build trust, while the primary competitive goal may be to establish dominance. The interplay between cooperative and competitive goals, therefore, focuses on the creation of joint gains and the claim of the largest possible portion of such gains. Even though negotiators from high-context and low-context cultures have both cooperative and competitive goals, the meanings attached to these goals are different and determined by culture (Adair and Brett, 2004).

The last frame of cultural influence on negotiation, according to Adair and Brett (2004), is on the norms of negotiation. Norms relate to standards of behaviour during negotiation: low versus high-context communication. Negotiators from low-context cultures engage in more direct information sharing, whereas negotiators from high-context cultures favour more indirect, implicit communication (Adair, Okumura and Brett, 2001 as cited in Adair and Brett, 2004). In other words, in high-context cultures, **“meaning is communicated not just by a person’s words or acts, but also by the context in which those words or acts are communicated”** (Adair and Brett, 2004, p. 161). Communication in high-context cultures is therefore indirect and requires one to be familiar with various contexts of the communicative event such as culture before the intended meaning can be correctly decoded. In low-context cultures, however, communication is rather direct allowing for interlocutors to follow properly the intended meanings of any communicative act. It, therefore, does not require familiarity with the cultural context before meaning is derived from the meanings of the words themselves are important in understanding the message (Adair and Brett, 2004). Thus, while the message in low-context cultures is explicit that of high-context cultures is implicit.

Low-context cultures also make appeals based on facts while high-context cultures stick to a general principle. Again, persuasion in low-context cultures is rationally guided, while that of high-context is emotional and affective (Cohen, 1991 as cited in Adair and Brett, 2004).

Fauren and Rubin (1993) argue that the influence of culture on the negotiation process can be viewed from five elements of negotiation, namely: actors involved, structure, strategy, process and outcome respectively. Fauren and Rubin (1993) further opine that the greatest influence of culture on any peace process, in this case, negotiation, is the actor. How the actor perceives the issue, other actors and their intentions are conditioned by culture. Also, the composition of the negotiation team which represents the parties and takes decisions are culturally influenced (Fauren and Rubin, 1993).

This is based largely on power structure, dynamics and levels of authority in society which is culturally defined. With respect to structure, Fauren and Rubin (1993) define it as the organizational setting, the degree of transparency of the negotiation, the number of parties and issues to be negotiated.

It also depicts the entire cultural frame of the society, which refers to the codes of conduct within the society. In certain cultural settings, the structure is the culturally defined system for dispute resolution: from the family to the clan and finally to the chief. The strategy element within a negotiation process refers to how the issue of the conflict can be addressed to the satisfaction of all the parties involved (Faure and Rubin, 1993). This does not only refer to a cross-cultural setting, but also the cultural context in which the negotiation takes place. While some cultures prefer the application of traditional

norms to addressing any stalemate, others prefer to address the issue from a general perspective (Faure and Rubin, 1993, :10; Fisher 1980:51). Especially in high-context societies, the strategy is guided by the norms, values and historical practices that have existed in these societies.

As a result, compromise is often difficult. Furthermore, while members of some cultures such as low-context learn to search for compromises in challenging situations; others look for consensus; while another group may work on attaining victory (Faure and Rubin, 1993, Hopmann 1996).

The fourth element of negotiation is process. This refers largely to the process of communication adopted for negotiation and the extent to which culture influences the effectiveness of communication in the negotiation process (Avruch, 2006). Communication is an important variable in every negotiation process and it is one of the human elements that cannot be discounted (Hopmann, 1996). In situations where cross-cultural misunderstandings exist, the negotiation processes can be hampered (Fisher, 1980). Some cultures are direct to the substance and the problem, while others are indirect. Even time is perceived differently in different cultures and such differences on time perceptions might disrupt the negotiation process (Lebaron, 2003). In both low-context and high-context situations, miscommunication is unavoidable.

The final factor, outcome, can be influenced directly or indirectly by culture. Indirectly, outcome is determined by the extent to which culture influences the other four factors. According to Fauren and Rubin (1993), how culture impacts the other four variables has an indirect bearing on the outcome. Culture determines the kind of outcome that parties prefer. While some parties would favour an agreement, others would be interested in the content of the agreement. Furthermore, the interpretation of the agreement is influenced by culture (Faure and Rubin, 1993), so that, for example, while some parties may perceive an agreement as projecting their image, others may see it as being biased.

In every society, culture serves as the value system that directs and guides the actions of individuals within that society. In negotiation, the value system of the society within which the negotiation process is taking place guides the behaviour and actions of the parties and the negotiators or their representatives. The value system, therefore, serves as the benchmark for negotiators and parties in a conflict who are engaged in negotiation or peace processes (Fauren and Rubin, 1993). Culture provides a lens for probing the underlying perceptions and understanding of the issues of the conflict and how such issues can be resolved. In culturally high-contexts where tradition is valued, during negotiations, emphasis will be placed more on the valued traditions than on others such as economic development (Fauren and Rubin, 1993). Further, culture, as a value system and lens of perception, serves both, as a yardstick for measuring the success of a negotiation process and the performance of the negotiator (Lang, 1993). Whether negotiation is taking place across cultures or within the same culture, the issues to be considered, the behaviour pattern of the parties and how the negotiation process is conducted are influenced by the value systems.

The theoretical perspectives reviewed will help define a framework for the further development of this paper. These frames are the nature of the parties, the issues in the peace process or negotiation and the negotiation process. The challenge of the theoretical literature thus far reviewed is reflected in its restriction to only cross-cultural peace negotiation processes. How culture influences peace negotiation processes in intra-cultural settings is not fully addressed and so the objective of this paper is to contribute to filling this gap with a focus on the peace processes of the Dagbon ethnopolitical conflict in Northern Ghana. The general principles and frames underlined so far will, however, be applied to critically examine the role of culture in intra-cultural peace negotiation processes.



Context of the Dagbon Ethnopolitical Conflict

The Dagbon ethnopolitical conflict is a chieftaincy dispute between two families of the same clan or lineage - the Abudus and Andanis – over the selection of the Yaa Naa, the King of the Dagomba people. The parties also contest the procedure for the selection of the king, as well as the institutions or persons whose responsibility it is to do the selection (Awedoba 2009; Tsikata and Seini 2004). The conflict between the two families or gates dates back to 1948 following the death of Yaa Naa Mahama II from the Andani clan. His son, who subsequently became the regent, failed in his bid to succeed his deceased father as the King of Dagbon. Yaa Naa Mahama III from the Abudu clan was instead installed as King (Asiedu, 2008). In accordance with the principle of rotation, after the death of Mahama III, the next king should have been chosen from the Andani family since the deceased King was from the Abudu family/gate. Instead, another member of the Abudu family (Abudulai III) was selected as the Yaa Naa in March 1954 (Ahorsu and Gebe 2011). This selection generated considerable dissatisfaction, particularly amongst the Andanis who felt they had been robbed of the high office (Awedoba, 2009).

The conflict raged on throughout Ghana's struggle for independence with the Andanis refusing to recognize Abudulai III as King and using all means at their disposal to remove the reigning King. These, however, failed. Yaa Naa Abudulai III survived the crisis until his death in 1967 (Anamzoya, 2004). The turbulent and divisive political situation during the independence struggle had an impact on the Dagbon conflict with the elite from both gates aligning themselves with the two main political parties in the

country (Ahorsu and Gebe, 2011). The Abudu Royal Gate aligned itself with the United Party (UP) while the Andani Royal Gate associated itself with the Convention People's Party (CPP) (Asiedu, 2008). In 1960, the Nkrumah government (1957–66) initiated a peace agreement between the two factions which attempted to restore the rotational succession system in Dagbon (Tonah, 2012). It was agreed that on the death of Abudulai III, the next King should come from the Andani family. In line with this agreement, Andani III from the Andani clan was selected as the Yaa Naa in 1968 following the death of Abudulai III in 1967 (Ahorsu and Gebe 2011). After the overthrow of the Nkrumah regime, the National Liberation Council government (1966–69) in 1968 set up the Mate Kole Committee to Inquire into the Dagbon Chieftaincy Conflict. The Committee in its report concluded that the enskinment of Yaa Naa Andani III was not in accordance with Dagbon tradition and therefore invalid. The National Liberation Council government however did not implement the recommendation of the report until the ushering in of the Busia government (1969-1972). The new government accepted the Committee's recommendations and ordered for the installation of Gbonlana Mahamadu from the Abudu Clan as Yaa Naa (Anamzoya, 2004).

The government of Busia, in its quest to see to the implementation of the recommendations of the Mate Kole Committee, sent security forces to Yendi to forcefully remove members of the Andani Family from the Gbewaa Palace to pave way for the installation of Gbonlana Mahamadu as Yaa Naa. This singular act of the then government resulted in the outbreak of violence in the capital of the Dagbon Kingdom, Yendi on September 9, 1969 which culminated in the death of 30 members of the Andani Family. (Ahorsu and Gebe 2011; Olawale 2006). Following the overthrow of the Busia regime in 1972, the military government of Acheampong (1972–78) set up the Ollenu Committee to Ascertain the Correct Custom and Customary Practices for the Nomination, Selection and Enskinment of a Yaa Naa (Asiedu, 2008).

The setting up of the Ollenu Committee was largely as a result of the petitioning of the Andani Family for a review of the decisions of the Mate Kole Committee (Ahorsu and Gebe, 2011).

The Committee in its report declared that the deskinment of Yaa Naa Andani III was illegitimate and therefore recommended for the removal of Mahamadu Abudulai IV as Yaa Naa. Consequently, Yakubu Andani was enskinned as Yaa Naa in 1972 (Mahama, 2009 and Anamzooya, 2004). Yaa-Naa Yakubu Andani II was not accepted as overlord by the Abudu Family and their attempts to change the status quo during the PNDC regime (1981–1992) failed (Asiedu, 2008). Further, a court action by the Abudu Family at the Supreme Court of Ghana in 1986 resulted in a ruling in favour of the Andani Family. The Supreme Court also upheld the recommendations of the Ollenu Committee and as well affirmed the principle of the rotation system between the two clans as being fundamental to traditional rule in Dagbon (Mahama, 2009). It was expected that the 1986 ruling of the Supreme Court of Ghana would bring finality to the conflict. This was, however, not the case as it appeared the Abudu Family was bidding its time for a change in government (Mahama 2009; Anamzooya, 2004).

The change of government in 2001 from the ruling National Democratic Congress to the opposition New Patriotic Party and associated outcomes with respect to this conflict confirmed the position of Anamzooya (2004) and Mahama (2009) that the Abudu Family was bidding time for a change in government. With the ascension of the NPP into power the Abudu Family, sensing that there was now a government more sympathetic to its cause, gradually resuscitated its demand for the performance of the funeral of their deposed King, Mahamadu Abdulai IV (MacGaffey, 2006). The Abudu Family also challenged and undermined the authority of the reigning King, Yaa Naa Andani II by organising a parallel celebration of key traditional festivals and ceremonies, particularly the Bugum and the Eid-ul-Adha in 2001 and 2002 respectively and allegedly appointing chiefs to traditional offices

without recourse to the Yaa Naa (MacGaffey, 2006; Olawale, 2006). Yaa Naa Andani II considered any parallel celebration of the Bugum and other festivals and the security provided to the Abudu group by NPP government officials as an affront to his office and a clear sign of tacit government support for the Abudus. The Andanis were determined not to let this continue (MacGaffey, 2006 and Olawale, 2006).

Relying on early warning signs, there were reports in the media and from other agencies that suggested that both families were preparing a war. Based on these reports, the Northern Regional Security Council recommended to the government for the imposition of curfew in Yendi which was implemented on March 23, 2002 (MacGaffey, 2006). Aside the curfew, the Regional Security Council also called for the cancellation of the celebration of the Bugum Festival (Ahorsu and Gebe, 2011). The curfew was, however, unilaterally lifted by the Regional Minister of Northern Region following assurances by the Yaa Naa Andani II that there would be no disturbances during the celebration of the festival. Yaa Naa Andani II was clearly unhappy about attempts by government officials to scuttle efforts to celebrate the Bugum Festival in 2002 and saw this as another sign of government support for the Abudus (Macgaffey, 2006).

The lifting of the curfew and the ban imposed on the celebration of the Bugum festival were therefore considered a “victory” by the Andanis. The general mistrust between the two factions, the stockpiling of arms by both factions, and the tension in the town during the celebration of the Bugum Festival created the conditions for the outbreak of violence in Yendi (Macgaffey, 2006). On March 25, 2002, an attack on an emissary of the Yaa Naa by a group of Abudu youth and the destruction of his bicycle ignited the violent conflict between the two sides. Three days of fighting between supporters of both factions resulted in the death of the Yaa-Naa Yakubu Andani II and 30 of his supporters as well as the destruction of 36 houses (Macgaffey, 2006; Wuaku Commission 2002).

Following the March 2002 violent outbreak and recommendations from the Wuaku Commission, the Ghana government appointed a Committee of Eminent Chiefs in 2003 to negotiate a peaceful resolution of the traditional chieftaincy difference between the two factions (Ahorsu and Gebe, 2011). With support from the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), as the main facilitator, together with the Ministries of Interior and Chieftaincy, and based largely on consultations with the various parties to the conflict and interpretations of traditional issues, the Committee came out with a peace agreement known as the 'Dagbon Roadmap' with five key benchmarks for the return of peace to Dagbon (Tonah, 2012). How did the culture of Dagbon shape the process and outcome of the roadmap? It is this question that this research seeks to answer using a qualitative research approach.

Methodology

In addressing the research question *"how was culture prominently featured in the Dagbon Peace Negotiation Processes and its outcome, the roadmap"*, the paper adopted the qualitative approach to research. Culture, as a fabric of society, is difficult to measure and can only be fully understood when expressed in words. Culture and how culture influences the behaviour pattern of society can best be understood when there is a critical exploration into the details (Uwe, 2009) and it is within the framework of qualitative research that this exploration can be achieved. To achieve the objective of the paper, the interpretive constructivist paradigm was selected with grounded theory as the specific research method. This paper does not seek to approve or disapprove any theory, but rather the study focuses on developing a theory from the data that is collected (Creswell, 2007) as a result the need for a grounded theory approach.

Data for the paper were obtained from both primary and secondary sources. Data from primary sources were collected through unstructured interviews with the support of a thematic interview guide. Although non probability sampling - snowballing- was adopted in selecting respondents for the study,

the interview process stopped after the twelfth (12th) respondent was interviewed, because a theoretical saturation was attained. The respondents selected were elders such as chiefs, clan and family heads from the Dagbon Traditional Area who had an in-depth understanding of the traditions and culture of Dagbon, the Dagbon history, the Dagbon ethnopolitical conflict and their understanding of the peace process or the roadmap.

The researchers conducted interviews of one(1) hour with each of the 12 respondents at their homes with the help of the interview guide which covered areas such as the Dagbon peace process, Dagbon culture and traditions, the components of traditions and culture that defined the peace process. The interviews were recorded with a tape recorder after permission was sought from the respondents. Similarly, brief notes were taken by the researchers during the interview sessions.

