

Development Implications of Chieftaincy Conflicts in Bawku Traditional Area, Ghana

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Abstract: Several decrees and laws by the new nationalist government have disrupted the customary processes of selecting chiefs from the original family lineage hence contributing to chieftaincy conflicts in Ghana today. This study explores the wide range of development implications of the protracted chieftaincy conflicts between Kusasis and Mamprusis in the Bawku Traditional Area. The study employed systematic sampling techniques to select 200 householders in five spatial locations in the Bawku Traditional Area which have had significant impacts on the conflicts. The data gathered were analyzed using descriptive statistics. The Bawku Inter-Ethnic Peace Committee, Belim Wusa Development Agency, and the Police were selected for in-depth face-to-face interviews to affirm the quantitative data. The Bawku conflict has created social mistrust and fear, economic, physical insecurity, and infrastructural destructions with undesirable consequences on socio-economic development. This has created a pang of severe hunger in Bawku and its environs. This can affect the realization of the sustainable development agenda. The study recommended that the Ghana government through the National Peace Council should embark on intensive media campaigns on the development implications of the conflicts in the Bawku Traditional Area. Besides, the Bawku East District Assembly should create employment opportunities for the youth and assist the victims to overcome the cost incurred on them through the conflict.

Keywords: Chieftaincy Institutions, Chieftaincy Conflicts, Socio-Economic Development, Bawku Traditional Area, Ghana

1. Introduction

While the economist's perspectives have traditionally been used as the benchmark for measuring and understanding development, the concept should be seen as a transformational process encompassing wide-range of political, social, and cultural factors holistically as one variable that has a significant influence on the other [33, 49, 25]. The linkages between conflicts and development have largely been documented [18, 17]. In a conflict situation, there are opposing views that compete over the limited resources [50]. Conflicts are beneficial to development if resolved early. When a conflict is resolved early and it does not lead to violent conflicts, the beneficial effects include social order, recognition, and improved decision-making in

society [14]. For instance, Ethnic groups and structures that are not involved in the decision making process may be involved to avoid further conflict. However, when it is allowed to fester and escalate, it has wide-ranging socio-economic, political, and cultural implications. It culminates in the loss of human lives, infrastructural destruction, social mistrust, and fear [18, 37]. At this stage, individuals can pursue resolution through legal actions, mediation, and negotiation.

According to [17], the economic costs of violent conflicts equal the total expenditure of development aid across the world. Violent conflicts create new forms of vulnerabilities through food insecurity, loss of livelihoods, market disruption, insecurity, fear, and suspicion [26]. It leads to loss of lives and injuries [38], disability, injury and loss of properties, displacements, properties damage, asset reduction

[18, 4], and disruption of education [38]. It weakens social trust and destroys the social norms, values, and institutions that have regulated and coordinated the welfare of a community [27] and effectively transforms the existing social structure and networks [52]. It erodes social norms and values with negative implications for collective social action [20] and leads to new parallel institutions [6].

This work focuses on chieftaincy institutions which have traditionally been regarded as the bedrock of unity and stability, cultural preservation, and a means of social control which are all essential elements for promoting development in centralized societies [1, 44]. Article 277 of the 1992 Constitution of Ghana defines a chief as "someone who comes from a renowned royal family unit and has been appropriately chosen and enstooled as a chief or queen mother in conformity with the appropriate customary laws"[32]. As postulated by [44, 23] that chieftaincy emerged naturally as human societies evolved. During the early days of migration, a group of people followed courageous leaders in search of suitable locations for human activities. These group leaders emerged naturally as chiefs and the territories that they inhabited were appropriated as their kingdoms [44]. These chiefs provided leadership and defended their territories against external aggression [7]. Such leaders inevitably transformed their families into ancestry from which succeeding chiefs are customarily selected [44].

During the colonial era, certain chiefs were known to have mobilized their forces to resist conquest and subordination by the European powers. However, war and conquest saw the superimposition of the new legislative, judicial, and executive powers over their traditional roles. To reduce the costs of maintaining law and order at the local level and to minimize opposition to the colonial powers, the administrative, executive, and judicial powers which were hitherto wielded by chiefs were reinstated which the colonial powers provided supervisory roles. This system of administration through chiefs has been referred to as the indirect rule. Today, despite their diminished executive, judicial and legislative functions, chiefs still wield enormous power, influence, and respect and are noted for maintaining peace, mitigating conflicts, and preserving and promoting local culture (see [12, 39]).

