



International Conflict Resolution: The Role of the Government of Ghana and Togo on the Wenchiki-Chereponi Chieftaincy Conflict

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Abstract

The article examined the Chereponi-Wenchiki Conflict and the role of Togo and Ghana's governments in managing the conflict and its effects on the two countries. The social identity theory provided the theoretical lens into issues of ethnicity, culture and ancestral connection to the geographical area. A qualitative research design was used to gather data from interviews in some communities in Togo and Ghana. This was necessary to solicit the views, and opinions of the people in the two countries on three main themes namely the causes of the conflict, the role of governments and the effects of the conflict. The study found that chieftaincy and land constituted the main causes of the protracted conflict. It was found that the government of Ghana was mainly responsible for managing the conflict while the government of Togo only collaborated with in managing the conflict. Many lives and properties were lost, social disruptions and separation of families and clan members, disruption of the economic and social livelihood of the people, the new unfortunate norm of two chiefs in communities in the Chereponi-Wenchiki area because of overlapping roles and the influence of traditional councils and the influence of Dagbon Kingdom were found to be the key effects of the conflict. The study concludes that the key influencers of the conflict are money and politics and relations among the factions has gone sour. It, therefore, recommends the need to depoliticize the conflict and strengthen the chieftaincy institution in the area for lasting peace.

Introduction

The introduction should include the paper's purpose, a short, relevant literature review, and a clear statement. The Chereponi-Wenchiki conflict is a longstanding and complex ethnic and territorial dispute that has plagued the North East Region of Ghana for many years. This conflict primarily involves the Konkomba and Chokosi ethnic groups, who have clashed over land ownership, chieftaincy, historical grievances, and access to resources in the Chereponi and Wenchiki districts (Yaro & Tseer, 2018). The ongoing turmoil in Ghana has given rise to continuous acts of violence, community displacement, and a significant humanitarian emergency (Sulemana, 2012). Ghana



grapples with a substantial array of conflicts predominantly rooted in interethnic tensions driven by competition for valuable resources, such as political authority, land, and mineral wealth (Yaro & Tseer, 2018). These conflicts manifest in various ways, encompassing inter-ethnic disputes, intra-ethnic discord, clashes over chieftaincy, and disputes related to land ownership. Notable inter-ethnic conflicts within Ghana involve conflicts between Peki and Tsito, Nkonya and Alavanyo (Gati, 2008; Wallenstein, 2010), Mamprusi and Kusasi, Konkomba and Nanumbas, as well as the Abudu and Andani factions in Northern Ghana (Mahama, 2011). The underlying causes of these conflicts have deep historical, socio-economic, and political origins that act as initial triggers and subsequently contribute to their escalation (Gati, 2008). The primary parties embroiled in this turmoil are the Konkombas and Chokosis, who have longstanding connections to the region spanning several generations. These ethnic groups have a long history of disputes revolving around land ownership and chieftaincy claims, each asserting ancestral rights to specific territories. Land disputes lie at the core of these conflicts (Mahama, 2011). Contentions over farmland, grazing pastures, and other natural resources often spiral into violent confrontations. The absence of clearly defined land boundaries and inadequate land-use policies further fuel ongoing tensions. These conflicts sporadically erupt in violence, leading to casualties and property destruction. Both districts' communities bear the brunt, with residents frequently forced to abandon their homes to evade the violence (Adewoba, 2009; Mahama, 2011; District Police Command, 2018).

The Ghanaian government, local authorities, and various organisations have made concerted efforts to mediate and seek lasting resolutions to these conflicts (Sulemana, 2012). Although peace agreements and reconciliation endeavours have been attempted, the conflicts persist stubbornly, are deeply entrenched, and resist resolution (Bircan et al., 2016). These conflicts have profound humanitarian ramifications, including population displacement, loss of life, and livelihood destruction. The Chereponi and Wenchiki conflicts are part of a broader pattern of ethnic and land-related disputes that have afflicted northern Ghana. Factors such as resource competition, historical grievances, and political manipulation have all played a role in perpetuating these conflicts (Adewoba, 2009; Mahama, 2011). In some instances, political figures have faced allegations of exploiting these ethnic tensions for personal gain, exacerbating the conflicts (Adewoba, 2009; Mahama, 2011; Bircan et al., 2016).

