‘State-caused’ Ethnic Conflicts: The Need for Remedial Measures in Regard to Teacher Education in the Northern Region of Ghana

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‘State-caused’ Ethnic Conflicts: The Need for Remedial Measures in Regard to Teacher Education in the Northern Region of Ghana

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Abstract

A decade of democratic rule in Ghana has put the nation on a pedestal as a stable and safe haven in the midst of highly volatile West African countries. Refugees fleeing conflicts from Cote d’Ivoire, Liberia, Sierra Leone and Nigeria have sought sanctuary in Ghana. However, beneath this peace and harmony are continuing political and institutional structures that have contributed to ethnic conflicts in the Northern Region of Ghana. Since 1980, this region alone has witnessed more than 30 intra- and inter-ethnic conflicts, bringing untold hardships to millions of people with destruction of property and infrastructure. There are at least forty recognised theories as to the causes of ethnic conflicts. However, in this paper the author advances yet one more. It examines the systematic neglect of the Northern Region dating from the colonial period, a practice that has barely changed since, resulting in an acute lack of development, poverty, destitution and social exclusion (Adjapawn, 2006 and 2008). This paper also explores the consequences of the systematic neglect on educational services in the Northern Region of Ghana and, in particular, the need for remedial measures with regard to teacher education in general, and peace education in particular.

Introduction

The study on *Two Faces of Education in Ethnic Conflict* (Bush and Saltarelli, 2000) contests the popular notion that education is inexorably a force for good. This reveals that education can be manipulated to drive a wedge between people, rather than drawing them closer together. This same study further reveals that denial of education can be used negatively as a weapon of war, and the cultivation of inclusive citizenship as a positive force, therefore

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emphasising the need for peacebuilding education to deal with the principles and goals, including the demilitarisation of the mind, the introduction of alternatives to suspicion, hatred and violence, and the value of memory (Bush and Saltarelli, Ibid).

It may not be unusual to suggest that in sub-Saharan Africa (SSA), the lack of ample education can contribute to lawlessness, societal breakdown and conflicts. Works by peace and conflict researchers support this notion as applicable to the Northern Region of Ghana (Pul, 2002; Adjapawn, 2008). Similarly, in Sierra Leone and Liberia, the lack of opportunities for education or any kind of planned future created squads of disaffected youth ripe for recruitment (Richards, 1995; O'Brien, 1996). Amid the complexities and chaos in education and conflict, lies on the fact that education in general, and peace education in particular, are vital in conflict management.

In terms of the *Complexity Theories and Conflict*, the issue with educational theory is that there has not been enough erudition into the differential contribution of schooling and violence. The emphasis has been on the contribution to inequality, looking at reproduction of social class or gender relations, while reproduction of conflict has received far less attention (Buckland, 2004). Buckland (2004), drawing on a research in 52 conflict-affected countries, focuses on the role that education could play, both in terms of conflict prevention and in the reconstruction of post-conflict societies. According to Easterly (2000):

> Africa's poor growth and resulting low income is associated with low schooling, political instability, underdeveloped financial systems, distorted foreign exchange markets, high government deficits, and insufficient infrastructure. High ethnic diversity is closely associated with low schooling, underdeveloped financial systems, distorted foreign exchange markets, and insufficient infrastructure. While motivated by Africa, these results are not particular to Africa.

Even in the midst of conflict, education provides an environment of relative stability and normalcy for children even amid the instability and unpredictability of war. It provides them with an opportunity to learn so that they can have a chance to gain at least some of the most basic skills that will allow them to work to contribute to society and in time to support their own families. As stated by the former UNICEF boss Carol Bellamy, it was a tragedy that much was not done to educate those living for many years in refugee camps (Bellamy, 2000).

In April 2009 the World Bank's Director for Education, Beth King announced that the World Bank had doubled its education financing in low and middle-income countries to $4.09 billion to help poor countries battle threats to their educational systems during the global economic

crisis[i]. That is a welcome announcement but it seems that these monies are not well channelled to the areas where they are most needed. For example, just recently in Sierra Leone the education sector is in crisis as thousands of teachers go unpaid (Fofana, 2009)[ii]. The ruling government has refused to pay the salaries of almost 3,000 teachers, while looking to recruit thousands more. As rightly put by the New Security Foundation Chairman Dr Harold Elletson: education is the forgotten aspect of post-conflict humanitarian aid and aid for refugees. It is of no wonder that almost a decade since MDG's universal primary education for every child by 2015 was adopted; almost 100 million children still do not attend primary school (Adjapawn and Makuwira, 2006). And, of these, 50% are in countries which are either suffering from conflict or recovering from it[iii].

1. Motivations and Research Questions

Although I schooled in the northern region of Ghana and still have some friends there, I spent most of my adult life in the southern part of the country. The lack of ethnic conflicts in the South and the vast North-South divide in areas of development, education and health, prompted me to concentrate my research on the following significant questions:

- Does education affect the causes and triggers of ethnic conflicts?
- Is there a link between education and development?
- What impacts can remedial measures in regard to teacher education in general, and Peace education in particular have on ethnic conflicts?

In fathoming the backgrounds of the situation, it is important to understand that the antipathy that has dogged the relationship amongst the ethnic groups in the Northern Region of Ghana is a product of the political configuration that the British colonialists imposed on them (Pul, 2002). The central feature of this configuration was Indirect Rule, which the British developed around the ethnic groups and chieftaincies. As part of indirect rule, the British colonialists forced the historically non-centralised ethnic groups and their allies under the political jurisdiction of the Dagombas and their allies. Social amenities and other benefits were mainly reserved for the chiefly centralised groups while the non-centralised groups missed out. As noted by Staniland (1975: 4), quoting Sir Gordon Guggisberg on British policy of rule:

> Our policy must be to maintain any Paramount Chiefs that exist and gradually absorb under these any small communities scattered about. What we should aim at is that some day the Dagombas, Gonjas and Mamprusis should become strong native states. Each will have its own little Public Works Department and carry on its own business with the Political Officer as a Resident and Adviser. Each state will be more or less self-contained.

This political inequality resulted in tensions between the ethnic groups that persisted until the conditions came to be viewed as bitterly unfair by the oppressed. Rebellion resulted and the oppressors resisted attempts to alter the *status quo* to shift the balance of power, resulting in twists and turns. As noted by Staniland:

> Despite this assertion of suzerainty, the Dagomba kingdom seems never to have exercised close control over the Konkomba: administration took the form of slave raiding and punitive expeditions. The Konkombas were by no means assimilated. Relations between them and the Dagomba were distant and hostile: there was little, if any mixing by marriage (Staniland 1975: 4).