The recorded interviews were transcribed and subsequently edited and proof-read to attain consistency and to minimize errors in the transcripts. The transcripts and the field notes were then read repeatedly to identify text segments for coding. This was done at two levels; based on the text as contained in the transcripts, what Creswell (2012) calls inductive and on the theoretical framework reviewed- deductive. The codes were then reduced to become more analytical by assigning the codes to the units of data on the transcripts and the field notes. With the final codes, an intra-case analysis was done to understand the perspectives of each respondent. Subsequently, an inter-case analysis was also carried out to deepen the analysis and to compare the views of the respondents. The two stages of intra-case and inter-case analysis set the grounds for the holistic discussion of the responses in line with the objective and research question of the paper (Yin, 2014). The data or codes were then described and supported with direct quotations from the transcripts. The relevant interpretations were then generated and the meanings derived from such reflections were related to relevant literature to either confirm, challenge or add new knowledge to the field (Creswell, 2012).

Results and Discussion

This section discusses the role of culture in shaping the peace negotiation process of the Dagbon conflict as well as its outcome based on the responses of the interviewees. The discussion will first seek to contextualize the cultural dimension of the people of Dagbon: whether high-context or low-context or whether the situation in Dagbon incorporates both dimensions. This then guided the analysis and discussion of culture in the peace process from three frames: the selection of negotiators, the process of negotiation and the issues that had been negotiated respectively.

Cultural Dimension of Dagbon

The cultural dimension based on the responses of interviewees can be described as a high-context/collectivistic culture. Utilizing the criteria of Hall (1976) in his categorization of cultures based on high-context/collectivistic cultures and low-context/individualistic cultures, the collective responses of the interviewees with respect to communication style of the people, relationship building, family ties, shame and face saving, align the culture of Dagbon with that of the high-context/collectivistic cultures. According to the respondents, communication in the tradition of Dagbon is indirect through the use of proverbs, dancing, drumming and stories. The message that is communicated is embedded in the stories, proverbs, drumming and dancing that the elders espouse during ceremonies such as festivals, naming ceremonies, marriages and problem-solving events. The message is only understood and appreciated by people who share the same discourse and cultural background. There are differences, however, in communication with respect to the generational cluster according to the interviewees. For instance, elders communicate with the young ones somewhat directly since the younger ones often do not understand the indirect form of communication until they are socialized into it. This is succinctly stated by one of the respondents interviewed:

The mode of communication is basically indirect through proverbs and stories when it involves elders, at ceremonies and events. However, elderly people to children or younger ones is direct because they do not understand the culture at that age (Respondent 3).

The responses of the interviewees on the communication style of the people of Dagbon are indicative that it is contextually high or collectivist (Hall, 1976). In this structure of communication, the information is not found in the message that is directly communicated but is embedded in the physical context and internalized in the person. It can only be understood by people who share cultural boundaries. Decoding and understanding the message is only possible when there is a strong relationship between the giver and receiver (Lebaron, 2003). Similarly, Avruch (2006) argues that in high-context cultures, direct meaning cannot be gotten from the message that is given by an individual, unless one is a member of the group. This style of communication affects the peace negotiation processes. Even though both parties share common cultural standpoints and therefore most likely to understand each other, there could be a situation where communication is blocked based on their interest. This, therefore, raises a critical point as to whether the interest of the parties influences the communication between the giver and receiver in the peace negotiation processes.

Some respondents also expressed that relationships within Dagbon are built around the family, the clan and the entire community. Bonds of relationships, therefore, transcend individuals and involve the family, clan and community. For instance, marriage as a social bond between a man and a woman, in the culture of Dagbon, involves not only the immediate but as well as the extended families of the couple. Similarly, individuals have close-knit relationships in the Dagbon social stratosphere underscoring the existence of strong bonds between the individual and society. In Dagbon culture, the society serves as the safety valve of the individuals who lives in it

and therefore any issue which borders an individual is considered a family, clan or community issue and the society comes together to show solidarity to that person. In times of funerals, festivals, communal labour and social gatherings, Dagbon society considers these as community issues and therefore comes together to undertake such activities. According to one of the respondents;

The people of Dagbon believe in social harmony and cohesiveness and therefore the people usually come together to support each other in times of mourning, marriages, festivals, communal labour, dancing competitions and other social gatherings. Whatever good comes to an individual comes to the whole of Dagbon and whatever bad comes to an individual also affects the whole of Dagbon (Respondent number 8).

The social bond of relationship that characterizes Dagbon tradition aptly supports the conclusions of Dsilva and Whyte (1998) and Hofstede et al. (2010) on the type of relationship that exists in high-context cultures. This has a bearing on how conflicts or disputes are resolved. According to Dsilva and Whyte (1998), relationships in high-context/collectivist cultures place premium on interdependence, interconnection, conformity to group norms and relational harmony. In such relationships, group interest supersedes individual interest. In high-context/collectivist cultures, individuals are expected to support and *“take care of their in-group members or relatives and in turn expect absolute loyalty from them”* (Dsilva and Whyte 1998, p. 59). Also, Hofstede et al. (2010) argue that in high context/collectivist cultures, the relationship that exists between the individual and the group is based on mutual dependency, that is, both practical and psychological.

Associated with the existence of mutual relationships, the interviewees also made reference to the cultural variable of shame and face saving, which is the defining relationship style in Dagbon. In Dagbon, the interconnectedness and interdependence that

exist between the individual and society offer the individual as the reflective lens of the society. It is expected of the individual to uphold the cultural norms and values of Dagbon. The behaviour and actions of the indigenes of Dagbon are thus guided by that expectation. Therefore, whatever is associated with the behaviour of an individual does not only affect that individual but the entire society of Dagbon. Saving face, therefore, becomes a collective rather than an individual objective. Similarly, when an individual infringes upon the norms and values of the society, the feeling of shame associated with it affects the whole social fabric of Dagbon. Individuals' regard for the cultural norms and values of Dagbon is not only about one's self but the society at large. One respondent put it forward thus:

When an individual goes against the norms and values of our culture, for example, murder, the family and the clan carry the shame. This can affect marriages as men in the family will find it difficult to get wives and the women will not get husbands. No family will like to associate with such a family or clan because of the tag of shame on the family. People will therefore not want to be involved with the family or clan (Respondent number 7).

This corroborates the view of Hofstede et al. (2010) that the reputation and status associated with one's behaviour and action do not affect that person alone, but also the group that person belongs to. As concluded by Lebaron (2003) individual feeling of shame within collectivistic societies is deemed to be a shame on the whole society. The behaviour of the indigenes of Dagbon is guided by the need to preserve group dignity as well as the respect and reputation that is associated with the society. It can, therefore, be concluded that the style of communication, the connectivity, interdependence and mutual respect that guides relationships in Dagbon and the call to preserve group dignity, reputation and respect, indicate that Dagbon is a high-context/collectivist culture. Nevertheless, many years of urbanization and multiparty

democracy in Ghana has led to the erosion of some of these cultural values. This is more pervasive in the urban areas of Dagbon. As observed by one respondent:

Over the years, the cultural values and norms that guide our behaviour and actions are being gradually eroded because of urbanization and the replacement of the extended family system with the nuclear family system (Respondent number 5).

The collectivist nature of Dagbon culture has to a large extent influenced the way the peace negotiation has been carried out. As a high-context society, emphasis is placed on the traditional values and norms in the resolution of disputes. As a result of the high-context/collectivist culture, the peace negotiation process was guided entirely by traditional values and norms. Issues such as economic development and resource allocation were not considered. The mediators were tasked to help the negotiators arrive at an acceptable, accommodative and sustainable agreement based largely on an interpretation of traditional issues (Tonah, 2012).

Selection of Negotiators

The selection of negotiators for both the Abudus and Andanis, according to the interviewees, was highly influenced by the culture of Dagbon. As a high-context cultural setting, power whether in the family, the clan or the community is invested in men. Decision making from the family level to the community is considered the responsibility of men. Similarly, the resolution of disputes whether between families, individuals or communities is done by elderly men. Based on the power structure of Dagbon that provides for the dominance of men over women, all the negotiators of the peace process and the peace agreement were men (Tsong Lana Mahama and Kpan Naa Bawah Mahamadu from the Andani Gate and Mion Lana A. A. Ziblim and Kworli Gbanlana Mahama from the Abudu Gate). The first criterion that influenced the selection of the negotiators is the patriarchal system or practice in

Dagbon that places men at the top of the - power

"In the culture of Dagbon, men are the heads of families, clans and communities; it is expected of them to take the lead to protect their people and as well solve problems that confront their followers"
(Respondent number 2).

Furthermore, all the negotiators were sub-chiefs from the Dagbon Traditional Area. This was culturally determined. Per Dagbon culture, chiefs are considered to have a deeper and better appreciation of the traditions of the community. The chief is seen as the embodiment of the knowledge and traditions of the community. Also, the chief as a leader, is the representative of the people and their identity; he projects and above all embodies the security of his subjects. The selection of sub-chiefs was also influenced by the fact that as representatives, sub-chiefs express the views of their subjects.

The selection of negotiators for the Dagbon peace process was not based on the negotiators' knowledge of negotiation process but was culturally determined. As a high-context cultural community, the negotiators were selected based on their position within the social structure of Dagbon. This pattern generally confirms Fauren and Rubin's (1993) conclusion that the greatest influence of culture on any negotiation process is on the actors. They opined that how the negotiation team is composed and who represents the parties, talks, and takes decisions are culturally influenced. The selection of the negotiators is based largely on power structure dynamics and levels of authority in society which are culturally defined and form a major feature of a high context culture (Fauren and Rubin, 1993). Nonetheless, this does not suggest that the input of women was not captured in the agreement or that women were not consulted in the negotiation process. In the culture of Dagbon, the resolution of disputes such as conflicts is, ostensibly, reserved for men while women's participation and input, though not openly acknowledged, go on all the same in the background.

Issues under Negotiation

The interviewees conveyed the view that Dagbon is a distinct society with its own cultural norms, structures and traditions that have guided the functioning of the society including the institution of chieftaincy. Even though the advent of colonialism and multi-party democracy in Ghana has had an impact on the cultural makeup of Dagbon, many practices, norms and traditions pertaining to chieftaincy have not changed. It is based on this reverence for culture and tradition that the issues negotiated and captured in the peace agreement/roadmap were based on the cultural norms, values, practices and traditions affecting chieftaincy and the institution of chieftaincy in Dagbon.

Some respondents emphasised that with regards to Dagbon culture and chieftaincy, any Overlord of Dagbon (Yaa Naa) who dies must be buried in the Gbewaa Palace (the official Residence of the Yaa Naa). The refusal to bury a Yaa Naa in the Gbewaa Palace symbolizes that such a person is not a recognized Yaa Naa and that all his descendants will not be eligible to contest for the position of Yaa Naa (Mahama, 2009). Guided by this tradition and the norms associated with it, the negotiation process recognized the need for both families to bury their respective Yaa Naas in the Gbewaa Palace and subsequently perform their funeral in the Palace. The peace accord recommended that the Andani family should appoint a regent; that the funeral of the former Yaa Naa Mahamadu Abudulai IV should be performed at the Gbewaa Palace; and that the late Yakubu Andani II should be given a befitting burial; after which an heir to the throne should be chosen. The Committee stated that only the Andani regent should be regarded as the Regent of Dagbon in the interim (Ahorsu and Gebe, 2011).

According to some respondents the power to select the Yaa Naa is vested in the elders at Yendi who are the official kingmakers. The elders, in the process of nominating and selecting a potential Yaa Naa consult the oracles, who then reveal the choice (MacGaffey, 2015). In recognition of this cultural

norm, therefore, the negotiation process agreed in Clause B of the Peace Accord that:

A Council of Elders comprising three representatives each from the Andani and Abudu factions shall be constituted immediately to act in concert with the Kuga-Naa and the regent of Naa Yakubu Andani to handle all traditional arrangements from the date of burial of Naa Yakubu Andani, performance of funeral rites of both late Yaa Naas to the installation of a new Yaa-Naa" (Manhyia, 2006).

Similarly, the respondents highlighted that the norms, practices and traditions governing the institution of chieftaincy in Dagbon include the position of "Regent" as a cultural variable that has influenced the peace negotiation processes. The position of a Regent is created to fill the vacuum in the absence of a Yaa Naa. The Regent, by the customary laws of Dagbon, should be the first son of the Yaa Naa whose mother has been formally initiated into the husband's family through a traditional customary rite called 'monibu' (cooking). In view of this cultural norm, Clause A of the Roadmap states that

"the installation of the regent of Yaa-Naa Yakubu Andani takes precedence over the installation of Naa Mahamadu Abudulai's regent since Naa Yakubu died in office and Dagbon custom did not contemplate a situation where there would be two sitting Yaa Naas or regents at the same time"

(Manhyia, 2006). According to an opinion leader in Dagbon:

Dagbon has laid down traditional practices that govern our chieftaincy institution. How we select and enskin a Yaa Naa are backed by our traditional norms. Also, the functions of the Yaa Naa, his elders

and other sub-chiefs are done in accordance with the cultural norms and values of Dagbon. It was in that respect that the Committee of Eminent Chiefs facilitated the negotiation taking cognizance of the traditional and cultural values of Dagbon (Respondent number 4).

The peace negotiation process facilitated by the Committee of Eminent Chiefs was done in accordance with the customs and traditions of Dagbon. The Committee had to come to a full understanding of the traditional and customary issues underlying chieftaincy in Dagbon before commencing with the negotiation process (Tonah, 2012). This concurs with the assertion of Faure and Rubin (1993) and Fisher (1980) that some cultures prefer the application of traditional norms to addressing the issue, while other cultures prefer to address the issue from a general perspective. Especially in high-context societies, the strategy is guided by the norms, values and historical practices that have existed in such societies.

Negotiation Process: Negotiators' Interest and Priorities

Throughout the process of negotiation between the two Gates, the influence of culture was said to be inevitable. The interviewees opined that the culture of Dagbon was influential in the negotiators setting their interest and priorities. According to the interviewees, the institution of chieftaincy in Dagbon is a reverent traditional institution that is built on the cultural values and norms of Dagbon that guide and shape the functioning of the chieftaincy institution. Avoiding and disrespecting the cultural norms and values of Dagbon tradition are considered unpalatable. The negotiators from both Gates recognizing that the institution of Yaa-Naa has its cultural values and norms set their interest and priorities in accordance with the cultural norms and values of the institution. The negotiators came to the negotiation table with their interests and priorities culturally defined. The interests/priorities of the negotiators were not to share resources but to uphold and respect the cultural values and norms

of the institution of chieftaincy. According to one of the interviewees:

The institution of Yaa-Naa is a unique traditional cultural institution with its own values and norms that have to be respected by all. Bearing this in mind, the negotiators were careful in raising or stating their interests and priorities. Throughout the negotiation process, the negotiators never brought to the table any interest and priority that were against the Institution. They raised issues with regard to the values and norms of the institution. The interests and priorities of the negotiators were, therefore, to protect, project and respect the cultural values and norms of the Dagbon Chieftaincy Institution. So all the issues captured in the roadmap are in respect of the cultural values and norms of the chieftaincy institution" (Respondent number 2).