After the loss of their colonial props and assault by the new nationalist government after Ghana's independence in 1957, the political process undermined the roles and relevance of the chieftaincy institution (see [39]). The institution became a platform for rewarding political royals and for deposing or undermining the powers of non-loyalist chiefs [12]. Kwame Nkrumah was quoted as saying, "those of our chiefs who are with us, we do honor you, those who are against us, shall run away fast and leave their sandals at the back" (as cited in [12]). Through the Chiefs Recognition Act of 1959, some chiefs were removed and loyalist personalities who were not necessarily from the royal families were installed (see [12]).

Several decrees and laws have continued to diminish the role of chiefs after the overthrow of Nkrumah. Most notably, the National Liberation Council government passed the

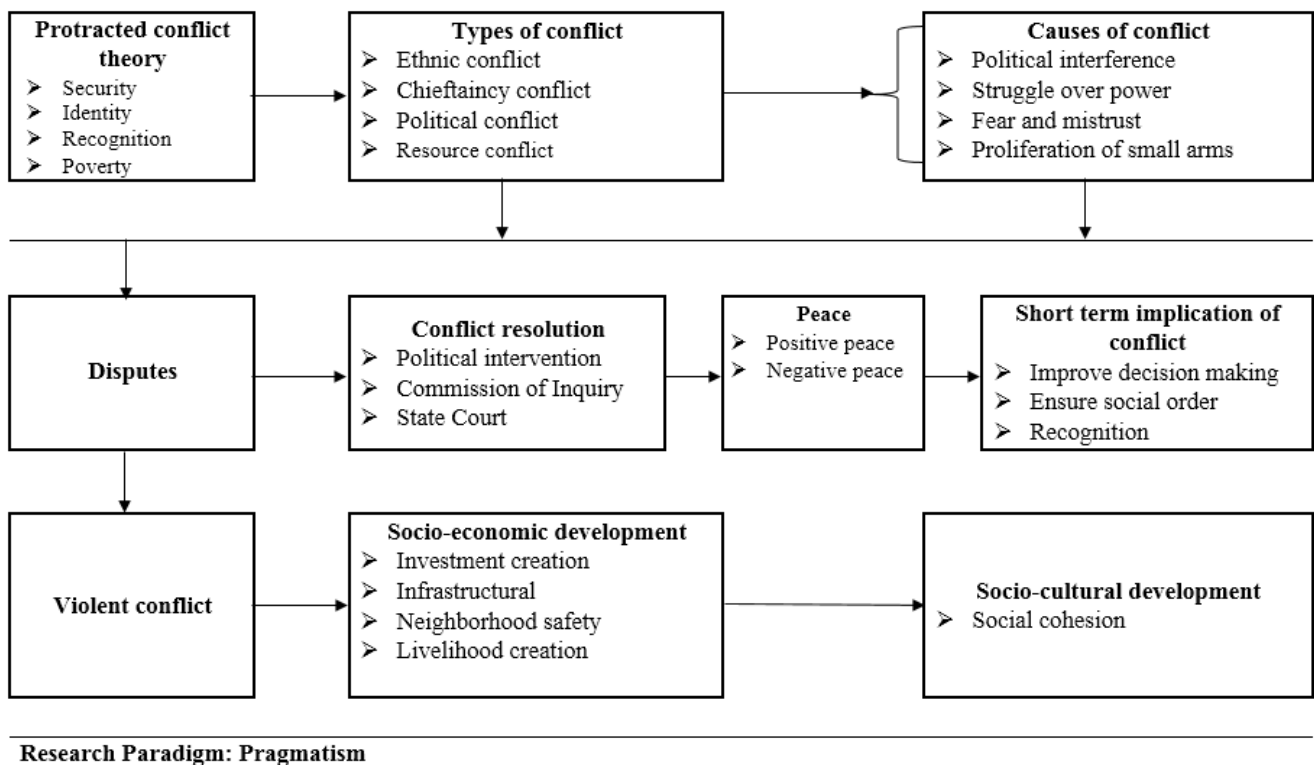
Chieftaincy Amendment Decree (NLCD, 112) in 1966 to disqualify some chiefs based on their political affiliations. Similarly, the Provisional National Defence Council Law (PNDCL) 107 was decreed in 1985 to remove some chiefs based on political affiliations. This political process effectively disrupted the customary process of selecting chiefs only from the original family lineages hence contributing to chieftaincy conflicts in Ghana today. For instance, [5] shows that as of 2008, about 63 chieftaincy cases were pending before the National House of Chiefs, and over 400 cases were pending before the Regional House of Chiefs. An example of these conflicts is the Bawku chieftaincy conflict.