Since 1957 when Ghana gained independence from the British, the successive postcolonial governments have done very little to reverse the scene set by London. Subsequent policies on land, chieftaincy, and allocation of resources have rather served to deteriorate further the already fragile relationships in the Northern Region of Ghana. The most prominent 23 out of the 30 conflicts fought are tabled below (see Table 1 and 2). It is important to note that the Tables below only document conflicts with higher tolls. Events that resulted in lower counts such as the Konkomba – Bimoba conflict in 2007 that resulted in only three dead and three houses in the Jimbali area burnt (Adedze, 2007) are not documented here.

Table 1: Inter-ethnic Conflicts, 1980-2002

	Date	Ethnic Groups	Type of War	Concerns Raised	Cost of War
1	1980	Gonjas-Vaglas	Inter-ethnic	Chieftaincy and Land	Unknown
2	1981	Konkombas-Nanumbas	Inter-ethnic	Chieftaincy and Land	118 dead, and houses burnt
3	1982	Mamprusi – Kusasi	Inter-ethnic	Chieftaincy and Land	Unknown
4	1984	Konkombas-Bimobas	Inter-ethnic	Chieftaincy and Land	60 dead and many displaced
5	1984	Mamprusi – Kusasi	Inter-ethnic	Chieftaincy	150 killed
6	1985	Mamprusi – Kusasi	Inter-ethnic	Chieftaincy	Unknown
7	1985-86	Konkombas-Bimobas	Inter-ethnic	Chieftaincy and Land	78 dead, several displaced
8	1986-87	Kombas-Bimobas	Inter-ethnic	Chieftaincy and Land	26 dead, assets destroyed
9	1989	Konkombas-Bimobas	Inter-ethnic	Chieftaincy and Land	20 dead
10	1990	Konkombas-Nawuris	Inter-ethnic	Chieftaincy and Land	Unknown
11	1991	Nawuris-Gonjas	Inter-ethnic	Chieftaincy and Land	78 Dead
12	1992	Gonjas-Nawuris	Inter-ethnic	Chieftaincy and Land	Unknown
13	1992	Konkombas (and allies)-Gonjas	Inter-ethnic	Chieftaincy and Land	High death toll[iv]
14	1993	Konkombas-Mossis[v]	Inter-ethnic	Chieftaincy	Unknown
		Konkombas-Dagombas and		Chieftaincy	15 000 dead, 200 000 displaced, 442 villages

15	1994-95	allies (Guinea fowl war)	Inter-ethnic	and Land	burnt.
16	1997	Mos-Gonjas	Inter-ethnic	Chieftaincy	800 people displaced.
17	2000	Mamprusi – Kusasi	Inter-ethnic	Chieftaincy	No account of lives lost. Assets burnt
18	2000	Mamprusi – Kusasi	Inter-ethnic	Chieftaincy	40 dead, properties destroyed.
19	2001	Mamprusi – Kusasi	Inter-ethnic	Chieftaincy	50 dead, 150 injured, 5000 displaced, properties burnt.

Source: Adjapawn (2008).

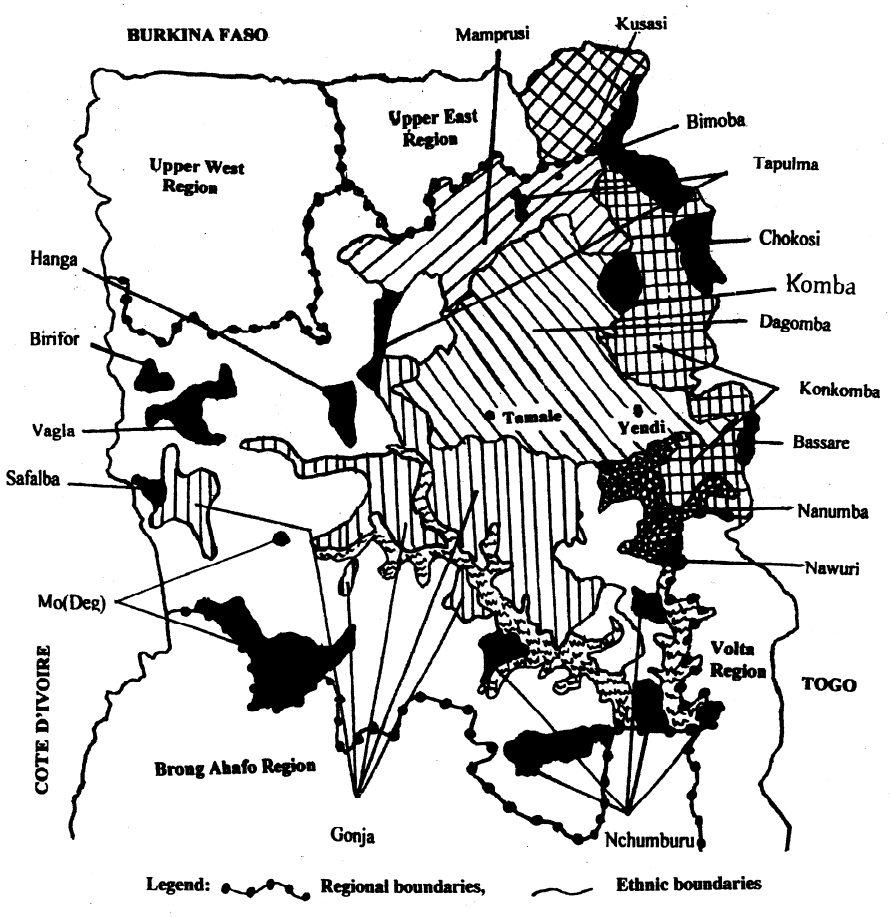
Table 2: Intra-ethnic Conflicts, 1980-2002

	Date	Ethnic Groups	Type of War	Concerns Raised	Cost of War
1	1986-87	Dagombas' chieftaincy crisis	Intra-ethnic	Chieftaincy	Unknown
2	2000	Bimobas' war	Intra-ethnic	Land	Unknown
3	2002	Dagombas' chieftaincy crisis	Intra-ethnic	Chieftaincy	49 dead, 1000 people displaced
4	2002	Bimobas' war	Intra-ethnic	Land	2 dead, 1200 peole displaced, assets destroyed.

Source: Adjapawn (2008).

The Mamprusis fought six times over the same period, but not with any other ethnic group in the Northern Region, rather against the Kusasis in Upper East Region. Tables 1 and 2 show inter and intra-ethnic conflicts between 1980 and 2002.