The interests and priorities of the negotiators were therefore derived from the cultural values of the chieftaincy institution of Dagbon. Negotiators from both sides demanded the burial of the two Yaa-Naas in the Gbewaa Palace. Also, the Negotiators from both Gates demanded the funerals of the two Yaa-Naas to be performed in accordance with Dagbon Tradition. These demands were all in line with the cultural norms and values that regulate the chieftaincy institution of Dagbon. These findings, in respect of the influence of Dagbon culture on the peace negotiation process, are in line with the conclusion of Fauren and Rubin (1993) that culture creates the lens of perception and understanding of issues bordering on conflict and how such issues can be resolved. In culturally high-context cultures where tradition is valued, the negotiated issues will be placed more on the valued traditions than on others such as economic development. Similarly, Lang (1993) observes that culture, as a value system and lens of perception, serves as the yardstick for measuring the success of a negotiation process and the performance of the negotiator.

Implications

The findings from this research indicate that the culture of Dagbon has an implication for the successful implementation of the Dagbon roadmap and similar to other ethnopolitical conflicts in Ghana. The narratives of the Dagbon ethnopolitical conflict can be viewed to be culturally defined as such it can be concluded that the conflict is a cultural conflict and this has an enormous implication on how the conflict resolution processes can be implemented. Therefore, it is imperative that the cultural norms and traditions of Dagbon are properly understood and adequately addressed in order for a satisfactory solution to be arrived at. Similarly, the different interpretations given to the cultural norms and traditions of Dagbon with respect to the institution of chieftaincy have to be adequately addressed and this has to be carried out by a neutral third party with the objective of providing a platform for the grey areas not understood and which serve as the iceberg of the conflict to be critically addressed. The failure to address these grey areas of cultural differences will continue to create the opportunity for abuse and the escalation of the conflict.

CONCLUSION

The influence of culture on conflict resolution and especially on peace negotiation processes is widely acknowledged by a number of scholars and conflict resolution practitioners. The objective of this research was to investigate the role of culture in shaping the process and outcome of the Dagbon Roadmap of the Dagbon Ethnopolitical Conflict in the Northern Region of Ghana. Many studies on culture and conflict admit the influence of culture on peace negotiation processes, which to a large extent is dependent on the cultural standpoint of the society under consideration. The overarching sentiments in these studies on cross-cultural negotiation processes are that the cultural dimension - high-context/collectivists and low-context/individualistic - of societies was influential in how the negotiation processes were conducted. Applying these frameworks, this paper sought to establish whether culture was relevant in the

negotiation of the Dagbon Peace Process in the Northern Region of Ghana. Adopting qualitative research approaches, interviews were conducted with twelve respondents to get their opinions on the subject of interest.

The findings, which were juxtaposed with secondary literature, indicate that the peace negotiation process was culturally supported. It was discovered that the cultural dimension of Dagbon is characteristic of a high-context/collectivistic cultural setting. The findings also indicate that the selection of negotiators by the two Gates, the defining interests and priorities of both Gates and the issues negotiated and captured in the Roadmap were all culturally based. It, therefore, implies that there is the need to understand the cultural and traditional issues that underline this conflict and how these can properly be addressed in the peace negotiation processes. When these issues are not adequately addressed they could serve as the standpoint for the conflict to escalate further.

The findings also concur with the conclusion that in cross-cultural peace negotiation processes, culture plays a critical role. However, the difference in settings - intra-cultural and cross-cultural - between this study and others presented a challenge to integrating the literature into the study. Nevertheless, aspects of the reviewed studies have been shown to be relevant to this study. We, therefore, recommend for wider research on the role of culture in peace negotiation processes within the same cultures considering the fact that recent intractable and protracted conflicts are within states and communities that share the same culture. Such studies should not only focus on the cultural roles but also on the cultural materials that are relevant to the peaceful resolution of these conflicts

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BEYOND LIBERAL PEACE BUILDING APPROACH:

A STRATEGIC (LIBETRADILISED) PEACE BUILDING IN AFRICA

ABDUL KARIM ISSIFU

*Institute for Development Studies
University of Cape Coast ,Cape Coast-Ghana
akissifu@gmail.com*

DOMINIC DEGRAFT ARTHUR

*Department of Socio-Political and Historical Studies
University for Development Studies, WA Campus- Ghana
darthur@uds.edu.gh*

ABSTRACT

Over the past decades, the Africa continent had experienced several violent conflicts. These conflicts resulted in the deaths through battlefield casualties and war-induced famine and diseases. As part of the strategy to terminate violent conflicts in conflict-prone and post-conflict countries, the international community adopted the liberal peace building approach. The basic principles of the liberal peace building approach include: the promotion of democracy, market-based economic reforms and a range of other institutions allied with modern states as a driving force for peace building process. Nevertheless, this approach has failed to promote long lasting peace and stability in war shattered countries such as Mozambique, Burundi

and Angola because international policy-makers and practitioners failed to recognise the importance of the diverse infra-political, cultural and social-economic conditions of these countries during the peace building process. In particular, in South Africa and Rwanda, where both the liberal peace building and traditional peace building approaches were mutually applied, the peace building process was very successful. In view of this, the paper argues that the strategic (liberalised) peace building approach, which goes beyond security-focused strategies, and focuses on sustainable peacebuilding at all levels of society is critical for promoting a durable and self-sustaining peace in war-torn countries in Africa.

Keywords:

Peace, liberal peace building, traditional peace building, 'liberalised', strategic peace building, Africa.

Introduction

Violent conflicts had threatened world peace over the past decades (Westendorf, 2015). According to the Uppsala Conflict Data Programme (UCDP), 112 of the total 119 armed conflicts between 1989 and 2004 were intrastate conflicts of which only two were interstate conflicts (Westendorf, 2015). Globally, the Africa continent is noted to have experienced its share of violent wars and armed conflicts since the end of the cold war (Gordon-Summers, 1999). Recent scholarship has documented that much of the contemporary conflicts are intrastate, exacerbated by ethnic and religious tensions, coupled with generic economic and political underpinnings (Issifu, 2015).

In Africa, countries emerging from long civil wars often experienced challenges in managing former combatants, militia groups and armed civilians. Consequently, most of these violent conflicts had appeared endless in many war torn countries such as Burundi, Mozambique, Eritrea, Sudan, DR Congo,

Lesotho, Uganda, Mali and Cameroon (Onwuka, 2009; Annan, 2013). For example, in the 1990s, the Africa continent accounted for more than 40 percent of the conflicts around the world, and these conflicts resulted in the deaths through battlefield casualties and war-induced famine and diseases of 500,000 to 1,000,000 persons (Stedman, 1996).

According to a recent report, there are about 250,000 Rwandese women and girls who were victims of some form of sexual violence and 66 percent of the raped victims tested positive for HIV/AIDS after the genocide in 1994 (Issifu, 2015). A similar report also estimated that there were about hundreds of women who were victims of rape every week during the war in DR Congo (Mzvondiwa, 2007). In addition, the elopement of girls (hijacking girls for marriage) was also a common and legitimate cultural practice in many violent conflict prone countries in Africa. The increased incidence of armed, ethnic and religious conflicts within states and other nation-states had prompted the international community to move speedily to adopt the liberal peace building approach to negotiate for peace building processes between warring groups within fractured states (Westendorf, 2015).

Peace building in conflict-prone and post-conflict countries is intended to avert the renewal or escalation of violent conflicts in order to promote a long-lasting and self-sustaining peace (Mac Ginty, 2010; Ostrowski, 2014). However, the application of the liberal peace building approach to promote peace did not succeed in the war torn countries in Africa such as Mozambique, Burundi, Angola and Uganda (Paris, 1997). Moreover, in some cases, it exacerbated the very violence it intended to end in the conflict zone countries (Wurst, 1994; Issifu, 2015). In his work on Peace Building and the Limits of Liberal Internationalism, Paris (1997) indicated that although, in Angola, the international peace negotiators used the liberal peace building approach to secure a cease-fire between the feuding Angolan political parties, the country slipped back into full-scale civil war in January 1993.

According to Belloni (2012) and Mac Ginty and Richmond (2013), the liberal peace building approach used to resolve violent conflicts failed in the war-torn countries in Africa for two reasons: First, the peacebuilders proposed neoliberal strategies, security-based policies and human rights principles in a subtle neo-colonial form which helped a west-dominated world order to the detriment of the local population of non-western war torn countries. Second, the approach tended to neglect the infra-political, cultural and socio-economic conditions of the war torn countries. However, in most of the war-shattered countries where the strategic (liberalised) peace building approach was used in the peace building process such as South Africa, where the traditional principle (ubuntu) and the liberal principles (formal court system; Truth and Reconciliation Commission) were jointly used in the peace building process, the peace building administrators were able to achieve a lasting peace, stability and development. A similar approach was also adopted by the peace builders in Rwanda, which consequently led to a great success (Oppenheim, 2012).

Research Questions

In the light of the preceding discussions, the paper addresses two-related questions:

1. *Why has the liberal peace building approach failed to promote long lasting peace in conflict-prone and post-conflict African countries such as Mozambique, Burundi and Angola?*

2. *Does the strategic (liberalised) peace building approach adequately help to resolve protracted conflicts in war-torn countries in Africa such as South Africa and Rwanda?*

Within the context of the rapid rate of violent conflicts in Africa, much of the recent literature has proposed for the strategic (liberalised) peace building approach (which combines the principles of both the liberal peace building and traditional peace building approaches) as the efficient technique to promote the peace process in the conflict zones in Africa (Oppenheim, 2012; Annan, 2013; Westendorf, 2015).

Literature Review

The Concept of Peace building

In an *Agenda for Peace*, the former United Nations (UN) Secretary General, Boutros Boutros-Ghali, defined peace building as the process by which an achieved peace is placed on durable foundations which prevents violent conflict from recurring by dealing with the underlying economic, social, cultural and humanitarian problems responsible for the conflict (Boutros-Ghali, 1992, p.57). Broadly, Boutros-Ghali (1992) reiterates that, peace building entails an action undertaken by national or international actors to identify and support systems, which tend to help fortify and solidify peace in order to avoid relapse into conflicts (Call and Cousens, 2007).

The concept of peace building was first used by peace researcher Johan Galtung 20 years earlier, before the concept was adopted by Boutros-Ghali (Call and Cousens, 2007). According to Call and Cousens (2007), the peace-building process focuses on changing the attitudes of the main protagonists and lowers the level of destructive behaviour in conflict situations. It also helps address the hardships associated with conflicts. According to these scholars, there are many techniques and strategies to the peacebuilding process. These include dialogue and reconciliation, sports and non-violence education as well as arts and music (Call and Cousens, 2007). Each of these techniques and strategies has its uniqueness, importance and challenges when they are used for peace building process. One key distinctive feature of peacebuilding is that, it requires multiple and well-coordinated techniques and strategies to change violence and conflict into more sustainable, peaceful relationships and structures (Call and Cousens, 2007).

Liberal Peace Building

The term 'liberal' entails ideas, laws, policies, strategies and principles which are used to resolve conflicts. The term is more commonly applied by Europeans, North Americans and Australians. Issifu and Asante (2016) have also referred to the term as Euro-U.S. Centric Colonial White Dominate Approach. The liberal peace building approach denotes the use of the external bodies, systems and institutions to help countries to recover from civil war, violent conflict and natural disasters (Newman and Richmond, 2009). The liberal peace building approach used by the Western international peace mediators focuses on three main issues; the transformation process of democratisation, economic liberalisation and pacification as the foundation for peace building (Newman and Richmond, 2009). According to these scholars, the liberal peace building approach results in promoting a positive feedback on each other. This argument is based on the historical experiences of Western Europe and the body of sociological, political and economic research developed by the scholars (Mac Ginty, 2010).

Drawing insights from Paris (1997), the liberal peace building approach focuses on the use of formal and external bodies, structures and institutions to end violent conflicts. The principles of the liberal peace building approach encompass holding immediate democratic elections, promoting market liberalisation, enhancing humanitarian assistance, encouraging litigation and retributive justice, and promoting the rule of law (Hoffmann, 1995; Reilly, 2008; Herring, 2008). The liberal peace building also draws on the Wilsonian tradition and deploys the liberal rhetoric to justify peace building and peace-making interventions. For example, according to scholars, liberalism is the ideology upon which life, culture, society, prosperity and politics are assumed to rest (Mac Ginty and Richmond, 2007). This view reflects the notion that war-torn societies can and should be rebuilt through the utilisation of a number of interrelated strategies for transformation such as market democracy and political reforms. This assumption guides the work of liberal institutions such as the United Nations, European Union, United States, World Bank/International Monetary Fund and other International Non-Governmental Organisations involved in peace building in Africa (Mac Ginty, 2010).

However, critics of the liberal peace have argued that the approach often uses illiberal strategies in the promotion of liberal values (Mac Ginty, 2010). In addition, the liberal peace building approach is conservative and realist philosophy which seeks to strengthen the position of power-holders (national, regional, international elites and their private-sector allies), while doing little to emancipate the general population (Mac Ginty and Richmond, 2007). Consequently, the liberal peace approach is equated with negative peace, or kinds of peace building approaches that resolve conflict manifestations, but circumventing the structural change in the conflict societies (Richmond, 2009).

Traditional Peace Building

The role of traditional African peace building approach and dispute resolution ethics, before the advent of the colonialism was centred on moral conduct in terms of attitude towards life. It also focused on issues of human dignity and respect of each other. This was based on the fact that an individual's humanity interconnects with the dignity and humanity of others in the society (Swindler, 1992; Abiodun, 2000; Mabovula, 2011). In particular, the traditional peace building approach involves peace and dispute resolution methods developed by the African traditional society since time immemorial (Bamidele, 2014). These include African practices and belief systems such as the norms, ideas, folklores, dialogues and native worldview employed to resolve conflicts in conflict situations.

Traditional peace building technique manifests itself in consensus decision making, a restoration of the human/resource ecological balance, and compensation or gift exchange, which is designed to ensure reciprocal and on-going harmonious relations between groups (Mac Ginty, 2008). In addition, the traditional African peace building approach involves the process of identifying the structural cause of a conflict and using African traditional principles and ethics such as mediation, truth-telling, chanting songs, joint problem solving, rituals, pacification and oath swearing to build a sustainable peace (Issifu and Asante, 2016). This approach to resolve conflicts in the war torn countries in Africa helps to protect and promote human life and dignity.

The Hybrid Peace Theory

The hybrid peace theory is used to underpin this study. The theory has been commonly used in the contemporary peace implementation and conflict studies. The theory is critical in underlining the importance of culture, power and identity in peace building process (Yamashita, 2014). The hybrid peace theory argues that social and political processes such as peace-making, peacebuilding or post-war

reconstruction must focus on the interaction of a series of already hybridised actors and structures. As a result, the hybrid peace builders engage with local, national and international actors as well as the application of the respective norms and principles during the peace building process.