It is essential to recognise that the situation in Chereponi-Wenchiki and the wider North East Region of Ghana is intricate and multifaceted. Attempts have been made to mediate peace agreements and find lasting resolutions. Still, these conflicts persist due to deeply entrenched issues and the significant obstacles to implementing and maintaining these agreements. This study aims to determine the role of the Government of Ghana and Togo in the Chereponi-Wenchiki Chieftaincy Conflicts in Ghana.

International Conflicts

International conflicts have occurred throughout history and can vary widely in their causes and nature. Here are some notable international conflicts that were ongoing or had occurred. In the 21st century, erasing the haunting memories of the two World Wars and the Cold War is difficult. It proves to be a formidable task, especially when these historical conflicts appear to be overshadowed by more recent and impactful crises in African countries such as Rwanda, Liberia, Sierra Leone, Libya, the Central African Republic, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Egypt, Mali, Mozambique, Nigeria, Somalia, Sudan, and South Sudan, Mali, Niger, and Burkina Faso (Zartman, 2003; World Peace Foundation, 2018).

The Syrian Civil War, which began in 2011, involved multiple domestic and international actors. The conflict included the Syrian government led by Bashar al-Assad, various rebel groups, and the



intervention of international powers, such as Russia, Iran, and the United States (Zartman, 2003; World Peace Foundation, 2018). The war resulted in significant humanitarian crises and displacement. The conflict in Eastern Ukraine, particularly in regions like Donetsk and Luhansk, came into existence in 2014 after Russia annexed Crimea. The Ukrainian government, bolstered by Western support, confronted pro-Russian separatists with allegations of Russia providing military aid to the rebels (Zartman, 2001).

Russell (2013) and Scharia (2014) stated that the longstanding Israeli-Palestinian conflict, spanning numerous decades, is characterised by tensions surrounding land, sovereignty, and the rights of both Palestinians and Israelis. This enduring discord encompasses disputes over the West Bank, the Gaza Strip, and the status of Jerusalem; there are enduring tensions. Moreover, ongoing strains are evident in the relationship between North Korea and the international community, specifically emphasising the United States and South Korea. These tensions are primarily linked to North Korea's nuclear weapons programme, which continues to be a pressing global issue (Shlaim, 2004; Sachar, 1987).

Furthermore, several nations, including China, the Philippines, Vietnam, and others, assert competing claims over territories in the South China Sea. These disagreements regarding sovereignty and control of these waters have led to regional tensions. In 2015, the Yemeni Civil War commenced as Houthi rebels, with backing from Iran, took over Yemen's capital, Sanaa. Following this, a coalition of Arab nations, primarily led by Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates, intervened to aid the internationally recognised government, leading to a significant humanitarian crisis (Set & Seta, 2018).

International Conflict Resolution Mechanisms

International conflict resolution mechanisms encompass processes and instruments to address disputes and conflicts involving countries and international entities. These mechanisms are designed to prevent, manage, and resolve conflicts peacefully, including diplomacy, negotiation, mediation, and more. Below are some significant international conflict resolution mechanisms. According to Zyck and Muggah (2012), diplomacy is a foundational tool for resolving international conflicts. It entails negotiations and dialogues between diplomats and government officials representing conflicting parties. Diplomatic endeavours can range from informal discussions to formal negotiations, such as peace conferences or summit meetings (Mullenbach, 2018).