Figure 1: Ethnography of Northern Region of Ghana



Source: Adjapawn (2008).

The Northern Region of Ghana, with Tamale as its capital, is the largest single region and covers an area of 70 383 square kilometres, about 30% of the total surface area of the country. It has a population of 1,805,428[vi], with only 25.7 persons per square kilometre, against the national average of 78.9 (Ghana Population and Housing Census 2000). For better understanding of the upcoming discussions in the following sections on the groups' interactions and subsequent conflicts, it is necessary to be familiar with the ethnographical map (Figure 1) and a summary of the region and its inhabitants (Table 3).

Table 3: Ethnic Groups in the Northern Region of Ghana

	Ethnic Groups	Population Distribution of Ethnic Groups in the Northern Region, Ghana.				
		Total National Population	Total Regional Population	Ethnic Population as % of National Population	Ethnic Population as % of Regional Population	% of Ethnic Population Living in the Region
1	Dagomba	747, 924	594, 865	4.3	32.90	79.50
2	Konkomba	474, 293	305, 575	2.7	16.90	64.40
3	Gonja	211, 703	131, 814	1.2	7.30	62.30
4	Mamprusi	200, 393	132, 494	1.1	7.30	66.10
5	Bimoba	113, 130	49, 013	0.6	2.70	43.30
6	Nanumba	78, 812	45, 414	0.5	2.50	57.60
7	Chokosi	63, 910	35, 898	0.4	2.00	56.30
8	Bassare	51, 299	20, 331	0.3	1.10	39.60
9	Nchumburu	113, 334	13, 624	0.6	0.80	12.00
10	Vagla	41, 684	5,205	0.2	0.30	12.50
11	Mo (Deg)	55, 174	5,178	0.3	0.30	9.40
12	Safalba	7827	2,159	-	0.10	27.60
13	Birifor	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
14	Hanga	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
15	Komba	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
16	Nawuri	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
17	Tapulma	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a

Source: Population Figures from Government of Ghana, 2000 Population and Housing Census, 2000.

Note that some of the ethnic groups appear more than once in their groupings and some are known by more than one name. As seen from Table 3, the groups have interesting demographic representations, from the Dagombas, who have the greatest numerical strength, to the Tapulmas, whose representation the recent National Population and Housing Census (2000) found to be infinitesimally small. The two neighbouring regions in the North, the Upper West and Upper East, have 31.2 and 104 people per square kilometre respectively - making the region the least populated[vii]. The Northern Region has 20 administrative districts and is shared between 17 main linguistically distinct ethnic groups.

2. Ethnic Conflict as Agent of Destruction

Human losses and destruction of property are hard to keep record of in such a preponderantly illiterate society[viii]. Though the focus of the study is the Northern region of Ghana, the conflicts sometimes spill to other parts of the country where feuding groups clash resulting in death and destruction of properties. As recent as 25 August 2008, there was an ethnic clash between the feuding groups, but this time at Konkomba Market at Agbgbloshie in Accra. Three people were butchered to death with machetes[ix]. Due to the erratic nature and the subsequent spill over, recording the dead and destruction of properties have always become problematic.

In the Northern Region, majority[x] of the inhabitants are Muslims whose teachings direct immediate burial of the dead. Also to win a psychological victory, in the case of the Konkombas, their women, who in times of war serve as the rearguard, are charged with the responsibility of immediately burying their dead men and supplying the warriors with food and water (Pul, 2002, Mahama 2003). The problem with counting the dead results in conflicting recorded figures. For example, Ada van der Linde and Naylor (2002) claim that the guinea fowl war in 1994-1995 claimed 15, 000[xi] lives, whereas Pul (2002) records that at least 2,000 died. However, they all agree that over 200,000[xii] people were displaced and 442 villages and settlements were burnt down. Also destroyed were vehicles, and private and public properties including schools and clinics[xiii].

3. Research Methodology

Fuller (2009) urges peace researchers to use methodologies that are commensurate with the end goals they are seeking. He argues:

> For peace research to be true to its professed mission, it demands a research methodology that starts from the lives of and includes in the research process, people engaged in the struggles of subordinate groups to transform structures of social stratification.

3.1 Choosing the Model

Amongst the three main Conflict Assessment Frameworks developed by international bodies, Strategic Conflict Assessments (SCA) by the UK Department for Internatioinal Development (DFID) was employed in this study. The DFID framework is built around three types of factors leading to violent conflict: Structural factors (political, economic, social and security structures), Actors (interests, relations, capacity, incentives, and peace agendas), and Dynamics of the conflict (long-term trends, accelerating triggers, capacity to deal with conflict, and likely future conflict scenarios). Of the three, even though the DFID framework is less detailed, its design is flexible; it focuses on the political economy of war, greed and grievance analysis, and regional analysis (context/neighbourhood). It also provides a fair range of options to help the analyst carry out conflict analysis to promote peace-building programmes and to assess how conflict affects programming of the agencies and vice versa.

3.2 Using Strategic Conflict Assessments (SCA)

The value of Strategic Conflict Assessment is that it encourages a more explicit and systematic analysis of conflict and offers peace-building opportunities. It also provides a broad framework within which a more focused mapping of conflict and stakeholders in relation to which programmes can take place. The SCA process is in part, descriptive (mapping out the conflict and current responses), predictive (identifying conflict trends and future scenarios) and also prescriptive (identifying policy and programming strategies and options)[xiv].

Its flexible approach allows the use of different analytical lenses to examine and develop responses. But the main objective for adopting SCA is to improve the effectiveness of

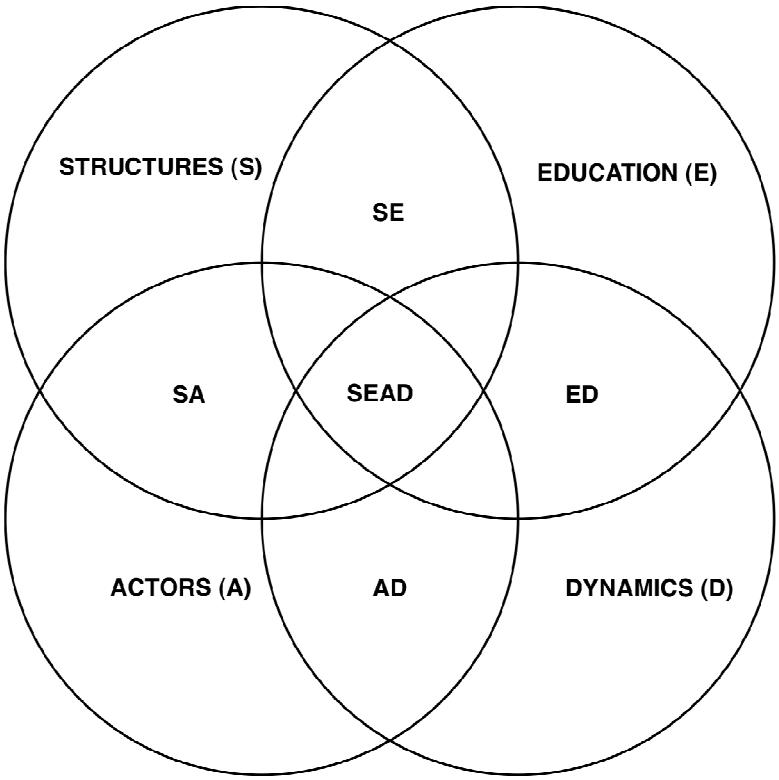
development policy and programmes in contributing to conflict prevention and reduction in the Northern Region of Ghana. Stage 1 of SCA involves the analysis of Structures,Actors and the Dynamics.