The Bawku chieftaincy conflict between the Kusasi and Mamprusi ethnic groups dates back to the pre-colonial era (see [8, 2]). The Mamprusis claim that Bawku has been under their rule since the pre-colonial era, and that, no Kusasi lineage is of royal status [47, 8]. However, this claim is refuted by the Kusasis who insist that they were the first settlers and the majority ethnic group in the area and so must have the right to the chieftaincy.

In 1957, these competing claims resulted in the enskinment of two different chiefs for the same skin in what [41] has described as a "two kings one kingdom affair. For instance, there were scuffles in 2000, 2001, 2007, 2008, 2009, and 2010. (see [2]). This study explores the wide range of development implications of the chieftaincy conflicts between Kusasis and Mamprusis in the Bawku Traditional Area (BTA). Following this, the central research question is this; how does the Bawku conflict affect development in Bawku Traditional Area (BTA)? The study is organized into four distinct sections. Section one presents an overview of the linkages between chieftaincy conflicts and development. Section two explores the study context and methodological approaches to data collection and analyses. Section three presents the findings and discussions of the study while conclusions and recommendations are drawn in the last section.

2. Conceptual Framework

The central argument is how do disputes and violent conflicts lead to development or under development. This section explains how the theories and the key variables under each of the concepts identified in the literature explain how disputes and conflicts lead to development or under development. As shown in Figure 1, a protracted conflict is a prolonged and unresolvable dispute by groups for such basic needs as security, identity, recognition, and status [19]. Conflicts are caused by the struggle over power, political interference, freedom from fear, and a proliferation of small arms. Conflicts are beneficial if resolved early. Where the beneficial effects included ensuring social order, recognition, and improved decision-making in society [14]. When a conflict is resolved it does not lead to violent conflicts. When it escalates the rest of the variables hold. It culminates in the loss of human lives, infrastructure destruction, and social cohesion, and affects livelihoods creation.



Source, Authors Construct, 2019

Figure 1. The Linkages between Disputes, Conflicts, and Development.

3. Methodology

The study employed a sequential explanatory design within the context of the qualitative and the quantitative paradigm to explore the nexus between conflicts and development in BTA [34]. The approach explores a wider range of questions and provides insights into findings that could have been ignored using a single design [22, 15]. This study is based on the ontological position that social reality is constructed by both the respondents and the researcher.

Before the data collection, visits were made to the offices of the Bawku Inter-Ethnic Peace Committee, Belim Wusa Development Agency, and the Police Service. During this process, the research team also interacted with householders in each community not only to establish a rapport but also to estimate the situation in the communities. The lessons learned informed the questionnaire and interview designs to avoid inflaming tensions. In line with this research process, a quantitative survey was first conducted to ascertain householder's perspectives on the development implications of the Bawku conflict.

The process started with the determination of the sample size for the household survey. The potential respondents (see Table 1) were proportionally distributed into the five communities which have had significant impacts from the conflicts.

Table 1. Number of Households Selected in each Community for the Survey.