According to Mullenbach (2018), mediation involves the participation of a neutral third party to facilitate negotiations between conflicting parties. This impartial mediator helps guide discussions and find common ground, aiming to resolve the dispute peacefully (Mirimanova, 2009). These mechanisms play pivotal roles in averting and mitigating conflicts on the global stage. Mediators can be individuals, governments, international organisations, or non-governmental organisations (NGOs). Examples of mediators include the United Nations, regional organisations like the African Union, and individual mediators like former heads of state (Hume, 1994; Wierzbicki, 1983 & Young, 2003). The Camp David Accords (1978) was facilitated by the United States, which led to the peace treaty between Israel and Egypt and the Oslo Accords (1993), where Norway mediated between Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) Meyer (2009).

International courts, such as the International Court of Justice (ICJ) and the International Criminal Court (ICC), provide avenues for the peaceful resolution of disputes involving states and individuals accused of international violations. These legal institutions adjudicate cases grounded in principles of international law. A notable instance of this is the Case Concerning the Legal Consequences of the Construction of a Wall in the Occupied Palestinian Territory (Israel v. Palestine), where, in 2004, the ICJ issued an advisory opinion regarding Israel's construction of a security barrier in the West Bank.



Bellamy (2008) assessed that Conflict prevention measures aim to identify and address the root causes of conflicts before they escalate. Early warning systems, diplomatic initiatives, and peacebuilding efforts help prevent conflicts from erupting or escalating (Hultman, 2014; Hultman, 2014; Banaszak, 2005 & Paffenholz, 2014). The United Nations (UN) deploys peacekeeping missions to prevent conflicts and promote stability, such as the UN Peacekeeping Mission in Cyprus (UNFICYP).

Heldt (2001) stated that Peacekeeping missions involve the dispatch of international troops and observers to conflict-ridden areas to uphold peace and security. Facilitate negotiations and monitor ceasefires. These missions are often conducted by the United Nations or regional organisations (Martin-Brule, 2012; Whalan, 2013). An example is UNPROFOR, which was established in 1992 during the Bosnian War, which followed the breakup of Yugoslavia. The mission's primary goal was to facilitate peace and protect civilians in the conflict-ridden region. UNPROFOR played a significant role in several aspects of conflict resolution, and the United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS) aims to protect civilians and support peace in South Sudan (Whalan, 2013).

Griffiths and Barnes (2008) and Eriksson (2008) asserted that economic and diplomatic sanctions pressure states and entities engaging in harmful actions. Sanctions can target individuals, government officials, or sectors of a country's economy to encourage compliance with international norms and agreements. Examples of such can be the United Nations Sanctions on Iraq (the 1990s), Sanctions on Iran (2010s), Diplomatic Isolation of North Korea, and Sanctions on Russia (2014 and ongoing).

Peace agreements are formal agreements reached through negotiations that outline the terms for ending a conflict and establishing a peaceful framework for the future (Vinjamuri & Boesenecker, 2007; Kalpakian, 2017). These agreements can address ceasefires, power-sharing, and post-conflict governance (Diehl & Balas, 2014; Diehl & Druckman, 2015). (a referral can be to the Good Friday Agreement (Belfast Agreement) - Northern Ireland (1998), Dayton Agreement - Bosnia and Herzegovina (1995), Oslo Accords - Israel and Palestine (1993-1995 Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) - Sudan (2005), Colombian Peace Agreement (2016) and Paris Agreement (2015) (Newman & Richmond, 2006).

United Nations Development Agenda (1990) explains that international conferences and summits bring together leaders and officials from multiple countries to address global issues and conflicts. These gatherings can provide platforms for dialogue and the negotiation of international agreements. Some of the conferences and summits are the Potsdam Conference (1945), the Geneva Conventions (Various), the Helsinki Accords (1975), the Camp David Accords in 1978, the Earth Summit in 1992, the Kyoto Protocol in 1997, the Paris Agreement in 2015, and the Iran Nuclear Deal (Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action - JCPOA) in 2015. Effective conflict resolution often involves a combination of these mechanisms tailored to the specific context of the conflict. The choice of mechanism depends on the nature of the dispute, the willingness of parties to engage, and the level of international involvement required to find a peaceful resolution.