Proponents of the hybrid peace theory argue that the use of an interconnected web of local, national, regional and global dynamics in peace building process is more crucial in promoting peace, because it helps to bring all the warring parties on board in negotiating diverse conceptions of peace and state institutions. This helps to sustain peace at the conflict zones. According to the critics, the hybrid nature of contemporary peace operations is more challenging and complex than earlier traditional peacekeeping and humanitarian interventions because of its state building role and alliances with local and international actors (Yamashita, 2014).

Methodology

The researchers relied on the secondary data for the study. The data were collected from academic articles focused on conflicts and peace building process. Eventually, 30 peer-reviewed academic articles were collected for the study. The data for the study were obtained in two months (from February, 15 to April, 15, 2017). The literature search included a computerised search of accessible and available sources from textbooks, journals, articles, magazines, published and unpublished theses, occasional papers and internet sources. These documents were obtained from the Balme Library and Legon Centre for International Affairs and Diplomacy Library of the University of Ghana, Legon and other websites. The secondary data was then put into themes for the purpose of documentary analysis to address the key research questions set out to study.

Results and Discussion

This section presents the result and discussions. Five case studies were used for the purpose of the analyses. These case studies were derived from Mozambique, Burundi, Angola, South Africa and Rwanda respectively.

Fractures of the liberal peace-building approach in the peace building process

The purpose of the section is to examine the fractures of liberal peace building approach in peace building process in Mozambique, Burundi and Angola respectively.

Case study 1: Mozambique

Mozambique, officially known as the Republic of Mozambique, is a country in Southeast Africa bordered by the Indian Ocean to the east, Tanzania to the north, Malawi and Zambia to the northwest, Zimbabwe to the west, and Swaziland and South Africa to the southwest. It is separated from Madagascar by the Mozambique Channel to the east. The capital and largest city is Maputo (Pfeiffer, 2003). Mozambique attained its independence in 1975, becoming the People's Republic of Mozambique. After only two years of independence, the country faced seventeen years of intermitted warfare with one million civilians killed and thousands tortured (Paris, 1997). After the war, a peace agreement was signed between the Frente de Libertacao de Mocambique (FRELIMO) and the Resistencia Nacional Mocambicana (RENAMO) in October 1992, under a United Nations watch, to help bring a sustainable peace in the country (Paris, 1997)

An empirical study conducted by Paris (1997) documented that the United Nations completed its mandate by holding the country's first democratic elections in October 1994, with FRELIMO maintaining control of government business and RENAMO forming the official opposition. After the 1994 elections, the relationship between RENAMO and the FRELIMO was largely peaceful. In December, 1999, Mozambique held elections for a second time since the civil war, which were again won by FRELIMO (Graybill, 2004). RENAMO accused FRELIMO of rigging the elections, and threatened to return to civil war, but the supporters of FRELIMO stopped the intended plans after taking the election petition to the Supreme Court and lost (Graybill, 2004).

The United Nations led the task of executing some vital provisions of the agreement; including the marketisation, demilitarisation and democratisation of Mozambique to help promote peace building process (Pfeiffer, 2003). As part of the economic restructuring process, economic liberalisation policies appeared to have made life more difficult for the ordinary citizens. The Mozambican government's abilities to rebuild schools, clinics, roads and other social infrastructure were restricted making lives uncomfortable for the citizenry due to conditions underlying the World Bank/International Monetary Fund's structural adjustment programme (Issifu, 2015).

In early 2000, a cyclone caused widespread flooding in the country, which killed hundreds of people and shattered the already precarious social services (Graybill, 2004). Besides, there were also general suspicions that foreign aid resources have been diverted by the FRELIMO government. Carlos Cardoso, a journalist investigating these allegations, was murdered, and his death was never satisfactorily explained. The worsened socio-economic living conditions emanating from the liberal economic policies of the World Bank/International Monetary Fund led to a growing dynamic level of poverty resulting in increase in the inequalities between the rich and the poor (Pfeiffer, 2003; Graybill, 2004). This development led to the spread of rural banditry and increased growing sense of frustration, anger and desperation that sparked a new uprising in Mozambique (Graybill, 2004).

Technically, in this case, the strategy adopted by the liberal peace builders in the peace building process in Mozambique was mostly superficial in nature due to international pressure (for democratisation and elections as well as for market liberalisation) and globalisation, which consequently led to a mere modernisation of the traditional status quo where the majority of the population was marginalised and excluded, while a few were able to accumulate wealth.

Case study 2: Burundi

Burundi, which is officially the Republic of Burundi, is a landlocked country in the African Great Lakes region of East Africa, bordered by Rwanda to the north, Tanzania to the east and south, and the Democratic Republic of the Congo to the west (Longman, 1998). It is also considered part of Central Africa. Burundi's capital is Bujumbura. The south western border is adjacent to Lake Tanganyika (Longman, 1998).

Burundi gained independence in 1962 and initially had a monarchy, but a series of assassinations, coups and a general climate of regional instability culminated in the establishment of a republic and a one-party state in 1966 (Issifu and Asante, 2016). Following their independence, Burundi witnessed one of the most dreadful civil wars in Africa. In the 1970s and 1990s, the country saw two civil wars and genocides following the long-standing ethnic division and ancient ethnic hatred between the Hutu and the Tutsi groups (Issifu and Asante, 2016). The 1993 civil war in particular led to an estimated people of 300,000 dying in the war (British Broadcasting Corporation, 2008). Longman (1998) indicated that, these series of wars largely left Burundi as one of the poorest countries on the African continent.

In a bid to find a lasting peace in Burundi, the UN deployed its peacekeeping mission in the country, while African leaders began a series of formal peace talks, guided by the principles of the liberal peace building approach between the feuding parties in the country (Issifu and Asante, 2016). In 2000, the UN initiated a move for the warring factions to negotiate for a peace agreement in the northern Tanzanian city of Arusha. The Arusha Peace Agreement called for an ethnically balanced military and government and democratic elections. To this end, Burundi enacted a transitional government in 2000 (Longman, 1998). One of the more powerful rebel groups, the Conseil National Pour la Défense de la Démocratie-Forces pour la Défense de la Démocratie (CNDD-FDD), agreed to sign the peace

deal in November 2003, and joined the transitional government.

However, since the end of 2005, the smaller militant Hutu groups such as the Forces for National Liberation (FNL) have remained active, causing mayhem in both Burundi and other neighbouring countries due to their rejection in signing the peace accord. In 2015 there were large-scale political disturbances in the country. Although, the liberal peacebuilding approach was employed by the UN and the South Africa government to help calm down the feuding parties, the country continued to witness political strife leading to the death and displacement of thousands of people in the country (Issifu and Asante, 2016). The process of dealing with the conflict had only a small impact in addressing the level of violence in Burundi. The high levels of violence in Burundi were caused by the renewed trauma, fear and distrust in the liberal peace building approach in the promotion of conflict resolution in Burundi.

Case study 3: Angola

Like Mozambique and Burundi, the international peace negotiators, under the premise of the liberal peace approach, secured a cease-fire in 1991 between the feuding Angolan political parties, that is the Movimento Popular de Libertacao de Angola (MPLA) and the Uniao Nacional para a Independencia Total de Angola (UNITA). Subsequently, the mutual agreement to hold multiparty elections in late September 1992 was documented. The elections were organised according to plan under international supervision and were judged to be "generally free and fair" (Paris, 1997). The outcome gave MPLA presidential candidate Jose Eduardo dos Santos 49.6 percent of the votes and the UNITA's Jonas Savimbi 40.1 percent, with neither candidate receiving the minimum 50 percent support required for a first round victory (Vines, 1995).

Savimbi, who feared defeat in a runoff election, rejected the first round results and resumed a full-scale civil war in January 1993 that was “as bloody as anything seen since independence” (Wurst, 1994). The most important issue is that the political liberalisation strategy which was used by the liberal peace administrators as a means to address the misunderstanding between the warring factions had a negative consequences on peace building process in Angola. This is because; the election did not serve as a basis for reconciliation, instead it renewed the war. The reasons are that; the parties involved in the elections were not fully disarmed before the elections were held, and also there were no proper provision made for power-sharing arrangement after the elections, so that the losing party could be allowed to join hands with the victor to form a new government (Wurst, 1994).

The strategic (libetradilised) peace building approach in the peace building process

The section focuses on the application of the strategic peace building approach in peace building process in Rwanda and South Africa respectively.

Case study 4: Rwanda

Rwanda officially the Republic of Rwanda, is a sovereign state in Central and East Africa. It is considered as one of the smallest countries on the African mainland. Located a few degrees south of the Equator, Rwanda is bordered by Uganda, Tanzania, Burundi and the Democratic Republic of the Congo (Alusala, 2005). The population is young and largely rural. Rwandans have commonly been considered to be drawn from just one cultural and linguistic group (the *Banyarwanda*), nonetheless, within the country there are three subgroups such as the Hutu, Tutsi and Twa (Alusala, 2005; Ingelaere, 2008).

In pre-colonial Rwanda, ethnic categories had been relatively fluid, consequently, ethnic categories were based mostly on wealth, size, number and the strength of the ethnic groups. Nevertheless, the Belgian colonial administration consolidated local power in the hands of the minority Tutsis and gave them all

the privileges in the field of land rights, education and national governance over the majority Hutus (Powley, 2003). Technically, although, Hutus are numerically stronger, the Tutsis minority continues to form the governing class (Alusala, 2005). In 1959, the Hutu population revolted and they massacred numerous Tutsi and eventually had independence resulting in Hutus-domination in the state in 1962 (Alusala, 2005).

The Tutsi-led Rwandan Patriotic Front launched a civil war in 1990. Social tensions erupted in the 1994 genocide, in which Hutu extremists killed an estimated 500,000 to 1.3 million Tutsi and the moderate Hutus who did not side with the extreme Hutus (Graybill, 2004). The main agenda of the killing spree by the Hutus was to thwart the power-sharing agreement, which the Rwandan Hutu President Juvenal Habyarimana had agreed as part of the Arusha Peace Accords. The hundred day genocide ended when the Tutsi-led Rwandan Patriotic Front defeated the interim government. As part of the peace building efforts in Rwanda, an international court of Arusha was set up in Tanzania by the United Nation to try the perpetrators of the genocide. Although the court of Arusha (a tenet of the liberal peace building approach) played a significant role, it became obvious that the processes were slow, time consuming and cumbersome (Graybill, 2004). In addition, during the proceedings of the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda (ICTR) in Arusha, Rwandans expressed the desire to have been allowed to attend the court cases and judgments of some of the masterminds behind the 1994 genocide. They remained far removed from the proceedings, and were never actively involved in the tribunal’s activities. The ICTR was also seen, in terms of procedure, as foreign to Rwandese society (Wasonga, 2009).

Technically, as part of the peace building process, Rwandans initiated mass trials using their traditional court called the *gacaca* court (a tenet of the traditional peace building approach) to resolve conflicts. The *gacaca* court system was viewed as

useful in filling the divide between the ICTR and the Rwandan population (Wasonga, 2009). The *gacaca* is a *Kiyarwanda* concept, a local-based court where village elders and their community members gather for problem solving, peace building, conflict resolution and peace-making, mostly under trees or sitting on the grass. In the pre-colonial era, *gacaca* was a popular indigenous forum for resolving local disputes over family matters, property rights and other local concerns (Reyntjens, 1990). According to Corey and Joireman (2004), the present-day *gacaca* court system was officially launched on 18th June 2002 by the Rwandan government in response to the overwhelming number of prisoners whose cases have remained untried since the end of the genocide in 1994 (Graybill, 2004).

In practice, the traditional *gacaca* court first identifies the victims' families who were affected by atrocities during the civil war and genocide. Suspects in these crimes are then identified and classified based on four distinct categories of *génocidaires*:

Category one consists of the planners, organisers, and leaders of the genocide and those who used their position of authority to orchestrate murders. The *gacaca* courts cannot handle the cases of individuals in this category because they fall under the jurisdiction of the national courts (Mutisi, 2009). Category two comprises people accused of homicide or other acts against persons resulting in death. Category three concerns individuals who committed violent acts without intent to kill. Category four covers people who committed property crimes. When categorisation is complete, the perpetrators are summoned to participate in the courts in their local community, where local witnesses speak for or against them (Mutisi, 2009).

After the witnesses have given evidence to the satisfaction of the court, the *inyangamugayo*—'people who hate evil or 'persons of exemplary conduct' pass judgment. That the *gacaca* system emphasises soliciting genuine confessions, repentance, and apologies helps in confronting the culture of impunity that had engulfed Rwanda during the

genocide (Mutisi, 2009). Through the principle of truth telling, the defendant and witnesses are required to provide a detailed description of the offence, how and where it was carried out, confirm the victims, and if applicable, provide information about where the victims' bodies were left. Perpetrators who give full confessions of their genocidal acts normally receive lesser sentences (Mutisi, 2009).

Under the *gacaca* peace court, the genocide suspects were taken to the villages to tell their story and victims were given the chance to share their story, while all the community members, including the *inyangamugayolocal* judges sat under trees to listen. More so, the *gacacacourt* also listened to survivors express their trauma and suffering before the perpetrators. This gave the perpetrators the opportunity to measure the destructive impact of their crimes on them (Koko, 2014). It also provided the survivors an opportunity to know their killers, oppressors and to express their suffering before the perpetrators, expecting them to apologise for peace-making. The practice is seen as healing of wounds and psychological trauma for both parties (Koko, 2014). The *gacaca* court has tried at least 178,741 cases at the level of appeal; representing nine percent of the 1,958,634 cases tried by all *gacaca* courts. The intervention of the traditional *gacaca* court had helped to the trial of a huge number of the genocide crimes committed in the Rwanda genocide. The traditional *gacaca* court was able to ensure a sustainable peace building in Rwanda because it assessed the structural causes of the violence and addressed them from the root sources.

The *gacaca* system is largely organised on the basis of local community involvement and active participation. The local community is involved in encouraging the perpetrators to acknowledge what they have done and the victims are involved in determining what reparations need to be made so that the perpetrator can be re-integrated into the community. The rate at which criminals responded to the local *gacaca* rulings suggests its superiority

and acceptability for the lasting peace in Rwanda today (Corey and Joireman, 2004).

There are approximately, 11,000 *gacaca* courts in operation today in Rwanda, each with a panel of 19 judges. The *gacaca* system of postconflict justice and reconciliation is informative and instructive because it is a community-owned process of transitional justice. The *gacaca* processes pave the way for the adoption and revitalisation of endogenous approaches to justice, healing, truth-telling and reconciliation (Mutisi, 2009). The *gacaca* approach is considered as the best practice of conflict resolution, and has helped in the sustainable peace building agenda in Rwanda (Mutisi, 2009).