Selected communities	Total number of households	Number of households surveyed	Kth house
Bawku	9,738	136	264
Pusiga	1,187	17	32
Mognori	580	8	16
Zebila	1,724	24	47
Garu	1,096	15	30
Total	14,325		

Source, Authors Construct, 2019

In each study area, every kth householder was selected based on the randomly selected first house. However, preliminary analyses of 200 respondents showed that a saturation point had been reached and that any additional survey was unlikely to shed new insight [29]. The data gathered were edited, coded, and entered into the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 23.0 for analysis. The analysis was done using descriptive statistics. Interviews deepen the results from quantitative data [15]. The purposive sampling technique was used to select the Bawku Inter-Ethnic Peace Committee, Belim Wusa Development Agency, and the Police for in-depth face-to-face interviews to affirm the quantitative data and to solicit additional information. The interviews were conducted from 27th-29th March 2020. In all, nine people were interviewed with an average length of about an hour. The interviewees were nine involving seven males and two females. This data was recorded, transcribed, and examined severally to identify common themes including

education, livelihoods creation, investment, insecurity, and cultural outcomes, and used in the text to affirm the quantitative data.

The study followed the Ethical and Safety Guidelines protocols developed by the [51] for conducting research. Before data collection, ethical approval was sought from the School of Medical Science, Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology (KNUST). The householders were asked to sign or thumbprint a written informed consent form. Participants who were not comfortable with signing or thumb printing were permitted to give verbal consent. Participation was voluntary, and respondents were allowed to withdraw anytime from the research. Respondents were informed about the principles of confidentiality and anonymity. The questionnaires were administered and analyzed secretly with household identities replaced with a numeric code.

4. Findings and Discussions

This section is organized under distinct but interrelated themes identified in the research. These are education, economic activities, physical insecurity, and cultural outcomes of the Bawku conflict. These themes are explored as follows;

4.1. Educational Attainment

Education can reduce poverty, severe hunger, inequality, and fuel social development. Education is a fundamental human right and should be accorded to all humans regardless of gender, race, religion, and ethnicity [4]. In Ghana, the government has introduced Free Compulsory Universal Basic Education (FCUBE) to promote education for all. The government has also introduced the Free Senior High School Policy. Despite these, educational attainment is still low in BTA. The data from the survey (see Table 2) showed that 40% of the household heads have never attended school while 35% had primary or secondary education. Similarly, about 10% of the householders had tertiary education.

The findings show that the Bawku conflict has deterred certain professionals such as teachers and other educational administrators into the area for the fear of being attacked and killed in the wake of the conflict. These conditions have affected the performance of students, especially at the basic level. For example, the total pass rate has reduced from 34.2% in the 2012-2013 academic year to 20.4% in the 2015-2016 academic year [10]. This condition can affect the government's commitment to providing quality education for all.

Table 2. Educational Status of Respondents.

Educational Status	Percentage
Never	40
Primary/Secondary	35
Technical/ Vocational	15
Tertiary	10
Total	100

Source, Field data, 2020.

4.2. Livelihoods Creation

Violent conflict can reduce the dietary value and can bring about food insecurity for a large proportion of the masses [26]. Violent conflicts have the potential to create new forms of vulnerabilities and a decline in food insecurity, loss of earning capacity, market disruption, insecurity, fear, and suspicion [24]. The empirical data (see Table 3) show that about 40% of the householders were farmers with 23% involved in handicrafts, 5% artisan, 26% traders, and 7% public servants. This suggests that the predominant economic activity in the BTA is farming.

Table 3. Occupational Status of Respondents.

Occupational Status	Percentage
Farming	40
Handicraft	23
Artisan	5
Trading	26
Public servant	7
Total	100

Source, Field data, 2020.

The regular imposition of curfew has affected livelihood activities such as trading and farming which are the predominant economic activities in the BTA. Amidst the conflict, people were not allowed to ride motor bicycles for three years. This affected the transportation networks in the area. Consequently, farmers were unable to transport their foodstuffs to the market centers leading to a pang of severe hunger. In an interview, one of the respondents narrated that,

"We don't get work again to do; this is because all the businesses have been relocated to Bolgatanga because of this conflict. This has affected our livelihood as we cannot even take care of our children anymore. Look at these children; they have to go on the streets to sell before we could get money to buy food"

According to the Officeholder "If you people don't recognize our chief (Bawku Naba), we will continue to deny you access to our farmlands." One of the householders also retaliated that, they are also afraid to go and use the land for farming for the fear of being attacked and killed by Mamprusis. Because of this, there are a lot of farmlands in the area that are not being used and this has affected food production in the area."