Role of Ghana government and Togo Government in the Chereponi-Wenchiki conflict

The Chereponi-Wenchiki conflict primarily involves communities in the northeast region of Ghana, and it does not directly involve the government of Togo. However, Togo shares a border with Ghana, and cross-border issues can sometimes influence local conflicts. According to Rasheed, Janet, and Peter (2009), the Ghanaian/Togo government's role in the Chereponi-Wenchiki conflict can be summarised as follows: both the governments of Ghana and Togo have been actively involved in endeavours to mediate and resolve the conflict that has arisen between distinct ethnic groups in Chereponi and Wenchiki.



They have initiated dialogues, facilitated peace talks, and deployed security forces to ensure regional stability. In addition, security forces like the Ghana/Togo Armed Forces and the Ghana/Togo Police Service have been activated primarily to preserve law and order in conflict-affected areas. These security forces carry the vital duty of preventing violence and protecting the welfare of the communities impacted by the conflict. Furthermore, both governments have responded to the humanitarian consequences of the conflict by offering crucial relief assistance to displaced individuals. This assistance encompasses provisions such as food, shelter, and medical services, all aimed at alleviating the suffering of those directly affected by the conflict.

The efforts of these governments have not ceased; instead, they continue to collaborate with various agencies and local leaders to advocate for peace and reconciliation consistently among the conflicting parties. They actively encourage the involved communities to seek peaceful avenues for resolving their differences. In summary, the governments of both Ghana and Togo have played multifaceted roles in addressing the Chereponi-Wenchiki conflict, spanning from diplomatic initiatives to security measures and humanitarian support, all with the overarching objective of promoting peace and stability in the region (Rasheed, Janet & Peter, 2009).

The Togo government needs to monitor the situation and prevent potential spillover effects on their border. In short, the Ghanaian and Togo governments are vested in maintaining stability along their shared border. The Ghanaian government directly addresses the Chereponi-Wenchiki conflict by mediating, deploying security forces, providing humanitarian assistance, and advocating for peace. In contrast, the Togo government should be vigilant to prevent any indirect consequences of the conflict within its borders (District Security Capacity Building Project (DISCAP, 2002).

Theoretical Framework

The study of the Chereponi-Wenchiki conflict employed the Social Identity Theory propounded by Tajfel and Turner in the 1970s. This theory posits that individuals tend to form strong affiliations with those with similar identities, resulting in robust bonds within their in-group while frequently underestimating or undervaluing individuals from outside their group. Conflict often arises when groups resist being subordinated or devalued. In the context of Chereponi, the Konkombas and Chokosis share a common language and ancestral heritage. These common attributes foster a deep sense of ethnic unity among these groups. This unity motivates them to support any fellow group member entangled in a conflict with an outsider, often escalating these conflicts into full-scale confrontations.

The theory of social identity remains pertinent when analysing conflicts that emanate from group identities. This theoretical framework provides valuable perspectives on how individuals' associations with particular groups can trigger intergroup tensions and conflicts, illuminating the profound influence of group identities and biases on human behaviour. Tajfel first introduced this theory and later worked alongside Turner to refine its core concepts.

Furthermore, Geertz (1973) observed that foundational connections are rooted in immediate proximity, familial bonds, religious affiliations, language, and cultural traditions. These inherent ties possess a mysterious and compelling influence, binding individuals to their family, neighbours, and fellow followers. The profound significance attributed to these relationships can significantly contribute to the escalation of ethnic conflicts (Geertz 1973).



Method

Study Area

Chereponi, located in the newly established Northeast Region of Ghana, is one of six districts carved out of the Northern Region. This district boasts a total population of 87,176, with males constituting 49% and females 51% of the population (Ghana Statistical Service-GSS, 2021). Notably, the youth make up over half of the entire population. Regarding employment, the number of individuals engaged in the economy's formal sector, including district administrators, teachers, nurses, and development practitioners, is comparatively smaller than those involved in the informal sector within the Chereponi district. The majority of residents are occupied in activities such as agriculture, forestry, fishing, and trading (GSS, 2021). The study encompassed several communities in Togo and Ghana: Daabu, Ango, Akobila, Ango (Togo), and Chereponi, Wenchiki (Ghana). The district is predominantly Muslim communities; the Muslim population is more than the Christian population.