Stage 2 of the SCA also involves:

- Analysis of Responses to the conflict; and
- Development of Strategies that contribute to prevention and/or reduction of the conflict, hence education in general and peace education in particular.

The interface of the overall Strategic Conflict Assessment (SCAi) is represented in Figure 2. SCA also allows a better analytical understanding of the socio-politico and economic interests of the Actors involved in the conflicts and draws attention to those who might have an advantage in using the conflict for their own ends (Talentino, 2003). Such an analytical approach divulges some causes of the conflicts, namely, Greed (opportunities for predatory accumulation) and Grievance – negative reactions of those who are disadvantaged (Collier and Hoeffler, 2002; Azam, 2001). The interaction between Structures and Actors in relation to institutions such as the political, economic, social and security apparatus that may have predisposed some of the ethnic groups to conflicts would also be assessed. Analysis on Actors looks into individual's motivation and incentives.

Figure 2: Strategic Conflict Assessment interface (SCAi)



Source: Adjapawn (2008).

Actors can influence the conflict Dynamics. Their influences on the Dynamics of the conflicts depend on the Structures in place and the (mis)interpretations and meanings of knowledge that they assign to events and symbols. Their discernment of institutional policies can back appeals for public support. Structures in place can also affect the actions of Actors and the degree of the Dynamics of the conflict building on the analyses of the Structures and Actors, the relevant precursors of the conflicts would be listed to assess the likelihood of the conflicts recurring and in what dimension (Dynamics).

3.3 Structures

An exhaustive comparative analysis of the structural roots of ethnic conflict involved compiling a broad contextual analysis; mapping out and weighting the importance of sources of tensions and conflict; and identifying linkages and connections between sources of tension in different sectors and levels of society. As indicated in the table below, the issues that

cropped up are listed against the main 4 headings.

Table 4: Structures of Ethnic Conflicts

Political Factors	• Colonial and Postcolonial policies • Elites Youth Associations • State institutions and capacities • Lack of equitable representations
Economic Factors	• High poverty rate • Poor economic governance • Underdeveloped infrastructure • Economy shaping conflict and/or vice versa
Social Factors	• Social mythology • Social exclusion • Socio-capital identity • Legacy of unsettled conflicts • (Mis)interpretation of cultural differences • Tension over religious beliefs • Chieftaincy/Paramountcy
Security Factors	• Border disputes • Legacy of past conflicts • Proliferation of small weapons • Bias on the part of security agencies • Weak conflict management system

Source: Adjapawn (2008).

3.3.1 *Political Factors*

According to Soyinka-Airewele (2004), violent ethnic conflicts often have their roots in the pathologies of the state and such conflicts in turn lead to profound changes in the nature and capacities of the state. The interests of elites in the ethnic conflicts take two main forms: those fighting for emancipation and those trying to keep the *status quo*.

3.3.2 *Economic Factors*

As Collier (2003) notes, wars cannot be fought just on hopes or hatreds. Of central importance is the financial viability of the ethnic groups. Poor economic governance has caused uneven development in the country, leading to a distinct progress gap between the North and South of Ghana (Adjapawn, 2006).

3.3.3 *Social Factors*

Ethnic conflict Actors are aware of the importance of the emotional or affective economy, and the battle for hearts and minds is at the nexus of ethnic conflict Dynamics. History plays a central role in social mythology in recreating stories to win the hearts and minds of the ethnic groups. Stories have been retold to manipulate the ethnic groups' histories. In that context, Ignatieff (1995) comments:

> It is not how the past dictates to the present but how the present manipulates the past (Ignatieff, 1995).

3.3.4 *Security Factors*

A critical factor underpinning the growing insecurity has been a decline in the State's security apparatus. When a nation is unable to contain and resolve crises, it loses its legitimacy by failing to assure the basic security of citizens from human rights abuses, crime and physical violence (Goodhand, 2001).

3.4 Actors

Examination of Actors' incentives, interests, relations, capacities and their ulterior motives when considering Peace Agendas. Using participatory community assessment, individual interviews and consultations, the study of Actors pinpoints the main Actors who influence or who are affected by the conflict. Other theorists argue that elite antagonisms and their actions drive ethnic conflicts (Kasfir, 1979; Brass, 1985, 1996, 1997; Vail, 1989). Elites manipulate ethnic identities in their quest for power through *construction* of ethnic conflict (Brass, 1997).

3.5 Dynamics

Dynamic analysis of ethnic conflicts entails examining the main long-term trends, short-term triggers, and also identifying factors likely to increase or decrease the ethnic conflicts, including institutions or processes that can mitigate or increase tensions. Assessing the

outcome of interaction between the three aforementioned factors will be crucial in determining the Dynamics of the ethnic conflicts.

3.6 Education

Education analysis necessitates examination of the effects that mainstream education in general has on the situation in the Northern Region of Ghana. As posited by Bush and Saltarelli (2000), the notion that mainstream education can be manipulated to become both positive and negative forces in ethnic conflicts will be assessed against peace education which deals with principles and goals of demilitarisation, conflict management, peace-making, conflict resolution and non-violence. The overall effects of peace education and its interactions with Structures, Actors and Dynamics will be the key to this paper.

4. Data Collection

Considering the diversity of the ethnic groups, data collection took two main forms, namely, reviewing records, and field research work. Historical records relating to the origin and evolution of the ethnic conflicts, dating back to the pre-colonial era, constituted the main source of written information for data collection.