4.3. Physical Insecurity

Gasper, D. (2005) [28] defines human security as protecting people from perceived threats in ways that enhance human welfare. As the people-centered approach to development, human security addresses the conditions which threaten human survival, livelihood, and dignity [42]. The empirical data (see Table 4) show that 8.5% of household heads strongly disagree that the conflict has not affected the safety of the neighborhood in the BTA. This indicates that majority of the householders 45% strongly agree that the conflict has affected neighborhood safety in Bawku.

According to the officeholder,

"The conflict has caused the destruction of human lives and properties on a large scale in Bawku and its neighborhoods. After the 2008-2009 clashes, the chiefs and Tendanas decided to pacify the gods in 25 locations where human lives were lost. It was found out that more than one person lost his life in each location. In all, about 45 people lost their lives through the conflict. The breakdowns are as follows; 11 women and children were slotted in Buabula, six people were killed in Yirongo and three people lost their lives in Sabon-Gari. Women and children were killed and their bodies were deposited in a pit. On the 5th of May 2008, a young business Kusasis man was killed immediately after prayers in Bolnaba Shed mosque".

"Some bad nuts have taken advantage of the conflict to kill and loot people, especially on the market days. Whenever the conflict erupts, the bad nuts target the well-to-do people and loot their properties. The Kusasis attacked and loot the Mamprusis' well-to-do people. In the same way, the Mamprusis attacked and loot Kusasis' well-to-do people. In 2009, some bad nuts attacked and killed market women who were going to the Sakanse market to trade in the name of this conflict. As a result of this, a large number of wealthy people in Bawku have lost their lives through the conflict".

Table 4. The Implications of the Conflict on Neighborhoods Safety.

Ranking	Percentage
Strongly Disagree	9
Disagree	9
Undecided	23
Agree	16
Strongly agree	45
Total	100

Source, Field data, 2020.

4.4. Cultural Outcomes

Culture is the way of life of a group of people. Conflict potentially weakens social trust and destroys the social norms, values, and institutions that have regulated and coordinated the welfare of a community [27] and effectively transforms the existing social structure and networks [52]. It erodes social norms and values with negative implications for collective social capital [20] and leads to new parallel institutions [6]. The empirical findings (see Table 5) show that about 58% of the household heads strongly agree that the conflict has affected the social capital in the BTA. Only five householders constituting 3% strongly disagree that the conflict has not affected socio-cultural development. This implies that more than 65% of the householders agree that the conflict has negative implications on socio-cultural development. In an interview, one of the female respondents narrated that,

"I am almost getting to 40 years but I don't know the time that I will marry. This is because the guy that I want to marry is from the other tribe and because of this my parents on several occasions have refused to accept the dowry".

According to the officeholder,

"The Bawku conflict has broken down social relationships and created imaginary boundaries where both groups will not pass to enter into other territories. The free will to attend each other naming ceremony, marriage, and a funeral is gone because there is a loss of trust. There are some particular people at a certain time of the day will not go to certain areas in the town. Some Kusasi market women were afraid to go and sell in the Bawku main market. This has led to the creation of other markets such as Bawku's new market".

Table 5. The Cost of the Conflict on Social Capital.

Ranking	Percentage
Strongly disagree	3
Disagree	8
Undecided	17
Agree	16
Strongly agree	58
Total	100

Source, Field data, 2020.

5. Conclusions and Recommendations

This study explores the wide range of development implications of the protracted conflicts between the Kusasis and the Mamprusis in the Bawku Traditional Area. The study found that the Bawku conflict has created social mistrust and fear, and economic and physical insecurity with negative implications on education, investments, farming, and trading activities. This has created a pang of severe hunger in Bawku and its environs. The study holds that if this continues, Bawku Traditional Area cannot witness growth and development. Hence, all efforts must be taken to chart a new course for peacebuilding in the area. This will enhance socio-economic development and improves human security. Future research should explore the spillover effects of the Bawku conflict on development in the Bolgatanga Municipality. The study recommended that the Ghana government through the National Peace Council should embark on intensive media campaigns on the development implications of the conflicts in the Bawku Traditional Area. Besides, the Bawku East Municipal Assembly and other stakeholders should create employment opportunities for the youth and assist the victims to overcome the cost incurred by them through the conflict.

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