Research Design

The study employed the exploratory design, which aligns well with the pragmatic philosophy. This choice was made because it enables both quantitative and qualitative analysis (Creswell, 2013). The exploratory method strategy involved collecting and analysing qualitative data before arriving at the final interpretation. This approach enhanced the study's robustness, going beyond a mere representation of qualitative data. Flick (2007) and Creswell (2013) have noted that the qualitative strategy is particularly suitable for the pragmatic research philosophy due to the higher level of analysis it allows. The study's target population was deliberately limited to stakeholders and individuals possessing experience and knowledge regarding the impacts of the conflict in the district. This group included key figures, as presented in Table 1.

Table 1: Key Participants of the Study

List of Participants	Locations of the participants	Number
Daabu Chief	Daabu, Togo	1
Chief in Ango	Ango, Togo	1
Akobila Chief, Ango	Akobila, Togo	1
Teacher (Professeur), Douaniere	Akobila, Togo	1
Farmer	Winchiki, Togo	1
Headteacher	Chereponi, Ghana	1
NCCE Official,	Chereponi, Ghana	1
NDC Chairman	Chereponi, Ghana	1
NDC Women Organizer	Chereponi, Ghana	1
NPP Chairman	Chereponi, Ghana	1
NPP Women Organizer	Chereponi, Ghana	1
Police Officer	Chereponi, Ghana	1
BNI Officer	Chereponi, Ghana	1
Prison Office	Chereponi, Ghana	1
Queen Mother	Chereponi, Ghana	1
Trader	Wenchiki, Ghana	1
Police (Gendarmerie).	Wenchiki, Ghana	1
Youth Chief of Chireponii	Chireponi, Ghana	1



Paramount Chief	Chireponi, Ghana	1
Teacher	Chireponi, Ghana	1
Nurse	Chireponi, Ghana	1
TOTAL		22

Data Sources and Data Collection Methods

The primary data for this study was gathered through semi-structured interview guides. The Primary data was collected largely from residents of the Chereponi District and the communities around the Togo border. Participants were drawn from the members of the primary data. It was further enriched by supplementing it with secondary sources, including academic journal articles, published books, and digital documents from the internet. Each interview session with respondents lasted approximately 40 minutes, and prior notification and consent were obtained from all participants. Stringent adherence to ethical research protocols was maintained throughout the data collection process. Ethical issues of participants’ informed consent, confidentiality, privacy, and anonymity were well considered and adhered to in the study, safeguarding the well-being of the participants. The research team conducted the interviews over two months, specifically in August and September, from the 7th of August to the 28th of September 2023, 2023. The study achieved an impressive response rate of 99%, a testament to the cooperation and participation of the respondents, which was highly encouraging.

Data Analysis

A total of twenty-three participants were initially selected for interviews, but only 22 of them participated. One participant had to withdraw from the interview due to illness. The researchers considered this an uncontrollable occurrence and a normal part of the research process. The collected data underwent thematic analysis. Initially, the researchers transcribed the interview results and shared them among them for editing and review. Subsequently, each researcher was tasked with developing codes, subthemes, and main themes from the transcribed data. The themes derived from the codes, underwent individual categorisation and naming by the researchers. The identified themes were subsequently compared following the individual coding and theming phases to guarantee uniformity, dependability, and pertinence. The researchers reviewed and rectified the codes, consolidating them into basic themes. These basic themes were further organised into comprehensive themes. Finally, the data results were interpreted in alignment with the identified themes by the study's objectives. Four major themes that emerged from the data are presented in Table 2.