Most interviewees were from local agencies in Saboba, Tamale, Yendi, Salaga, Gushiegu, Zabzugu and Bimbilla in the Northern Region of Ghana. In Accra, the interviewees were from Agbogbloshie, Konkomba market, Timber Market and Old Fadama and areas adjacent to the areas such as Ayalolo. One-on-one interviews were also conducted for those who felt uncomfortable with in-group discussions. Others interviewed outside the conflict zones were active individuals in the relevant areas, such as peace workers and conflict resolution specialists. I also had interviews with members of the Ghanaian public service who work with the relevant sectors including NGOs, Ethnic Youth Associations (EYAs), District Assembly members, members of the House of Chiefs, Government Officials, Regional Ministers, District Chief Executives, Council of State members, Constitutional lawyers and Religious leaders.

Thematic analysis which is highly inductive was used to analyse my data. Under Thematic analysis, the themes emerge from the data. I made sure that all my interviews were audio taped. This was done after obtaining verbal and signed permission from the

respondents. I found this to be a dependable way of obtaining complete and accurate records of interviews, particularly supporting them with my field notes (Minichiello et al., 1995). The recorded audiotapes were re-listened to several times and transcribed into text verbatim. The transcribed text was also re-read several times to ascertain that what the interviewees had said was exactly what had been transcribed.

Conceptual analysis of the theoretical literature took me through a review of over 40 theories on ethnic conflict. Some were intertwined with others, whilst others were just not applicable to the situation in the Northern Region of Ghana. Those that were applicable to the ethnic conflicts in the Northern Region of Ghana were chosen to form the main frame of this paper. Finally, on comment seeking and feedback, I have remained in touch with the people I interviewed via e-mails, letters and phone calls because I find a strong need to keep in touch with the key respondents to clarify any issues that may arise.

5. Brief on the Research Sites

The Northern Region of Ghana which covers about 30% of the country's total landmass is the largest region in the country. It is home to 1.8 million people, with 17 main ethnic groups. 56.1% of the regional population are Muslims, and Christians make up 19.3%. The rest are of other beliefs. Tamale which is the capital city of the Northern Region has a population of 202 317 (Ghana Population and Housing Census 2000). The region is divided into 20 districts and bordered by the Upper West Region in the north-west; Upper East Region in the north-east; Côte d'Ivoire in the west; Brong-Ahafo Region in the south-west; in the east by Togo; and in the south-east lies the Volta Region. The Northern Region is one of the least developed areas of Ghana. 80% of the inhabitants are classified as poor and more than 70% are peasant farmers. Climatically, the region is much drier than southern areas of Ghana, due to its nearness to the Sahel and the Sahara. Some researchers have used the conditions of soil, climate and even population to explain the relative underdevelopment of the region.

6. Gaining Access to the Interviewees and Other Participants

The initial contacts were gained by exploring the list of peace organisations and NGOs in a book entitled: *Searching For Peace in Africa: An Overview of Conflict Prevention and*

Management Activities (Mekenkamp, et al., 1999). The initial list I made comprised of West Africa Network for Peacebuilding (WANEP), ActionAid Ghana, Centre for Conflict Resolution (CENCOR), Centre for Democracy and Development (CDD), Mediation and Change, and African Development Programme (ADP). Later, I added to the list organisations such as: Foundation for Security and Development in Africa (FOSDA), Catholic Relief Services (CRS), International Council on Social Welfare (ICSW), National House of Chiefs, Ministry of Labour and Manpower, Ghana Network for Peacebuilding (GHANEP). In all, I spent seven months in the field. I stayed for three months during my first visit and the second visit was for four months.

The 'unstructured' interviews I adopted were more free-wheeling, whereby the same sort of questions were asked as in a structured interview, but the style was free-flowing rather than rigid, making it more conversational. Questions were adjusted according to the interviewees' responses. Unstructured interviews may produce a wealth of valuable data, but I realised that they require a great deal of expertise to control, and a lot of time to analyse. As the interview progressed, and rapport had been established, I guided the interviews by funnelling the discussions from casual conversation to the main issues pertinent to my research study.

Figure 3: During an "unstructured" interview section

Source: Adjapawn (2006)

7. Evaluating My Fears: Nearly Caught in the Fight

Out of enthusiasm and readiness to get to the field, I had no time to ponder over my fears. I did not feel particularly threatened, nor that my life was very much in danger, except on three occasions. The first occasion occurred after I had given my complimentary card to a Konkomba; a practice I often did before interviews. Upon looking at my surname, he asked whether I had links with Ghanaian politics. Knowing how well the conflicts have been politicised, I was a bit apprehensive. Also during my first visit to the research site, one gentleman I had already interviewed sent an e-mail to my supervisor in Australia to enquire about gaining admission into a PhD programme. This gentleman got the e-mail address of my supervisor from the consent form that I handed out before the commencement of interviews. That was not his aim. His ultimate reason for sending that e-mail was to be revealed during my second visit to the research site. On my second visit to the research site I was warmly

welcomed by those I met during my first visit. One gesture that broke the ground and facilitated my smooth return was that part of my research materials featured in *The Australasia Review of African Studies*[xv]. I had carried with me eight copies of the journal and distributed them to the key persons I met with during my first visit. It was at this stage that one of them stated:

> When we first met you, we doubted your credibility. To start with, we were not comfortable with your surname so some of us decided to check on you. The reply received from the e-mail I sent to your supervisor in Australia confirmed who you are (researcher). The journals you brought with you also feature the earlier work you did amongst us. These are enough to prove that you are a genuine researcher (Interviewee 039 Konkomba Yam Market, Agbogbloshi).

The bait here was that, had my supervisor replied to say that she did not know me, or was not aware of the research I was conducting amongst the ethnic groups, they would have searched for me and dealt with me. Once my credibility was established, those who were wary and sceptical of my research, later became friendly and helpful. I had transformed from 'spy for the opposing group to acceptable genuine researcher' (Herbert, 2001).

Thirdly, on the second visit to the Northern Region, I left Accra at about 3:00 pm by what is currently deemed to be the fastest passenger overland means of getting to Tamale from Accra. The journey took us 12 hours. The following morning, I called to announce my arrival in Tamale and to confirm my appointments with would-be interviewees.Late that day the National news bulletin reported:

> The Bimbilla Police have arrested two men for trying to transport a large quantity of arms and ammunition to the Nanumba district, hidden in two coffins. But for the vigilance of the police, they would have succeeded with their deception. The Northern Regional Police Commander, Ephraim O. Brakatu, who confirmed the arrests to the Ghanaian Times yesterday, said the two men, whose names are being withheld pending further investigations, have been transferred from Bimbilla Police Station to Yendi for security reasons. According to a security source at Bimbilla, the suspects: Likaye Sanga, 32, and Siso Sanga 34, were arrested at Lepusi, a farming community near Bimbilla on Tuesday (9 January 2007) and had impounded a Benz mummy truck with registration No. GW 3209 V carrying the illegal goods (Abdul-Majeeb, 2007).