Case study 5: South Africa

South Africa, which is officially the Republic of South Africa, is the southernmost country in Africa (Callinicos, 1996). It is bounded on the south by 2,798 kilometres of coastline of Southern Africa, stretching along the South Atlantic and Indian Oceans, on the north by the neighbouring countries of Namibia, Botswana, and Zimbabwe; and on the east and northeast by Mozambique and Swaziland; and surrounds the kingdom of Lesotho (Callinicos, 1996).

The first people to live in South Africa were black Africans who raised cattle and sheep near the coast (Callinicos, 1996). In 1652, the Dutch migrated to settle in South Africa, and although, they were immigrants, they believed the land was theirs. These Dutch immigrants defeated many native South Africans and forced them to work as servants and slaves as they established a Colony. In 1806, Great Britain captured the Colony from the Dutch. The British and descendants of the Dutch settlers, known as the *Boers*, fought for control of the country for about 100 years. The British finally won in 1910 and forced the Black people off the mineral rich lands onto lands they thought had little value, known as "reserves". Subsequently, the British stayed in the places with rich minerals (Callinicos, 1996). The segregation and its related apartheid challenges were so severe that black groups began resisting the white government (Kaufman, 2011).

In 1986, the white South African government continued to intimidate those who resisted the apartheid. For three years, they arrested, tortured, discriminated and imprisoned over 20,000 people (Hillier, 2008). In the apartheid era, there were over 18,000 people killed and about 80,000 people detained without trial (Kaufman, 2011). In 1994, the apartheid regime ended with multi-party elections where Nelson Mandela won the Presidential elections on the ticket of the African National Congress (ANC) (Callinicos, 1996). The 1994 elections ushered in a new government in democratic South Africa to build a lasting peace in South Africa to ensure that the violence did not reverse. The administration of President Nelson Mandela recognised the importance of dealing with the injustices the apartheid system brought to the citizens during the apartheid era.

As part of the peace building process, *ubuntu* (traditional peace building approach), together with the TRC/formal court system (liberal peace building approach) was used by the South Africans. The Promotion of National Unity and Reconciliation Act of 1995 sets the framework for the TRC, and in 1996, the Commission began receiving amnesty applications (Cangialosi, 2012). The TRC was comprised of three committees: the Human Rights Violations Committee, the Reparation and Rehabilitation Committee, and the Amnesty Committee (Cangialosi, 2012). The principal idea was to have information flow between the three committees as both the victims and perpetrators of apartheid were permitted to tell their stories. The TRC was grounded in the belief that South Africa could not move forward as a unified nation until it acknowledged its past. Promoting the slogan "Truth: The road to reconciliation," the TRC was meant to be a platform where blacks, whites, coloureds, and Indians could all give public testimony in the hope that these public statements would initiate the healing process in South Africa (Cangialosi, 2012).

As part of the process to ensure that victims and perpetrators actually speak the truth and to ensure a successful peace building and conflict resolution in the TRC, the traditional *ubuntu* method was

revived and made reference to in the process. The *ubuntu* principle has over the years been used, in a general sense, to refer to an African philosophy of life (Mokgoro, 1997). *Ubuntu* originates from within African and it means 'a person is a person through other persons' or 'I am because we are; we are because I am' (Ramose, 1999; Goduka, 2000). *Ubuntu* is more effectively understood through its lengthier proverb: '*ubuntuungamunutu ngabanye abantu*', which literally proclaims that a person is a human being through other human beings (Berkowitz, 2009).

Ubuntu could be described as a community-based mind set in which the welfare of the group is greater than the welfare of a single individual in the group (Kwamwangamalu, 1999). The communal African worldview, *ubuntu* contrasts with the more individualistic and self-centred one of Western culture. Communalism at the core of *ubuntu* implies that the interests of the individual are subordinate to that of the group (Broodryk, 2002). The community will focus on the interests of each individual member and those activities and behaviours that will ensure the good of the group. *Ubuntu* is a collective solidarity, meaning that individuals will align their interests, activities, and loyalties to the group's cause and well-being (Mokgoro, 1997).

The actual process of the *ubuntu* used in the peace building process in South Africa involved five key stages:

First, after a fact-finding process where the views of victims, perpetrators and witnesses were heard, the perpetrators, if considered to have done wrong, were encouraged, both by the Council of Elders and other community members in the *inkundla/lekgotla* forum to acknowledge responsibility or guilt (Murithi, 2006; Arthur, Issifu and Marfo, 2015);

Second, the perpetrators were encouraged to demonstrate a genuine remorse or to show a sign of true repentance;

Third, perpetrators were supported to plead for forgiveness and victims, in their turn, were also encouraged to show mercy to their offenders (Murithi, 2006);

Fourth, where possible, at the suggestion of the Council of Elders, perpetrators were required to pay an appropriate compensation or reparation for the wrong done (Arthur, Issifu and Marfo, 2015). The payment was not in-kind, but a symbolic sign, with the primary function of reinforcing the remorse of the perpetrators;

The **fifth** stage seeks to consolidate the whole process by encouraging the parties to commit themselves to reconciliation (Murithi, 2006; Arthur, Issifu and Marfo, 2015).

Technically, *ubuntu* served as a guide and food for thoughts to some of the perpetrators and victims who came before the South African TRC to confess, and later asked for forgiveness for the damages and pains caused to the human race in the apartheid era. For instance, some group of people who raped women in the apartheid period openly narrated their story to the TRC and showed remorse for the various acts of atrocities against women, children and fellow friends. This confession would not be possible without the introduction of *ubuntu*, which the people hold allegiance to (Mani, 2002). The revival of *ubuntu* in the TRC helped the South African people to transcend the bitterness, hatred and suspicion of the past and to make the transition to a more stable political order (Murithi, 2006). In effect, the application of strategic (liberalised) peace building approach has helped to promote good relations between and among people predicated on a culture of caring, sharing, and respect; the only way to ensure the well-being of the collective whole (Berkowitz, 2009).

CONCLUSION

The Need for the strategic (libetradilised) peace building approach

From the foregoing analysis, it is evident that the liberal peace building approach offers an important set of tools to understand the peace building process in war shattered countries. However, the approach has not been able to effectively promote the lasting peace in war shattered countries such as Mozambique, Burundi and Angola because the fundamental changes in path dependent on developments to peace building were carried out without the inclusion of the indigenous institutions in the war devastated countries. The point is that, although the external actors and the international community were able to support the internal actors in an attempt to help build peace process, they were not able to overcome the historical blockades which contributed to the violent conflicts in these countries.

For this reason, it is critical for peace building administrators to be aware of the fact that peace building is an issue that cannot only be influenced by external actors. For instance, the influence of political and economic programmes in peace building process is considered only as short term strategies necessary to promote transformation and stabilisation of post-war countries. Technically, the transformation and stabilisation of violent conflict and peace building process should include processes such as reconciliation, purification, mental and spiritual healing. This is critical as time horizons and dynamics as well as the logic of these conflicts are mostly associated with ethnic and intra ethnic underpinnings.

In view of this, it is important to note that stabilisation and transformation of post-war societies and post-war states should not be relied mostly on the repressive capacity of the states such as police, military, and economic rewards as commonly associated with the liberal peace building paradigm. The peace building administrators should rather use the strategic (libetradilised) peace approach for peace building process. The approach focuses on the inclusivity and the participation of the society in peace building process. Under this approach, solutions based on consensus are not merely taken from the political elites and the local elites that may not be perceived as representative of society. Instead, the approach engages the participation of all parties involved in the conflict to gain a win-win solution for the warring factions.

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RESOLVING CONFLICTS AND BUILDING PEACE THROUGH FUNERAL PRACTICES IN RURAL GHANA:

A CONTEMPLATION OF APAAH AND YONSO COMMUNITIES

SAMUEL MARFO

*Department of Social, Political and Historical Studies,
University for Development Studies, Faculty of
Integrated Development Studies,
Post Office Box 520, Wa Campus, Ghana.
marfoms@yahoo.com*

ABSTRACT

In Ghana, many communities including Yendi and Bimbilla have been torn apart by chieftaincy conflicts in the presence of modern system of conflict resolution and peace building bodies such as the police and the court. Ironically, the people of Apaah and Yonso rural communities in the Ashanti Region of Ghana enjoy relative peace amidst sharp division among the people brought about by protracted chieftaincy conflicts. Probing the situation, empirical data gathered through in-depth interview of traditional leaders in an exploratory case study revealed that: (1) the tacit principle embedded in funerals which enjoins family members to reconcile before any befitting burial for a departed family member, (2) the cash and material contributions by adult males and females, and (3) the exchange of greetings to support a bereaved family regardless of a person's traditional and political affiliations during funeral celebrations are three major unifying force that had restrained the people from any violent confrontation in the study communities. This article posits that indigenous Ghanaian conflict resolution and peace building mechanisms cannot be abandoned in the name of 'modernity' and suggests that chiefs and community members should organize durbars occasionally to agree on the best practices of celebrating funerals without necessarily undermining their significance.

Key words:

Indigenous Knowledge, Funeral Rites, Peace Building, Customary Practices, Apaah, Yonso.

Introduction

Long before the advent of modern institutionalised conflict resolution and peace building mechanisms or bodies such as the police and the court, Africans had their own beliefs and practices which regulated the conduct of and fostered peace and development among the people (Acquah, 2006). Notable among these practices included funerals. Interestingly, the advent of these contemporary institutionalised conflict resolution mechanisms reputed as Western conflict resolution mechanisms largely have cast doubt on the efficacy of the age-old African practices which anchored the people together. Every practice, labelled as indigenous or traditional, is at best construed as barbarous and fetish (Ackah, 1988). As noted by Pkalya, Adan and Masinde (2004), the introduction of the police, the courts and the prison system has been erroneously interpreted to infer that the customary laws of Africans have been rendered obsolete and their place taken by the Western styled court system.

Ironically, these modern conflict resolution mechanisms and peace building strategies have not

succeeded in halting violent confrontations among the people especially in Africa. Violent conflicts of all forms have afflicted all continents and fragmented or undermined the integrity of several nation-states, including Afghanistan, Bosnia, East Timor, Kashmir Region of India and Pakistan, Cote d'Ivoire, Sierra Leone, Liberia, Sudan and Somalia. Tremendous harm has been done to ordinary people and innocent communities, and somehow these innocent people will have to find a way to move beyond the atrocities that they have endured and rebuild their lives (Murithi, 2009).

Smock (1995), for instance, has recognised the need for foreign assistance or support especially that of the United States and the United Nations in the resolution of the various conflicts engulfing the African continent which cannot be disputed. It is equally true to mention that any modern system of conflict resolution and peace building either from within or outside Africa cannot survive without a deep thought of the indigenous African conflict resolution and peace building mechanisms. Africa, for that matter Ghana, has a peculiar culture and mechanisms for peace building which cannot be substituted in the name of 'modernity'. Zartman (2000) (cited by Murithi, 2009:148), for instance, has pointed out that Africans have indigenous traditions

for peace building which are instructive for healing and reconciling the people.

In congruence with Zartman's (2000) assertion, Mkhize (1985) indicated that vigil and funerals, as a unifying traditional force, have formed a well-recognised custom from time immemorial in the African community. He argued that this custom is so entrenched that even if one did not see eye to eye with the deceased, after his death one would feel obliged to attend the vigil and the funeral as a sign of support for and solidarity with the deceased's family. Mkhize (1985) further indicated that failure to do this might cause the label of 'witchcraft' to be attached to one; purely because one is generally expected to bury the hatchet once one's 'enemy' has passed away.

It is against this background that the study sought to examine how funeral practices have contributed to the peace of Yonso and Apaah communities in spite of the sharp division among the people brought about by protracted chieftaincy conflicts. This paper contends funerals may not be absolutely perfect and panacea to all conflicts and at all social settings given the dynamics of contemporary conflicts. Nonetheless, their power in resolving conflicts and building peace among various divided communities in Ghana especially, the rural communities, cannot be misjudged. It is expected that the findings from this study will place policymakers and stakeholders to understand and appreciate the immense contribution of traditional conflict resolution and peace building mechanisms in our conflict endemic societies and the need to support and streamline these mechanisms to promote peace, especially in the rural communities.

In consonance with the objective, the study is organized into five broad parts. Part one captures the introduction to the study while part two reviews literature on funerals as indigenous conflict resolution and peace building mechanisms. Part three concerns itself with the method employed in gathering and analyzing data while part four is devoted to the results and findings from the study.

Part five captures the conclusion of the study as well as suggested recommendations.

Literature Review

Indigenous conflict resolution and peace building mechanisms

The concept 'indigenous' as opposed to 'contemporary' does not mean that the former is either bad or inferior to the latter. However, in present times, people usually use the word 'indigenous' loosely to denote origin or original inhabitants of a given community, or an idea which is appropriate to a given people. It could be a style of building, nature of song or mode of doing something such as farming which has endured over the years. In some quarters, indigenous is used synonymously with the words native or tradition. Indigenous peace building mechanisms, by implication, are the practices and mechanisms rooted in the culture of the people of Africa which long before the advent of colonialism and its political institutions such as the court, police, military, executive and legislature, ensured peace and security among the people (Acquah, 2006). The process of conflict resolution has to do with how indigenous structures and systems encompass the norms, values and the beliefs guide social interaction in bringing peace at the individual and community level relationships.

The inability of mainstream conflict resolution mechanisms to bring about the desired peace and security calls for a serious reflection and consideration of the incorporation of the resilient indigenous conflict resolution and peace building mechanisms, notably; chieftaincy, festivals, funerals, taboos and joking mate relations which over the years foster peace, security, discipline, order and fear in the society. As rightly pointed out by Gulliner (1979) and Twumasi (1985), in all societies, primitive or civilised have at some stage or other of their development formulated policies designed to regulate the conduct of their citizens and in settlement of disputes.

Admittedly, the advent of colonialism with its political institutions such as the police, military, court and its adjunct Christianity and Western education to some extent has reduced the fear of punishment and sense of communalism and bond embedded in traditional beliefs and practices, which served as pillars of peace and security among the people (Busia, 1968, Nukunya, 2003). Nevertheless, most of the indigenous conflict resolution and peace building mechanisms including funerals are of much relevance in building a sustainable peace in contemporary times, notwithstanding the forces of social change. As noted by Ndumbe (2001), indigenous conflict resolution strategies are not only a healing of wounds and psychological trauma, but also a product of consensus building, re-integration of conflicting parties into the society, and an avenue for promoting community development.

Funeral is a solemn period to mourn the dead. It is one of the oldest indigenous conflict resolution mechanisms in Africa and in Ghana. It is a moment of reflection and the belief is that family and community members have to forgive themselves for the offences they committed to ensure a right passage of the dead (Busia, 1968). According to Mkhize (1985), traditionally, vigils and funerals promote the integration of people with fractured relationship. He argued that funerals bring people within and outside the family and the community together to wish the departed soul a farewell.