Table 2: Major themes of the Study

Major Themes
Causes of the Chireponi-Wenchiki Conflict
Role of Governments (Togo-Ghana) and Conflict Resolution Mechanisms
The Effect of the Chireponi-Wenchiki Conflict

Findings

The Causes of the Chireponi-Wenchiki Conflict

The study found several factors accounted for the conflict in the Chireponi-Wenchiki Area of the North East Region of Ghana. Chireponi is the district capital while Wenchiki is by the Ghana-Togo border. The main factors that most of the participants mentioned include land, chieftaincy, ancestral connection to the area for some centuries, and the influence of money and power. This was how a



participant responded to the question on the causes of the long-standing dispute/conflict in the Chireponi-Wenchiki area:

A Male Participant, a Chief in Togo, stated that there is a *Lack of knowledge on who is qualified to be a traditional leader and who is not. Bribery and corruption coupled with favouritism.*

Another participant, i.e. A Female Participant and a Political Party woman organiser from Chireponi, Ghana, *shared her perspectives on the causes of the Chireponi-Wenchiki conflict. Both the Government and the traditional authorities should dig deep and have a better understanding of the situation so that they will be able to solve the problem once and for all.*

Participants have varied opinions on the possible causes of the protracted conflict in the Chireponi-Wenchiki areas of the Northeast Region. The varied perspectives ranged from male and female, profession, political party affiliation, government official, traditional leadership, youth groups, and civil society groups. Most participants expressed their displeasure with the conflict and hope and wished it would end in the area for peace.

A Farmer in Chireponi shared his view on the conflict:

In our history, every clan has a position and what each represents; therefore, no clan should be allowed to cross its boundaries by taking what rightfully belongs to the other because they have money to bribe the authorities.

The multifaced nature of the Chireponi-Wenchiki conflict was explained by this participant-Douaniere, Togo Winchiki:

Power transfer and succession should follow historical traditional formalities so that power is not in the wrong hands. The council should visit the Mango-Togo Togo Traditional Council to revisit their history on chieftaincy and land succession producers to avoid future escalation of this conflict.

Our historical tradition should tell who is qualified to be a chief and who is not.

The Dagbon Kingdom has also negatively impacted our traditional council and traditional leadership by enskinning two chiefs in almost all the smaller villages in the Chereponi district, which itself created a faction.

A Female Participant shared her views on the conflict-Trader, Wenchiki, Ghana. She said this: *The situation has much to do with the role of the Chereponi Paramount Chief and the Overlord of Dagbon.*

The responses of the varied groups of participants in different locations, across professions and gender lenses, have led to some factors that account for the Chireponi-Wenchiki conflict. These factors include a lack of understanding of the succession system because of external influence from the Dagbon Kingdom, politicians and other outsiders of the Anufors (Chokosis). The factors found in the study are the influence of politics and money, favouritism, and some kind of disregard for the succession or status of the Paramount Chief of Chireponi.

The Role of Governments (Togo-Ghana) in the Chireponi-Wenchiki) Conflict Resolutions

The second major theme that emerged from the fieldwork data gathered in the Chireponi District of the Northeast Region of Ghana is the role of governments in conflict resolutions. Part of the investigation into the Chireponi-Wenchiki conflict was to explore the role of the governments of Togo and Ghana in the conflict. The findings suggest that both governments are interested in the conflict in finding an amicable solution. The findings showed that violence in one part or side, say Ghana, has negative effects or impacts on the other side (say Togo). The reason is that there are Anufors/Chokosis in Ghana and Togo, and several border towns make the conflict a two-state affair. Thus, the reason for soliciting the views of the study participants on the roles of the two governments or two states (Ghana-Togo) in terms of Chireponi-Wenchiki) Conflict Resolution mechanisms.



This was what a participant said concerning the role of governments (Togo-Ghana) in the Chireponi-Wenchiki Conflict- A male Teacher by Profession, a Participant at Ango (Togo) Teacher (Professeur):
The Ghana government only cares about its votes and not peace. The people are under the care of the Ghanaian and not Togo. Leaders are not willing to open for the truth for justice to prevail. Government authorities are busy milking the people all they care about is the corrupt money they are making from the people.