Coming from Australia where the level of violence is much more reduced compared to the situation in Africa, I was petrified and overwhelmed by the news report and the readiness of the groups to go to war whilst I was in the field. I decided to deal with my emotions during field research by talking to some of those I had already interviewed. That was not to say it was a demonstration of my professional weakness but, on the contrary, it allowed me to gain

deeper knowledge of the situation and about myself (Kleinman, 1991).

8. Educational Neglect: Colonial Governments

The days of colonialism saw an established and sustained system of inequality whereby education was offered to the princes, especially the sons of senior chiefs in the North. It was not until the 1950s, with the arrival in the North of missionaries along with their clinics and schools, that such facilities became available to all commoners including the non-chiefly ethnic groups. Through Indirect Rule, during the major part of colonisation, the British kept a tight control on education and missionary policies in order to maintain the traditional institutions that were facilitating their smooth administration (Thomas, 1974). These policies seemingly had left the protectorate of the Northern Territories to suffer and they are still suffering from serious educational disadvantages compared to the Ashanti and the Gold Coast colonies in the South. This was evident in 1957, at the time of independence; the Northern Region had only one university graduate[xvi].

During the colonial period, education received little attention in the Northern Region of Ghana. It was not perceived as a life-saving initiative like health and nutritional rehabilitation. From the experiences that the colonialists had in the Ashanti Kingdom and the Gold Coast Colony, they deliberately wanted to either slow down the educational process in the Northern Region, if not to neglect the inhabitants completely.

The British colonial administration ensured the late introduction of education in the Northern Territories and in some areas there were restrictions. Education started in 1908 with four boys, who were sent to Cape Coast in the Gold Coast colony and in 1909, when Tamale School was established, the boys were transferred to Tamale in the Northern Territories. By 1925, it was clear that areas like Yendi, Bawku and Bole needed schools but not at the expense of Achimota College that was opened in Accra in the South. The British administration responded that:

> …owing to the necessity of rigid economy and to the fact that considerable expenditure will be incurred in the near future in the building of Achimota College, His Excellency has decided that no additional day Primary School will be opened in the Northern Territories during the next three or four years (cited in Bening 1990).

Three phases were earmarked for educational policies in the Northern Territories. During the first phase, the colonizers raised no concern about integrating educational and administrative issues. The foreign missionaries were allowed to operate but with the caveat that their operations were not to interfere with areas where Islam was strong. The second phase was marked by the announcement by (F. G.) Guggisberg in 1919 that education was to be established in the protectorate but it should be encouraged not to break down the traditional institutions, as was the case of the Ashanti and the Gold Coast colonies. In effect, Standard III (elementary primary 6) education was to be limited as the maximum that the system could bear.

Their only option was to migrate to the south as unskilled labourers in the mines and the plantations. During the third phase, in line with Native Administration, the traditional authorities were urged to send their children to school, but the provision of labour was seen as a higher priority than education. The Chief Commissioner in the Protectorate pointed out the need to establish a special schools to train a new generation of chiefs, but English language should be enforced as the lasting benefit rather than forcing the Commissioners and their administrators to learn one of the many languages of the ethnic groups.

In the Northern Territories, the intake at the Tamale school in 1913 was as following: 43 were Dagombas, 5 were Gonjas, and 10 were identified as children of Southerners employed by the government. There was no enrolment for anyone from the acephalous ethnic groups. A step supposed to improve education was introduced in 1915, where pupils completing Standard VII (Elementary Middle Form 4) were recruited as teachers on the basis that employment of the local natives would encourage the parents to send their children to school. There were better-qualified teachers in Ashanti and the Gold Coast colonies, but in the Northern Territories, the British administration continued to recruit Standard VII leavers as teachers. By 1935, schools in the North had a serious shortage of qualified teachers, but the Provincial Inspector of schools could not be convinced to bring in qualified teachers from the South, who by then had better education than their compatriots in the North. Bening (1977) notes that the denial of the qualified teachers from the South was to shield the Northerners from the movements that were protesting against the colonial rule in the South. A few attempts by the missionaries to be involved in schools met resistance from the British administration because they were deemed to be subversive and thus not allowed to operate freely. Despite the weaknesses in education, the provincial Commissioner found it unnecessary to revamp the educational system in the North. He notes:

> To give these primitive children more advanced education would be a doubtful blessing at present. It might tend to make them discontented with their lot. Is our population so large at present that we can afford to educate natives for work on the coast? On the other hand if they, on leaving school, return to their families with advanced education, will this make for peace in the household? Will these educated youth go back to work on the farms (Wheeler, 1912)?[xvii]

In the Ashanti kingdom and the Gold Coast colony, education was steadily improving with better-qualified teachers. Meanwhile in the North, presumably due to limited development or isolation, Governor Guggisberg decided to slowly integrate traditional values into the educational system. As noted in Table 6, this notion caused regional disparities in the education system (Kimble, 1963).

Table 5: Gold Coast Educational System in 1919[xviii]

Gold Coast Colony Area	Number of Government Schools	Government Assisted Mission Schools	Pupils Enrolled	
			Boys	Girls
Eastern Province	5	114	12,130	2,877
Central Province	3	42	5,723	1,107
Western Province	3	19	2,370	321
Ashanti Colony	4	19	2,292	287
Northern Territory	4	-	203	8

Source: The author and compilation from sessional paper no. XVII, 1918 –1919, CO 98/31

The seemingly deliberate attempt to delay the Northerners' education as compared to the Southerners was noted in 1919. At that time there were only four government schools in the Northern Territories with a population of 694,000, while Ashanti, with a population of 448,000 had four government schools and nineteen government-assisted schools. In a sense, the colonial administration seemed to be guarding against the mistakes they made in the South. Governor Guggisberg noted:

> It is obvious that to do anything at the present moment that would extend education system in the Northern Territories would be extremely inadvisable. In the Northern Territories we have a virgin ground on which to work, as far as education is concerned, guided by the lessons brought to us by the failures in the colony and Ashanti[xix].

Whether intentionally or by oversight, the two committees that were set in 1918 and 1920 by Clifford and Guggisberg respectively to investigate and report on the progress of education in the three colonies did not make mention of the Northern Territories. By 1939, the Northern Territory continued to lag behind the other colonies in education. In 1931, the total number of children in the North was estimated at 184,000 boys and 168,480 girls, but out of these only 600 boys and 65 girls were enrolled in schools. Meanwhile in that year, the total enrolments in the Southern colonies including Togoland mandate were 43,825 boys and 14,534 girls.