Among the Ashantis of Ghana for instance, funeral rites are not performed for adults who commit suicide and other deaths which traditionally are labelled as abominable deaths. Funeral rites for a departed soul start with a vigil and the laying of the deceased in state, and burial of the corpse. The climax of the funeral rites takes place after the burial where members of the bereaved family assemble usually under a canopy, dressed in black, red and white mourning clothes and receive cash donations from members of the community, well-wishers and other social networks built by the deceased and the bereaved family. In present times,

a receipt, usually with the imprint of the deceased is issued to donors. Names of donors and the amount donated are announced to the hearing of the gathering public. Drumming and singing and dancing feature prominently in funerals. Donors in contemporary times are usually served with food (take-away) normally rice with chicken or fish together with alcoholic beverages such as beer and Guinness, and in some instances schnapps as well as soft drink mainly Fanta and Coca Cola (both bottled and canned). The traditional drink, the palm wine is not left out, even though it has ceased to be the main source of drink in funeral celebrations probably due to the fact that most of the palm wine is distilled into 'Akpeteshie', a well patronised hard local alcoholic drink. Information gathered from Busia's work (1968) and field survey (2014) among others revealed that, Thursdays, Fridays Saturdays and Sundays are the preferable days earmarked for funerals. The import of any given funeral however, is to give the departed soul a befitting farewell.

Theoretical Consideration

This study has adopted the Theory of Cooperation and Competition as espoused by Deutsch (1973) to explain why some chieftaincy conflicts are constructively resolved, yet some tend to escalate and grow beyond hope of resolution and assume destructive tone. Supported by considerable research, the theory of cooperation and competition identifies conditions and dynamics that affect whether conflicts result in largely constructive or destructive outcomes. The theory proposes that emphasizing cooperative goals in conflict, belligerents demonstrate a commitment to pursue mutually beneficial solutions which create high-quality resolutions and relationships. On the other hand, focusing on competitive interests, parties pursue their own goals at the expense of the others which escalate conflict, resulting in no or imposed solutions and suspicious relationships.

Deutsch's (1973) Theory of Cooperation and Competition defines conflict as incompatible activities. The theory assumes that incompatible

activities occur in both compatible and incompatible goal context, and that the choice made or the belief held by conflicting parties, very much affects their expectations, interaction, and outcomes. The theory stresses by defining conflict as incompatible activities can help develop more realistic and useful understanding and attitudes toward conflict. Thus, the theory admits the presence of conflicts or differences that exist among people which by themselves do not make conflicts negative. What the theory seeks to communicate is that how people define and react to their differences may determine the outcome whether conflict would be constructive or destructive. It holds that defining conflict as opposing interests reinforces the popular view that conflict is a win-lose contest and each party tries to win the conflict. The theory asserts that people who assume that their conflict is competitive are unlikely to develop constructive ways of managing their conflicts (Deutsch, 1973). The seemingly peaceful condition in Yonso and Apaah communities notwithstanding the differences that exist among them may suggest that the community members have chosen to cooperate to resolve their differences rather than to compete.

Methodology

Study locality

Apaah and Yonso, the study communities politically fall under Asante Mampong Municipal Assembly in the Ashanti Region of Ghana. Like any typical Asante community, Apaah and Yonso are clan-based communities. Thus, every member of the two communities belongs to at least one of the seven principal clans namely, Oyoko, Bretuo, Asene, Asona, Agona, Aduana and Ekoona respectively.

The people of the two communities share similar characteristics including language (Twi-speaking people) and practice matrilineal system of inheritance. The people are mainly farmers and cultivate both cash crops (example cocoa) and food crops such as yam, cocoyam, plantain and cassava. To a large extent, the two communities engage in

inter-communal marriage. The distance between the two communities is about 4.8 kilometers.

Traditionally, Apaah and Yonso have different roots of allegiance. While Apaah is under the paramountcy of Mampong, Yonso is under the Divisional Chief of Jamasi who in turn is under the Paramount Chief of Mampong (Busia, 1968). Like other communities in Ashanti, Apaah and Yonso have witnessed long standing and sharp chieftaincy disputes. While the chieftaincy dispute in Apaah is between the kingmakers and the Chief; that of Yonso is between two competing royal families namely, Bretuo and Asona. These two chieftaincy conflicts have witnessed various court interventions and have polarized the people in the two communities.

Sampling and Data Collection

This study adopted an exploratory case study design. This design enabled the researcher to get an in-depth understanding as to why Yonso and Apaah communities had not experienced any violent confrontation notwithstanding the sharp and protracted chieftaincy conflicts confronting the people. On the basis of the objective, only traditional leaders were purposely selected for the study.

The understanding of customs and practices demand in-depth historical account. As these selected people were generally old and also reputed to be custodians of customs, their selection was considered appropriate for the study. Data were gathered mainly through in-depth interview between April, 2013 and June, 2014 with the aid of interview guide. However, there was a follow up in 2016 with the view to ascertain any development that might have taken place for the past two years when the data were gathered.

In order to arrive at the relevant data, four separate interviewing sections were held at different times for the selected traditional leaders in the two communities. At all times, the researcher was accompanied by a field assistant, and where custom demanded, soft drinks were presented to

the traditional elders as an appreciation for moving them from their 'traditional stools' a symbol of their authority and as the link between the people and the ancestors (Gyapong, 2006). Ten (10) traditional authorities (family heads/elders) and eleven (11) traditional authorities (family heads/elders) from Apaah and Yonso respectively took part in the study.

Given the fact that in the Akan system, traditional authorities basically tend to be males (Odotei, 2006; Fayorsey, 2006), to cater for the views of women, besides the inclusion of the three queen mothers (one from Apaah and one each from the two competing royal clans in Yonso), four other elderly women, two from each community were purposely selected and interviewed. In all the two communities, none of the participants was below the age of 60 years. The relatively youngest participant as at February, 2014 was 65 years with the oldest being 97 years. The participants were matured and did understand the purpose of the study. The contributions of all the relatively young and old participants were weaved together with the view to getting a coherent picture of the situation in the study communities. For the purpose of validity, the researcher met the participants individually at different times from the two communities in 2014 and the draft report was read to them for confirmation, rejection or modification of any part deemed necessary. The credibility of the study was thus in no way compromised.

The researcher was also mindful of ethics in the field of social research and the sensitive nature of chieftaincy conflicts, and as such was at all times tactful in his encounter with the participants. All the instruments used in recording the data and their purpose were made known to the participants. It was also against this ethical consideration and the sensitive nature of chieftaincy conflicts that the field assistant whose biological father and mother were natives of Apaah and Yonso respectively and known by the members of the two communities as a true son was selected to allay any suspicion that the participants might have held about a supposed

'researcher and a stranger'. The field assistant helped the researcher to transcribe the information recorded with the aid of both the field note book and an audio recorder device.

De Vos (2002) has emphasized that human beings are the objects of study in social sciences and this brings unique ethical problems to the fore that would not be relevant in the pure, clinical laboratory settings of the natural sciences. In their contribution to ethics in social research, Babbie and Mouton (2004) indicated that scientists have the right to the search for the truth and the right to collect data through interviewing people, but this must not be done at the expense of the rights of other individuals in the society.

As a follow up, in April, 2016, the researcher visited the two communities to ascertain whether there had been any new development in the two communities. Information received from two key informants was that, no significant change had taken place in terms of the funeral practices in the two communities except that the chieftaincy conflicts (cases) which were pending before the High Court (in case of Apaah) and the Supreme Court (in case of Yonso) at the time of the field study had been ruled and the two communities now have substantive chiefs. Whilst there was only one chief in Appah, Yonso community still has two competing chiefs namely; Yonsohene (Yonso chief) and Yonso Odumasehene (Chief) who doubles as Benkumhene of Jamasi (the Left wing of Jamasi) as per the Supreme Court ruling. The key informant from Yonso supported his assertion by producing to the researcher the Supreme Court ruling document (J7/20/2014). The key informant from Yonso indicated that, the decision of the Judicial Review of the Supreme Court has still not buried the chieftaincy conflict in Yonso as the community is still polarized by the conflict, yet without any violent confrontation. Data gathered during interview sections were recorded with the aid of both field note book and a digital camera recorder. In addition, secondary sources relevant to the study such as textbooks and journal articles were equally utilized.

The information recorded was first transcribed and carefully edited to ensure that the original content was not lost. Given the fact that the study was purely qualitative, information gathered through interview and secondary sources were analysed descriptively around three main themes namely: funeral, conflict resolution and reconciliation; funerals and socio-economic development, and challenges associated with funerals.

Results and Discussion Funeral, Conflict Resolution and Reconciliation

The main objective of the study was to explore the contributory role of funerals in the resolution of conflicts and building peace among the people of Yonso and Apaah who are sharply divided by chieftaincy disputes, yet had not experienced any violent confrontations. Data gathered revealed that all the participants were aware of the devastating nature of the chieftaincy conflicts and the influential role of funerals in conflict resolution in the two communities. Data gathered revealed that the cash and material contributions by virtually all adult males and females in the community as well as the exchange of greetings to support a bereaved family regardless of a person's traditional or political affiliation has largely prevented members of the two communities from any violent confrontation. As indicated by one participant at Yonso:

'Every behaviour exhibited in Yonso by any person is construed as chieftaincy which has resulted in a number of court actions'. But regardless of this we all assist by mourning with any bereaved member of the community irrespective of his or her traditional political allegiance by giving cash donations and material things'.

The participant stated that the attempt to resolve the Yonso chieftaincy dispute through the courts has divided members of the community. He however, admitted that 'leadership position is mainly for one person, but death is for everyone'. This, he

said explains why the people come together to mourn the dead whenever death strikes in the town notwithstanding the different loyalties of the people to the two competing chiefs. This of course is a healthy practice as it restrains any outward violent confrontation among the people. Murithi (2009) ,for instance, had indicated that peace building proceeds from that of negative peace - absence of violence to that of positive peace. That is, peace that promotes reconciliation and co-existence on the basis of human rights and social, economic and political justice. An indigenous practice that restrains people of diverse traditional or political loyalty from mutual physical attack could be seen as productive. Diversity in terms of traditional or political loyalty should therefore not necessarily be a basis for mutual violent attack among people.

According to the participants, what was not possible was the direct cash donation and exchange of greetings by the immediate protagonists. In the case of Apaah, what was not practical, according to the participants, was direct exchange of greetings and cash donation between some of the kingmakers and the chief. Similarly, in Yonso, the problem was between the two competing chiefs and or isolated closed family members. This revelation suggests that funerals may not necessarily be a panacea to all social conflicts at all social settings notwithstanding their potency in resolving conflicts. This calls for the collaboration and intervention of other conflict resolution mechanisms such as customary arbitration and mediation.

Funerals have helped in resolving intra-family and communal disputes especially in the rural communities of Ghana. In both Apaah and Yonso, data gathered indicated that the resolution of land disputes and personal squabbles typically has been made possible due to the celebration of funerals. In finding out as to why land disputes and petty squabbles have been able to be resolved due to funerals, the participants indicated that people are requested by tradition to settle their differences so as to ensure a befitting burial for any departed

relative. Sixteen (16) of the participants recounted how they assisted in resolving land disputes and personal squabbles among their own family members and members of some bereaved families as a prelude to joint family funeral celebrations for some departed family members. In the words of one participant in an interview held in Apaah in November, 2013: 'Ayie na ede ayaaka nkabom ba' (literally - funeral reconciles people hitherto with fractured communication).

If a major component of peace building is to reconcile people of disjoint relationship, then, the practice and proper funeral celebration could be a major binding force among divided societies in Ghana. As pointed out by another participant at Yonso in February, 2014:

'Se woƣe se wohunu sedee ayiyo de nkabom ba a, hwe senea oman panin Mills ayiyo bree amanyosem ase, na afei ekaa nnipa a wofiri amanyokuo ahadoo emu sie won oman panin a ofirii emu wo 2012 (literally - if you want to see how funerals integrate people, look at how the funeral rites of the late President Mills in 2012 calmed the political tempers at that time and brought people of diverse political affiliations to mourn and bury their departed president)'.

The tacit principle embedded in funerals which has integrated the people of Yonso and Apaah together cannot be overemphasized as gathered in this study. This finding is in line with Ndumbe's (2001) assertion that indigenous conflict resolution strategies are not only a healing of wounds and psychological trauma, but also a product of consensus building, re-integration of conflicting parties into the society, and an avenue for promoting community development.

Funerals and Socio-Economic Development

Although funerals are not celebrated principally with the view to achieving any economic benefits, the reality is that funeral celebrations have some accompanied social and economic benefits. In finding out any social and economic benefits attached to funerals, information gathered revealed that, funerals play instrumental role in the economic lives of the people. It was gathered that some members of the two communities have taken advantage of purchasing canopies and plastic chairs which they hire to bereaved families for a fee. It was also revealed that some bereaved families have equally purchased plastic chairs and canopies through funeral donations. Such chairs and canopies, according to the participants, are equally hired to members of the community for a fee. In Yonso, one participant recounted that in a funeral celebration in 2013, part of the proceeds of the funeral, being excess donation, was used as 'seed money' for the upkeep of the children of the departed mother. The researcher also gathered that as a result of the funeral rites of an elderly father in the same community in 2013, the children of the deceased by way of preparing a decent place for the last church service for their deceased father roofed the Presbyterian Church in the community which was long overdue.

The information gathered from all the participants indicated that some buildings in the two communities which over the years had not seen any meaningful renovation had been renovated and painted. In response to the question as to why the various houses were renovated and painted, the participants voiced out that the painting and renovation were done to give a good impression to mourners or sympathizers about the bereaved families. This is what two participants said during an interview; 'Kane no na yese owuo see fie, nso seisei dee, owuo siesie fie' (literally- In the past death was seen as a destructive blow to the household but now death builds and uplifts households)'.

The participants pointed out to the researcher some of the buildings in the two communities that have witnessed a massive renovation and painting due to funeral celebrations. If peace building seeks to transform the social well-being of people (Murithi, 2009), then the contribution of funerals to the social life of people especially in the rural communities cannot be over simplified.

Challenges Associated with Funerals

In finding out any challenges confronting the celebration of funerals in contemporary times, two competing views were gathered from the participants. One view coming from nine participants suggested that modern system of funeral practices are expensive as compared to the olden days due to preparation of 'take away food', long deposit of dead bodies in the mortuary, and the sewing of special mourning clothes by members of the bereaved families among others. Those participants who shared this view indicated that such practices were unknown in the olden days.

This is what two respondents said:

'What are we witnessing in present times? Solemn periods to mourn the dead have now become moments of feasting. Every funeral celebration now calls for new mourning clothes which place financial burden on the already poor'.

The other 12 participants, representing the opposing view admitted that the celebration of funerals has become expensive in contemporary times. They however, indicated that the nature of funeral rites is a reflection of present realities such as; the growth of the population, long distance places of work and the widening of social networks. This is what one respondent remarked:

I have children working in the various cities with their friends. When we were bereaved we kept the body in the mortuary and informed all our relatives working in the country for them to prepare for the funeral. During the funeral, my children came with their friends and we had to feed them. All these demand money that is why funeral celebration in present times has become expensive. This is the reality and there is little that we can do about it'.