A traditional leader has this to say on the role of governments in resolving the conflict- A Male Participant, A Traditional Leader, Ango, Togo:
Because the government of Ghana and its organs are more into favouritism and corruption than exercising their real responsibilities, the chieftaincy wouldn't have occurred had the court injunction in the enskinment been obeyed. There was a court injunction, but it failed to work. The Wenchiki-Chereponi conflict is only the responsibility of the Ghana government.

A participant also shared her views on the role of the two governments (Togo-Ghana):
The conflict has nothing to do with the Togolese government. Because Ghanaian politicians only care about their interests till 'thy' [their] kingdom comes. A participant, Douaniere, Togo Winchiki, security service of Togo, said this on the role of government and the resolution - Police Officer, Wenchiki, (Togo), Togo Police (Gendarmerie):
Almost all the traditional leaders in the area are occupying the wrong seat. They should be told the truth and act responsibly. The government and its organs should take documents of the court injunction that was disobeyed and let perpetrators face full rigours of the law.

Most of the participants interviewed in Togo see the Chireponi-Wenchiki conflict as largely in the hands of the government of Ghana.
Similarly, an official of the National Commission for Civil Education (NCCE) shares his perspectives on the role of governments in conflict resolution in the Chirepon-Wenchiki:
The responsibility was solely on the government of Ghana. He should take the first step and seek ideas from the Togolese Government.

A Female Chief (Queen Mother) has this to say on the role of government in the conflict:
It is about chieftaincy, land, and clanship; if government does not know the cause of the conflict and who is right and wrong, resolution remains impossible

A youth leader (Wenchiki) made some strong statements or raised serious issues that he thinks are the best conflict resolution mechanisms for the Chireponi-Wenchiki Conflict and urged the government of Ghana to act right and be decisive in resolving the conflict once and for all. One of the Youth Leaders in the Chereponi Balasu Area:
The Wenchiki-Chereponi Traditional Council makes no effort. First, they are the cause of continuous disturbances in the area. They are busily enskinment almost every household and clan. How can there be peace? Suppose there is a way to get the Traditional Council outside politics. In that case, almost every traditional leader is affiliated with one political party or another, and therefore, there can't be peace or resolution where there's no justice.

Each chief belongs to one faction or the other. The only mechanism that can give long-lasting peace and resolution in the Wenchiki-Chereponi Traditional Council is for the government and its organs to exercise their powers without greed, selfishness, favouritism, bribery, corruption and injustice.

The Effect of the Chireponi-Wenchiki Conflict.

The study identified several effects of the conflict on the people of the Chireponi-Wenchiki area. Some of the notable effects include lack of peace in the area, loss of lives and properties, some acts of



impunity of some traditional leaders and some politicians in the area and outside, the conflict retards the development of the area, lots of money spent on peacekeeping at the expense of development are some of the effects of the protracted Chireponi-Wenchiki conflict.

This is what one participant has to say about the effect of the Chireponi-Wenchiki conflict - A Traditional Leader, Ango Area, Togo:

Business and farming activities come to a standstill because of the conflict. This was how a Togo participant commented on the conflict's effect.

Only the Traditional Councils of Ghana and Togo will have a better impact, not the governments.

A participant made a strong statement that the conflict only has a negative effect and no positive side of the conflict. *This was what the participant said- A participant, teacher, Chireponi: The conflicts have only impacted negatively. No positive mechanism or process has been applied so far.*

Another participant shared his view on the effect of the Chireponi-Wenchiki conflict- A Police Officer, Ghana:

The conflict has had a significant negative impact on access to health facilities in the region. The violence and displacement have distributed access to healthcare in the area, with the availability of health services largely depending on where people have been forced to flee. Health workers have also been forced to flee the conflict, further exacerbating the lack of access to health services in the area; the conflicts have also caused an increase in poverty, which further means access to healthcare.

The responses from the categories of participants suggest the conflict has a lot of negative effects on the people of the Chireponi-Wenchiki area and the entire district. Also, both countries have spillover effects (Ghana and Togo). Some of the negative effects include economic costs for the governments of Ghana and Togo and the district. There are social costs because of internal displacements (families separated). Also, the findings show political costs as some parties may gain votes because of the conflict, and others may lose votes in the constituency. The conflict also tends to increase tension with the Dagbon Kingdom.