The field research conducted in this study unearthed no specific document to support the idea that the British colonialists purposefully favoured Islamization in Ghana. However, a political conference held in 1933 in the Northern Territories endorsed the Education Department's concerns about the way in which the Catholic Mission schools seemed to be springing up in an uncontrolled manner. This is an indication of the concerns of the then government (Staniland, 1975). Duncan-Johnstones[xx], the then Chief Commissioner of the Northern Territories (CCNT) feared that the Catholic Mission schools would have a disintegrating effect on the social system that he was trying to build (Staniland, 1975:100). Whilst Hodgkin (1966), Ferguson (1970; 1972) and Seidu (1989) have recorded a positive and steady process of Islamization during the colonial days in the Northern Territories (Goody, 1953, 1954, 1967; Hodgkin, 1966; Ferguson, 1972; Seidu, 1989), Sundkler and Steed (2000) note that the steady process of Islamization resulted from the undisclosed support for Islam and concern about Christianity by the British government. On the other hand, other researchers note the British colonial authorities did not perceive Islam as a threat to their administration and as such Muslims received little attention or were left alone.

Education was deliberately introduced at a later stage and with tight control – the level of attainment was restrictedin order to facilitate smooth administration in the North. When the Christian missionaries wanted to help, they were cautioned. Border policies that united the western part of Togoland with the Gold Coast have resulted in opponents and proponents of the ethnic conflicts re-writing history to the disadvantage of others who are denied land and

political representation. The acute economic destitution and lack of development being witnessed today in the Northern Region of Ghana have their origins in historical underpinnings. Such economic development recipes, according to Collier's (2003) groundbreaking work, create an environment where ethnic conflicts thrive. The British were aware that the standard of education in the South was better than in the North, yet their attempt to improve the educational system in the north settled on recruiting local Standard VII (Elementary Middle Form 4) as teachers, instead of bringing better qualified teachers from the South. The Provincial Inspector for education notes:

> The teachers from outside the Northern Territories (from the South) although they were competent and efficient as such, did not exercise a beneficial influence on the boys in the direction of instilling in them a sense of their civic responsibilities (cited in Bening, 1975:65-79).

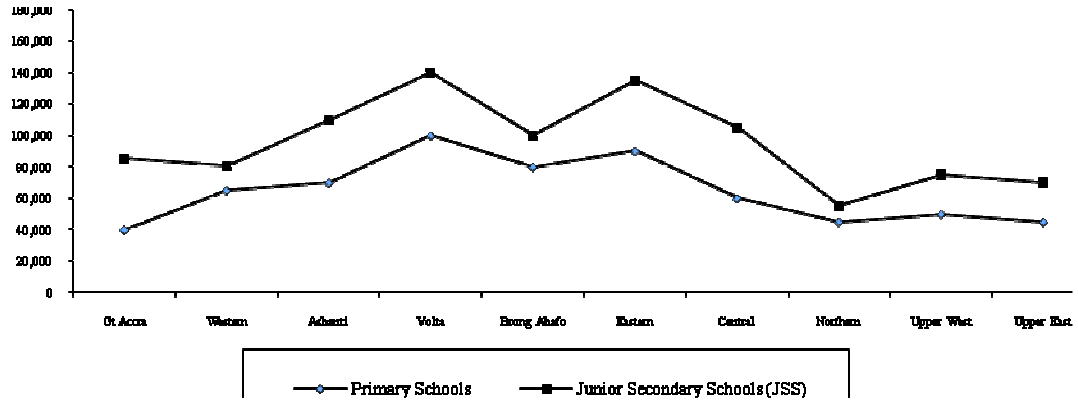
It sounds reasonable, from this study that the denial of qualified teachers from the South was to shield the Northern Territories from awareness movements that were protesting against the British in the South (Field note 2005/37). The British knew that the Northern Territories was at the time lagging behind in education, they further restricted the missions in their activities to guard their interest. Collier (2003), in his groundbreaking work to establish the link between Conflict and Development (or the lack of it) asserts:

> Civil war is now an important issue for development. War retards development but conversely development retards war. This double causation gives rise to virtuous and vicious circles. Where development succeeds, countries become progressively safer from violent conflicts, making subsequent development easier. Where development fails, countries are at higher risk of becoming conflict trapped, in which war wrecks the economy and increases the risk of further war (Collier, 2003).

9. Educational Neglect: Postcolonial Governments

It was revealed that though the 1992 Ghana Constitution provides for Free Compulsory and Universal Basic Education (FCUBE) and enjoins the state to make higher education progressively accessible to all, allocations of public subsidies to support educational institutions are skewed against the North and favour the South. State subsidies per schoolchild by region favour the prosperous regions in the South. For primary schools, the South receives fewer subsidies mainly due to good private institutions there which cater for foreign diplomats and the well-to-do families. With the poorest regions benefiting least from public spending, this presents a great challenge in the fight against poverty.

Figure 4: State Subsidies for Schools



Source: Adapted but modified from Canagarajah, S. and X. Ye, 2001.

The national averages for the pupil-teacher ratios in primary and junior secondary schools (JSS) are 43 and 32 respectively. However, shortages of teachers in the Northern Region result in high teacher-pupil ratios and over-crowded classrooms. It is thus plausible to suggest that the appalling pattern of schooling in the region as compared to the South could be the result of this disparity. The literacy rate among adults in the area is lower than 5%, and about 40% of school-age children are out of school[xxi].

Table 6: Northern Region's Educational Characteristics Compared with Greater Accra Region and National

	Northern Region	Greater Accra	National	Percentage (%)
Education Characteristics	**1,639,327**	**2,714,517**	**17,282,545**	**100**
None or Pre-school	1,288,064	782,337	8,240,625	47.7
Primary	174,727	470,715	3,210,917	18.6
Middle/JSS	73,721	763,607	3,642,567	21.1
Secondary/SSS	52,078	336,050	1,045,140	6.0
Vocational/Technical	14,919	142,695	386,559	2.2
Post Sec. (Agric/Nurse)	17,374	58,488	266,323	1.5
Tertiary	18,444	160,625	490,414	2.8

Source: Population and Housing Census, 2000, Ghana Statistical Services.

Despite under-staffing and lack of adequate resources, primary school education is readily available in the North. However, out of 260 communities surveyed in the Northern Region, 13 have no primary schools and children living at Namango in the Mamprusi East district wishing to attend primary school have to journey 28 kilometres.