The two opposing views suggest the dynamic nature of funeral as a traditional practice. While the nature of funeral celebrations cannot remain static due to present conditions, care however should be taken not to obliterate their role as an age-old Ghanaian conflict resolution and peace building mechanism.

Two participants, all females, indicated that the processes that widows had to go through (widowhood rites) in the past were stressful. This is what they said;

'In the past widows had to bath in cold water, walk on bare foot, and abstaining from eating certain foods during mourning which were stressful. However, with the advent of Christianity and Western education these practices have been largely transformed'.

This revelation supported the report of the Executive Director of MATCH International (2002) that among the Ashantis, as in other ethnic groups in Ghana, women are expected to observe rituals such as being secluded in the dark during the period of mourning and bathing in cold water. The information gathered suggest that certain funeral practices may be obnoxious and need to be transformed so as to preserve this age-old Ghanaian practice devoid of any stigma.

Regardless of the challenges confronting funerals, all the participants were of the view that funeral

practices are part and parcel of their daily lives. This is what one participant said:

'I don't think that a time may come that any person of authority can even ban the celebration of funerals. This is impossible. We can modify the practices but we cannot abandon them. Not today nor tomorrow'.

The assertion made by the participants was not far from Sarpong's (1974) view. Sarpong (1974) pointed out that whatever one thinks of funerals, one must not tell the Ghanaian to abolish them. Sarpong (1974) contended a call to abolish funerals in Ghana is equally asking the Irish Bishop to forget about the Feast of St Patriarch, which is not possible.

CONCLUSION

The findings from this study have shown how funeral, a traditional practice can foster peace among people divided on traditional or political views and affiliation and to co-exist without any outward violent confrontation. From Deutsch Theory of Cooperation and Competition, it can be suggested that the people of the two communities have realised the differences that exist among them. Yet, they have adopted the cooperative style to resolve their differences thereby preventing any outward violence in the two communities., From the perspective of the Deutsch Theory of cooperation and competition, the Yonso and Apaah situation suggests that chieftaincy conflicts need not be waged destructively even when there is a sharp difference between the conflicting parties. This study has revealed that funerals promote socio-economic development of people as manifested in Apaah and Yonso communities. However, the preparation of 'take away food', long deposit of dead bodies in the mortuary, and the sewing of special mourning clothes by members of the bereaved families, have become a major economic burden to some family members which needs a second thought.

RECOMMENDATIONS

In order to make funerals more relevant and acceptable as conflict resolution and peace building mechanisms, especially in the rural communities, the following suggestions are made :

1. Dispute resolution centers focusing on non-violent means of resolving conflicts such as mediation and customary arbitration should be established at the various Local Councils where traditional authorities including family heads, women groups and youth-group leaders could be trained and equipped with contemporary mediation and arbitration skills in managing disputes at the family and community levels without the recourse to violence.

Information gathered from the study revealed that the celebration of funerals has not fully helped in resolving the differences between the chief and some king makers in Apaah, and in the case of Yonso, between the two competing chiefs. This information points to the limitation of funerals in resolving conflict and building peace. Dispute resolution centers focusing on mediation and arbitration may help cater for any limitation associated with funerals as indicated above. The various dispute resolution centers should be supervised by resource persons including the police, lawyers and conflict resolution experts.

2. In order to cut down the seemingly unnecessary costs associated with funeral celebrations especially in some rural communities which place financial burden on the people as revealed in the study; chiefs, family heads and community members should organize community durbars occasionally to agree on the best practices of celebrating funerals without necessarily undermining their significance. As noted by Sarpong (1974), one major legacy of Ghanaians is funeral which cannot be abolished. Improving the conduct of funerals to make them more relevant to the people is therefore necessary. One way to cut funeral costs is to earmark a particular week in every month for funeral celebrations as practiced in Apaah community. More so, any

aspect of funeral cerebation that undermines the development of the people especially women, should be expunged to reflect the Ghana 1992 constitutional provision in respect of the promotion of human rights for all people.

3. It is also recommended that further studies should be conducted into the viability of resolving cultural-based conflicts such as chieftaincy conflicts through the application of law. From the field study, information gathered was that the attempts to resolve the chieftaincy conflicts in the study communities through the courts have further deepened the differences among the people especially in Yonso community.

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THE EFFECT OF LAND AND TREE TENURE ON THE MANAGEMENT OF SHEA TREES IN GHANA

SHU-AIB JAKPA, S.1,3, LOVETT, J.C.3 AND DONKOH, S.A.2

1. Department of Horticulture, Faculty of Agriculture, University for Development Studies, Nyankpala Campus, Tamale, Ghana.

2. Department of Agricultural and Resource Economics, Faculty of Agribusiness and Communication Sciences, University for Development Studies, Nyankpala Campus, Tamale, Ghana

3. Twente Centre for Studies in Technology and Sustainable Development, University of Twente, Enschede, Netherlands.

ABSTRACT

This research was conducted in Ghana to assess the impact of land and tree tenure conflicts and other related factors on the management and conservation of shea trees. A multi-stage sampling design was used to select 540 farmers for the study. Statistical Package for Social Scientists (SPSS) and Microsoft Excel were used to analyze responses of the administered questionnaire and the relationships between socio-demographic factors and willingness to continue managing shea trees were investigated using Pearson correlation and cross-tabulation in SPSS. Results of the analyzed data were presented in the form of tables and pie-charts. Findings of the

research indicate that almost all the farmers (85%) willing to continue managing shea trees were natives who inherited farmlands from their parents or clans. These farmers own and have authority over their lands and shea trees but are more willing to continue managing the trees that are less than 3 km away from their homes. Willingness to continue managing and conserving shea trees is significantly ($p \leq 0.05$) influenced by whether the farmers are natives, how the land is acquired, distance of farm from home, who owns the farmland and the shea trees, who has authority over the land and benefits derived from the trees.

Key words:

Ghana, Land and tree tenure, conflicts, management trees, conservation

Introduction

Land tenure involves laws, rules and obligations relating to the possession, and/or authority and interests in land (Kasanga, 1988). It is the legal or customary relationship among people with regards to ownership of land. The parties involved can either be individuals or groups (FAO, 2002) and hold the land and land-based resources, such as trees, minerals, pastures, and water under spelt-out agreements (USAID, 2017). In Ghana, land and tree tenure may involve the control of land and trees without managing them or managing them without necessarily controlling them (MLNR, 2016). Such situations between ownership/control and management of the land and trees can impact on the conservation of the trees including shea (*Vitellaria paradoxa*).

The shea tree is a multi-purpose tree native to sub-Saharan Africa (SSA). It is immensely valued for the oil produced from its nuts which is used locally and worldwide in cosmetics, pharmaceuticals and in chocolate formulations (Bup et al., 2014). The shea tree is generally regarded as one of the utmost important tree species in the West African

parklands. Its uses range from provision of income to environmental services in the semi-arid region (Teklehaimanot, 2004; Okullo et al., 2004; Byakagaba et al., 2011). The edible fruit pulp of the tree is consumed by both humans and animals while the butter is generally used in cooking food as well as in the pharmaceutical and confectionery industries for the production of useful products such as body creams, lotions and other body healthcare products (Lamien, 2007). The tree serves as the bedrock on which most households in northern Ghana depend for survival as it provides jobs for nearly 85% of the people in that area.

Despite all these benefits, over the past decades the trees have been cut down for various uses, including clearing them to create space for the cultivation of food crops as well as for fuelwood for domestic uses and for sale. These have resulted in drastic reductions in the shea tree populations in Ghana. Most of the trees could have been conserved and managed alongside food crops, but insecure land and tree tenure serve as a disincentive for tenant farmers in particular to manage trees (McDermott and Schreckenber, 2009, 163), and this has contributed to the declining numbers of shea trees in Ghana. As a result, a lot of concerns have been expressed as to how to reverse these worrying trends as the populations of shea trees have significantly

dwindled over the past decades. In view of this, in recent times there have increasingly been on-going studies and discussions on how to deal with these disturbing developments of decreasing shea tree populations (Okiror et al., 2012, Okullo et al., 2012 and Buyinza and Okullo, 2015). One of the identified promising panaceas lies in the conservation of the trees through farm management practices (Lovett and Haq, 2000; Takimoto et al., 2008; Okiror et al., 2012; Okullo et al., 2012 and Buyinza and Okullo, 2015, Shu-aib Jakpa et. al., 2016).

The traditional management of shea parklands usually involves the use of farming strategies and practices to manage and conserve shea trees, and these have been identified as the most effective way of tackling the problem of the decreasing shea tree populations. During such management activities, mature trees are preserved in each cycle of land preparation for farming and constitute a major part of the indigenous farming system (Tabuti et al., 2009). The trees profit from agronomic practices such as weeding and management of soil fertility carried out for annual crops (Masters et al., 2004) and increase in growth and yield. Ultimately, these trickle down to improve the livelihoods of households and communities that manage the trees, and in turn help to conserve trees (Bigombe Logo, 2004) since farmers are able to derive financial and other benefits from the trees. It was therefore worth conducting a study to find out the effects that land tenure and other related factors have on the management and conservation of shea trees in Ghana since there is scanty or no documented information in that aspect of research.

This study was therefore conducted to address the following research question:

How are land tenure conflicts impacting on shea tree management and conservation in Ghana?

Methodology

Study Location and Land-use Systems

The study was conducted in the shea-growing areas of northern Ghana; the three northern savannah agro-ecological zones of Ghana. In each of these three zones, an administrative region was selected for the study; Upper East Region (representing Sudan savannah zone), Northern Region (representing Guinea savannah zone) and Brong-Ahafo Region (representing the transitional forest/savannah zone) (Figure 1).

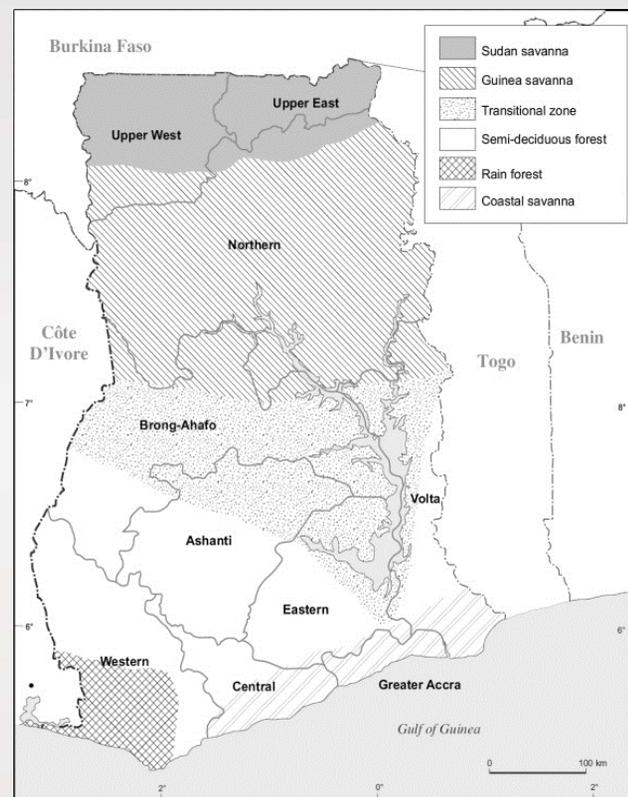


Figure 1. Map of Ghana showing the ecological zones including the Transitional, Guinea and Sudan savannah zones where the study was conducted
Source: Benneh and Agyapong (1990); Antwi-Agyei (2012).

Data collection

Sampling Techniques

The study was done at 2 levels; the local community and household levels. A total of 540 respondents were chosen using the multi-stage sampling technique.

At the first stage (Regional level), purposive sampling technique was used to select the three regions within the ecological zones of shea-growing areas in northern Ghana.

The second stage (District level) involved using a simple random sampling technique to select approximately one-third of the number of shea-growing districts in each region.

At the third stage (Community level), purposive sampling technique was used to select three (3) communities in each district.

The fourth stage (Household level) of the sampling design entailed using a simple random sampling technique to select approximately one-third of the

number of households per community for interview.

The fifth and final stage (Individual level) involved stratified sampling where two (2) persons (a male and a female) were purposively selected in each household. This was done as a result of the fact that the shea industry involves the active participation of both men and women in the management and processing of shea respectively. Details of the sampling procedure are indicated in Table 1 below. Specific key-informant interviews and personal observations were used to gather the required information. The focus of the study was on land/tree tenure, land/tree ownership, management strategies and practices and conservation in the shea-growing areas of Ghana.

Table 1. Regions, districts and communities selected for the study

	<i>Zone</i>	<i>Region</i>	<i>District</i>	<i>Community</i>
1	<i>Transitional Savannah</i>	<i>Brong-Ahafo</i>	<i>Kintampo North</i>	<i>Kawampe</i>
2			<i>Tain</i>	<i>Old Longoro</i>
3			<i>Pru</i>	<i>Yeji</i>
4	<i>Guinea Savannah</i>	<i>Northern</i>	<i>East Gonja</i>	<i>Fuu</i>
5			<i>Tamale</i>	<i>Nyeshei</i>
6			<i>Kumbungu</i>	<i>Cheyohi</i>
7	<i>Sudan Savannah</i>	<i>Upper East</i>	<i>Kassena-Nakana East</i>	<i>Paga-Badunu</i>
8			<i>Kassena-Nakana West</i>	<i>Gia</i>
9			<i>Bolgatanga</i>	<i>Kulbia</i>

2.3 Statistical analysis, interpretation and presentation of results

Responses of the questionnaire that were administered in the research were analyzed using Microsoft Excel and Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) programme. Pearson correlation and cross-tabulation in SPSS were used to investigate the relationship between socio-demographic factors and willingness to continue managing shea trees. The analyzed data were then interpreted and the results were presented in the form of tables and pie-charts.

Results

Authority over land and shea trees

Findings of the research indicate that, as shown in Figure 2, farmers and the chiefs (traditional leaders in the communities) were identified as the main authorities over land and shea trees, respectively forming 60% and 20% of the main decision makers in the shea tree management within the communities sampled. Other identified decision makers were traditional chief priests (7%), clan heads (6%), family heads (5%) and landlords (2%) respectively.