Discussion

The study found land and chieftaincy to be the main causes of the Chireponi-Wenchiki conflict. This finding concurs with other studies (Yaro & Tseer, 2018; Gati, 2008; Wallenstein, 2010; Mahama, 2011). Other factors identified in the study as the cause of the protracted conflict is the show of power (traditional and political power), where those wielding such powers try to lord over others in the form of enskinment of sub-chiefs in territories in which they have no jurisdictions on traditional matters (Yaro, Danjoe, & Kipo-Sunyehzi, 2024). Other shows of power include political influence in the selection and enskinment of some members of families or clans who may not have had a connection to such skins. Closely related to traditional and political power are favouritism and material inducements for traditional titles and ancestral connection to the area (Yaro & Longi, 2023). These are key factors found to be the cause of the protracted conflict in the Chireponi-Wenchiki area of the Northeast Region of Ghana. These empirical observations are consistent with previous studies (Gati, 2008; Adewoba, 2009).

On the role the two countries (Togo and Ghana) play in terms of the Chireponi-Wenchiki conflict resolution mechanisms, the study found that state and non-state actors cooperate in the forms of peace workshops on diplomacy, negotiation, mediation training, and sensitisations for peace. Also, there are media talks between government officials of Ghana and Togo on the one hand and several non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and civil society organisations (CSOs) working for peace to prevail in the two communities and their environs. These conflict resolution mechanisms align with



previous studies on international peace and conflict resolution mechanisms in other countries (Zyck & Muggah, 2012; Mullenbach, 2018).

On the role played by the Togo and Ghana governments in international conflict resolution, the study found both countries have an interest in the conflict, and both took measures to resolve the trans-border conflict for peace and stability. This observation agrees with Rasheed, Janet, and Peter's (2009) findings. The study, however, found Ghana to be more responsible for the conflict than Togo. The Togo government's role in the conflict appears passive, while Ghana has an active role. However, the active and the passive roles of the two countries, governments and the traditional and political arrangements or agreements leading to some kind of power-sharing appear not helpful in the study. Thus, the findings appear inconsistent with other studies regarding ceasefires, power-sharing, and post-conflict governance structures (Diehl & Balas, 2014; Diehl & Druckman, 2015).

The Chireponi-Wenchiki conflict, which, by its geography and mode of spread, constitutes an international conflict. The effects of the conflict are enormous on the family and social lives of the people. The conflict also affected businesses and farming activities (the people's economic lives). The conflict affected political activities at a point as politicians feared to campaign in some communities for fear of violence or potential attacks. Other effects of the conflict included the loss of human lives and properties in the Chireponi district of the North-east Region. These empirical findings appear to be short of the suffering countries face regarding international sanctions/embargoes (Griffiths & Barnes, (2008); Eriksson, 2008). However, such traditional councils, per the findings, look a bit different from the traditional system of the Dagbon Kingdom regarding rights to be appointed as chiefs in the Chireponi-Wenchiki areas. These overlapping identities appear to be part of the chieftaincy problems in the area. The theory of Social Identity is relevant as the source of the parallel chiefs (two Chiefs in one community) as found in several communities in the Chireponi-Wenchiki area. It provides insights into conflict spots because of social/ethnic identities (Geertz, 1973).

Conclusion

The study concludes that land and chieftaincy are the main causes of the Chireponi-Wenchiki conflict that affected lives and properties, businesses, and farming activities in the area. It was also found that power in terms of money and politics are other influential factors that account for the protracted conflict in the area. The effects of the conflict are enormous in terms of deaths, injuries, loss of properties and disruption of social life because of internal displacement within Ghana and in Togo, separating one family from the other, among others. The study concludes that the government of Ghana plays more key roles and has more responsibilities in dealing with the Chireponi-Wenchiki conflict than the government of Togo.

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