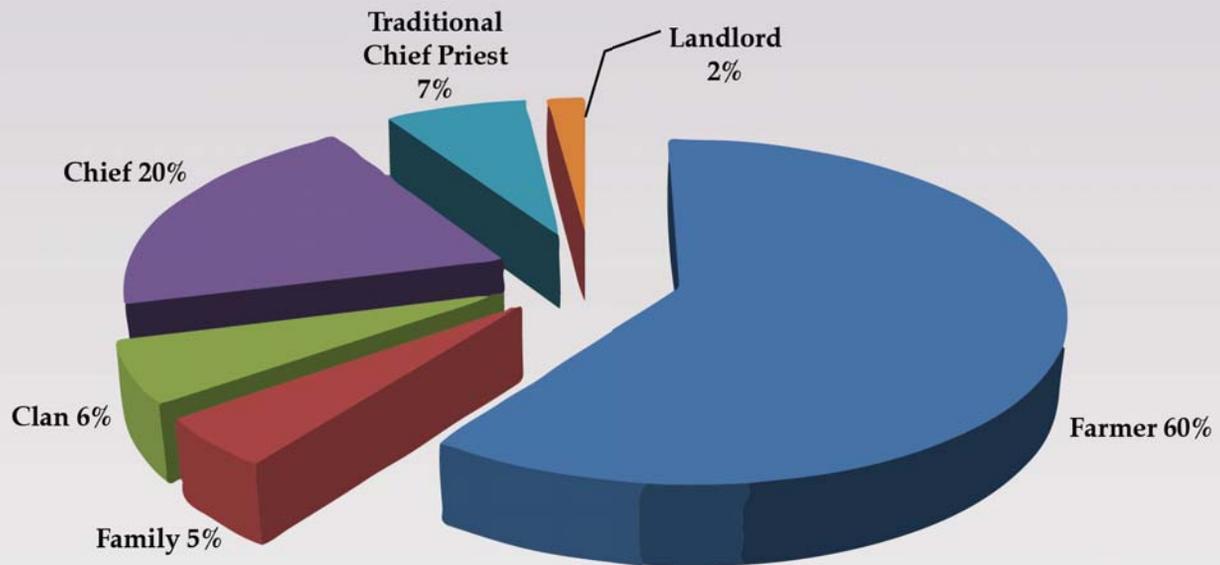


Figure 2. Who has authority over the management of shea trees in communities in Ghana?

Willingness to continue managing shea trees by farming households

Of the main socio-demographic and shea tree management characteristics that influence people's willingness to manage shea trees (Table 2) studied, logistic regression analysis shows that respondents' willingness to manage shea trees is significantly ($p \leq 0.05$) influenced by whether one is a native to the village or non-native, mode of land acquisition, distance of farm from home, ownership of the farmland and shea trees, authority over land and shea trees and benefits from the shea trees (Tables 2 and 3).

If the correlation coefficient (R) is positive and statistically significant, it indicates that there is a high direct relationship between two variables. The strength of the relationship between the two variables is determined by the value of R and the statistical significance. On the other hand, if R is negative, it means there is an inverse relationship between the two variables (Forrester, 2015).

Thus, if R is significantly positive, it means the socio-demographic and shea tree management

characteristics encourage farmers to manage shea trees, while the reverse is the case (farmers are less willing to manage shea trees) if R is negative.

With regards to whether one is a native or a non-native, natives were more willing (84.8%) to manage shea trees than non-natives (Table 3). The marginal effect of 0.667 implies that there is a 67% greater chance of willing to continue managing shea trees if the farmer is a native of his community. The marginal change on the attitudes towards shea management activities as a result of indigenesness is 0.126, implying that if the farmer is a native of his community, the probability of continuing managing shea trees increases by 13% more than if he is not a native.

Land acquisition also influenced attitudes towards shea management. A cross-tabulation (Table 4) shows that farmers with farmlands acquired through inheritance had the highest interest (57%) in the management of shea trees. The marginal effect of 0.562 implies that there is a 56% greater chance of willing to continue managing shea trees if the land was inherited. The marginal change on

¹Marginal effect is a measure of how one variable (the predicted or outcome variable) changes as a result of changes in another variable (the explanatory variable). Marginal effects can provide information for determining how change in a response is related to change in a covariate (Barrons, 2014 and Williams, 2015).

the attitudes towards shea management activities as a result of land acquired through inheritance is 0.121, implying that if the land is inherited, the probability of managing shea trees increases by 12% compared to if the land is acquired by other means. Farmers with shea trees of less than 3 km from their homes were more willing to manage the species (53%). The marginal effect of 0.515 implies

that there is a 52% greater chance of farmers willing to manage shea trees if the trees were less than 3 km from their homes. The marginal change on the attitude towards shea tree management as a result of distance of shea parklands from homes was 0.282, indicating that the level of shea management increases by 28% if the shea parkland was less than 3 km from homes of farmers.

Table 2. Logistic regression of socio-demographic and shea tree management characteristics that influence people's willingness to continue managing shea trees (N = 270)

<i>Socio-demographic and shea tree management characteristics</i>	<i>R (Pearson)</i>	<i>Odd ratio</i>	<i>p-value</i>	<i>Significance at 5%</i>
<i>Age</i>	<i>0.083</i>	<i>1.620</i>	<i>0.174</i>	<i>ns</i>
<i>Household size</i>	<i>0.012</i>	<i>0.934</i>	<i>0.849</i>	<i>ns</i>
<i>Native</i>	<i>0.126</i>	<i>0.667</i>	<i>0.038</i>	<i>*</i>
<i>Educational status</i>	<i>0.116</i>	<i>0.700</i>	<i>0.058</i>	<i>ns</i>
<i>Religion</i>	<i>0.115</i>	<i>1.930</i>	<i>0.060</i>	<i>ns</i>
<i>Marital status</i>	<i>0.048</i>	<i>1.434</i>	<i>0.430</i>	<i>ns</i>
<i>Primary occupation</i>	<i>0.050</i>	<i>1.315</i>	<i>0.412</i>	<i>ns</i>
<i>Farm size</i>	<i>0.089</i>	<i>1.576</i>	<i>0.145</i>	<i>ns</i>
<i>Do you own land with shea trees</i>	<i>0.038</i>	<i>0.799</i>	<i>0.573</i>	<i>ns</i>
<i>How was land acquired</i>	<i>-0.121</i>	<i>0.562</i>	<i>0.048</i>	<i>*</i>
<i>Distance of land from home</i>	<i>-0.282</i>	<i>0.515</i>	<i>0.000</i>	<i>*</i>
<i>Who owns land with the shea trees</i>	<i>0.239</i>	<i>0.735</i>	<i>0.000</i>	<i>*</i>
<i>Who has authority over the shea trees</i>	<i>0.172</i>	<i>0.805</i>	<i>0.005</i>	<i>*</i>
<i>Other benefits from shea</i>	<i>0.137</i>	<i>1.069</i>	<i>0.025</i>	<i>*</i>
<i>Are you required to share benefits</i>	<i>-0.127</i>	<i>0.861</i>	<i>0.036</i>	<i>*</i>
<i>Do you manage trees?</i>	<i>0.129</i>	<i>0.437</i>	<i>0.034</i>	<i>*</i>
<i>Do you intercrop shea trees with food crops</i>	<i>0.032</i>	<i>0.978</i>	<i>0.605</i>	<i>ns</i>
<i>Would you have preferred cultivating only crops</i>	<i>0.040</i>	<i>1.044</i>	<i>0.518</i>	<i>ns</i>
<i>What do you use economic benefits for</i>	<i>0.132</i>	<i>1.128</i>	<i>0.030</i>	<i>*</i>
<i>Is anyone allowed to grow trees?</i>	<i>-0.093</i>	<i>0.749</i>	<i>0.127</i>	<i>ns</i>

Table 3. Variables that influence people's willingness to manage shea trees in Ghana (after logistic regression analysis; N = 270)

Variable	R (Pearson)	Odds ratio	p-value	Significance @ 5%
Native	0.126	0.667	0.038	*
How was land acquired?	0.121	0.562	0.048	*
Distance of land from home	-0.282	0.515	0.000	**
Who owns land with the shea trees?	0.239	0.735	0.000	**
Who has authority over the shea trees?	0.172	0.805	0.005	**
Other benefits from shea	0.137	1.069	0.025	*
Are you required to share benefits?	-0.127	0.861	0.036	*
Do you manage trees?	0.129	0.437	0.034	*
What do you use economic benefits for?	0.132	1.128	0.030	*

* = Significant; ns = not significant at $P \leq 0.05$

** = Significant at $P \leq 0.01$

Table 4. Cross-tabulation of indigenes, how land was acquired, distance of farmland, ownership and authority over the land, owned against respondents' willingness to manage shea trees (N= 270).

Variable	Percentage willingness to manage shea trees		Total
	Willing	Not willing	
Native			
Native	84.8 (229)	6.7 (18)	91.5 (247)
Non-native	7.4 (20)	1.1 (3)	8.5 (23)
How farmland was acquired			
Purchased	17.0 (46)	0.0 (0)	17.0 (46)
Inherited	56.7 (153)	5.2 (14)	61.9 (167)
Gilled	14.4 (39)	2.2 (6)	16.7 (45)
Rented	4.1 (11)	0.4 (1)	4.5 (12)
Distance of farm from home			
< 3 km	53.0 (143)	1.1 (3)	54.1 (146)
3 - 4 km	21.9 (59)	4.8 (13)	26.7 (72)
5 - 6 km	9.6 (26)	1.1 (3)	10.7 (29)
> 6 km	7.8 (21)	0.7 (2)	8.5 (23)
Who owns the land with the shea trees			
Myself	58.5 (158)	1.1 (3)	59.6 (161)
My family	8.1 (22)	-	8.1 (22)
My clan	7.8 (21)	0.7 (2)	8.5 (23)
Chief of this community	7.4 (20)	3.0 (8)	10.4 (28)
This community	5.2 (14)	2.6 (7)	7.8 (21)
Myself & the chief	0.4 (1)	0.4 (1)	0.7 (2)
The Traditional Chief Priest	2.6 (7)	-	2.6 (7)
My family & Chief	1.5 (4)	-	1.5 (4)
My landlord	0.7 (2)	-	0.7 (2)
Who has authority over the shea trees			
Myself	58.9 (159)	1.1 (3)	60.0 (162)
My family	4.4 (12)	0.4 (1)	4.8 (13)
My clan	5.6 (15)	0.4 (1)	5.9 (16)
The Chief	14.8 (40)	5.6 (15)	20.4 (55)
The community	0.7 (2)	-	0.7 (2)
The Traditional Chief Priest	5.9 (16)	0.4 (1)	6.3 (17)
My landlord	1.9 (5)	-	1.9 (5)

Discussion

Socio-demographic and management factors influencing shea conservation in Ghana

A logistic regression analysis indicates that the willingness of farmers to continue managing and conserving shea trees is significantly ($p \leq 0.05$) influenced by whether the farmers are natives or non-natives, how the land was acquired, distance of farm from home, ownership of the farmland and shea trees, authority over land and shea trees and benefits from the shea trees (Tables 2 and 3). A further correlation analysis of respondents' willingness to manage shea trees with these factors, individually, showed negative relationships, except benefits derived from shea trees and the use of economic benefits of shea trees.

Cross-tabulation of the factors (Table 4) showed that majority (85%) of the natives were more willing to manage shea trees than non-natives. This could be as a result of the recognition of the shea trees being of high priority for African genetic resources (Teklehaimanot, 2004) and economically valuable (Okullo et al., 2004; Byakagaba et al., 2011). As a result, to ensure that such trees are conserved to provide them with benefits, most farmers who are natives in their communities usually manage their trees, which significantly benefit from agronomic practices, such as weeding and management of soil fertility employed for annual crops (Masters et al., 2004).

Farmers who inherited farmlands were more willing to manage shea trees owing probably to the fact that they considered the trees to be an integral and crucial part of their lives and livelihoods (IOI Group, 2011). Therefore, to preserve their cultural heritage, customary practices and traditions meant that they needed to manage the shea trees to continue surviving on their lands. In addition, most of the farmers who acquired their farms by inheritance said they have the spiritual belief that there are links between their ancestors and the properties (including the shea trees) they bequeathed to the current and future generations. Therefore, apart

from the shea trees providing several vital products (Teklehaimanot, 2004) and numerous benefits, the farmers believed that to continue appeasing their ancestors meant that they needed to manage the trees, and also ensure that they conserved the trees for posterity as well.

With regards to cross-tabulation of willingness to manage the trees with distance of farmlands and trees from homes of farmers, it can be deduced that willingness to manage shea trees diminished with distance; meaning the closer (less than 3 km) the farm was to the farmer's home the more he was willing to manage the trees. Conversely, the further away (3 km or more) the farm was from his home the less the farmer was willing to manage the trees. This is obviously due to the additional challenge of covering distances of more than 6 km to provide protection for the trees (Lovett, 2004), apart from the numerous management constraints such as financial challenges and lack of working tools and planting materials, particularly with farmers from the naturally less-endowed northern Ghana (Lund, 2003).

With regards to ownership of land and trees, farmers who personally owned their farms together with the shea trees were the most willing to manage the trees probably as a result of their multiple uses (Teklehaimanot, 2004) and economic value (Okullo et al., 2004; Byakagaba et al., 2011). It is a tree species of high priority for African genetic resources (Teklehaimanot, 2004) and the ripe fruits are eaten as food during periods of food scarcity (Lamien, 2007). In addition, farmers who owned lands managed the trees so that they could use the presence of the trees to continue laying claims to the ownership of their lands.

Farmers who did not own the land on which the trees were or on which they were farming were unwilling to manage the trees most probably due to insecure land and tree tenure.

Decisions on willingness to manage shea trees were mostly made by farmers who had authority over their farmlands together with the shea trees growing on them. Similar to ownership, farmers who had authority over their farmlands could make independent decisions on issues related to the land and the trees and were the most willing to manage the trees since they valued the presence of the trees on their farmlands most. This is because trees are used as symbols of ownership and authority over land since the claim of ownership of land is tied to the ownership of land, and vice versa. The choice of trees as a claim of ownership, though symbolic, is the main reason for conserving shea trees in particular on farmlands and it is as a result of the tree providing sheabutter and other shea products for the people (Saul et al., 2003). It is a tree species of high priority for African genetic resources with multiple uses in most communities (Teklehaimanot, 2004) as well as generating income (Okullo et al., 2004; Byakagaba et al., 2011) due to its multi-purpose nature.

CONCLUSION & RECOMMENDATION

Almost all the farmers who were willing to continue managing shea trees were natives in their communities and had inherited their farmlands together with the shea trees from their parents and other family or clan members. These farmers own and have authority over the lands and shea trees but are however more willing to manage trees that are closer to their homes compared to trees that are farther from their homes. Willingness to manage and conserve shea trees is significantly ($p \leq 0.05$) influenced by whether the farmers are natives or non-natives, how the land was acquired, distance of farm from home, who owns the farmland and the shea trees, who has authority over the land and the shea trees and benefits derived from the trees. Therefore, in seeking ways of conserving shea trees in the study area, these factors should be taken into consideration since they play critical roles in determining the willingness of farmers to continue managing shea trees.

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For further information, Please contact us at the following address:

West Africa Network for Peacbuilding
Trinity Avenue, Off Mile 7 Road, Achimota, Accra

Postal address:
P. O. Box CT 4434
Cantonment-Accra Ghana

Tel: +233 (0)302 411638; (0)302 406340, (0)302 426004, (0)302 408224

Or

E-mail us at: wanep@wanep.org