In a survey of Junior Secondary Schools (JSS)[xxii], the people of Buipe-Yipala in the Gonja West district have to travel 50 kilometres to attend JSS. It might sound unbelievable that pupils at Banda-Nkwanta in the Bole district in Northern Region have to travel 90 kilometres to the nearest Senior Secondary Schools (SSS), but this is the reality. Given the lack of schools in the Northern Region, it is not surprising to note that they are behind in education (Adjapawn, 2006). These precarious educational systems in the three Northern Regions explain the relatively poor educational standards in the Northern Region. The national average for those who have attended preschool or no school stands at 47.7%. In the Greater Accra Region, the figure is 28.8%, but in the Northern Region the figure stands at

78.6%. Nationally, those who have attained tertiary education account for 2.8%; in the Greater Accra Region this reaches 5.9%, while in the Northern Region it is a mere 1.1%[xxiii].

Detailed analysis reveals a substantial difference between girls and boys when it comes to school attendance, especially in the rural areas and in the Northern Region. For those who do attend school, there is a higher girls' dropout rate. There are also disturbing signs of declining access to tertiary education. Only about 10% of basic schools, mainly based in the South, produce nearly 70% of students admitted to Ghana's tertiary institutions (Addae-Mensah, 2000). The continuing brain drain out of the Northern Region and inability to retain trained manpower highlights sustainability problems.

The selective development pattern, which was initially started by the colonialists, still prevails against the North, but in favour of the South.

> The whole of the Northern Region has only one University, but various campuses. In the South, there are over 15 Universities; both private and government. Pupils who are brilliant enough to further their education are deterred by accommodation and distance problems (Executive, Student Representative Council 079).

An interviewee at Vaggo in the Tolon Kumbungu district declared that had the British education policies been evenly spread across the three colonies at the time, the underdevelopment, unemployment and recurring ethnic conflicts would have been minimised. He continued:

> Places like Bole, Yendi, Damongo, Gushiegu and Savelugu needed schools but the British spent in excess to build huge schools like Achimota College in Accra in the South. That amount could have built four moderate schools in these areas but they did not. Due to the considerable expenditure incurred in the building of Achimota College, not even an additional primary school was opened in the Northern Territories at the time Achimota College was being built (Retired teacher 101).

A National Reserve Ranger at Bole national park stressed:

> With such restrictions on education; it was another way of the British making sure that pupils upon completion of Standard III would not be fit for any job but still migrate to the South to work on the plantations and the mines (National Reserve Ranger 102).

Conclusion

It is apparent throughout this study that, whether by design or oversight, the Northern Region of Ghana has been denied ample educational system. Education is a human right and offers a way to break the cycle of poverty. During the launching of the 2008 Global Action Week of the Ghana National Education Campaign Coalition, there was a call to make quality education a reality for all children, particularly in the Northern Region. Nevertheless, this said about the current situation:

> The enrolment and retention of girls in schools in the Northern Region has not improved much. The gender parity index decreased from 0.88% during 2006/2007 academic year to 0.83% in 2007/2008. At the Basic Education Certificate Examination (BECE), the region recorded 53.6% pass in 2004 which reduced to 46.1% in 2005 and appreciated marginally to 47.6% in 2006. In 2008, out of the 21,594 candidates who registered and participated in the BECE, 13,550 were boys and 8,044 were girls respectively. The primary school enrolment currently is 377,328 as against the estimated population of 442,927 children between six and eleven years; with about 65,599 (14.8%) of children in that age group out of school (Hobenu, 2008).[xxiv]

With about 80% of the inhabitants in the region declared as poor, poverty, unemployment, and other economic issues are quite pervasive. It is apparent that if youth are only faced with the option of poverty, unemployment and destitution they might be more inclined to join a rebellion where they might have better opportunities. In the case of Northern Region, it is obvious people in higher places such as politicians have been influencing the poor and destitute youth to take up arms.

Though it has been said that education in general can be manipulated as both positive and negative forces of conflicts (Bush and Saltarelli, 2000), peace education in particular which deals with the principles and goals of demilitarisation, conflict management, peace-making, conflict resolution and non-violence should be considered as the best option for the situation in the Northern Region of Ghana (Adjapawn, 2008).

Notes

[i] See http://www.afrol.com/articles/33112

[ii] Read about the crisis in schools in Sierra Leone crisis by Lansana Fofana: http://www.ipsnews.net/africa/nota.asp?idnews=48218

[iii] *Education 'Forgotten' in Post-Conflict Aid*: http://www.elearning-africa.com/newsportal/english/news199.php

[iv] It is very hard to put a figure on the death toll since each side tried to hide their casualties to win a psychological victory over the other.

[v] Ethnologically the Mossis are related to the Dagombas, but they do have their own language and religion, with most members being Muslim. They share common traditions with the Dagomba, Mamprusi and other northern Ghanaian groups. Even though they originated from Burkina Faso and have been in the Northern Region for hundreds of years, they are the most isolated and form a fairly cohesive group. Often, they migrate to live in the Ashanti and Brong-Ahafo regions where they worked on farms belonging to natives of these regions. (Information from Minority At Risk (MAR) website: http://www.cidcm.umd.edu/mar/assessment.asp?groupId=45203

[vi] According to the figures of the 2000 Government of Ghana Population and Housing Census

[vii] Source: Population figures from Government of Ghana, 2000 Population and Housing Census.

[viii] See Population and Housing Census, 2000, Ghana Statistical Services, Government of Ghana.

[ix] Read from Ghanaweb Friday, 28 August 2009 - Konkombas: We have nothing to do with clashes, from: http://www.ghanaweb.com/GhanaHomePage/NewsArchive/artikel.php?ID=167736

[x] Out of 1,815,408 population of Northern Region, 1,022,331 are Muslims (56%), see Population and Housing Census, 2000, Ghana Statistical Services, Government of Ghana, Summary Report on Final Results. p. 26.

[xi] See Ada van der Linde and Rachel Naylor, 2002, Building Sustainable Peace: Conflict, Conciliation and Civil Society in Northern Ghana, An Oxfam Working Paper.

[xii] 200,000 figure has been recorded by Ada van der Linde and Rachel Naylor (2002, p. 28), Pul (2002) and by Bacho, Musah and Mahama (1996), p. 1.

[xiii] See Pul (2002), Ministry of Food and Agriculture - MoFA (1994) and Ada van der Linde and Rachel Naylor (2002).

[xiv] These terms have been borrowed and adapted from Van de Goor, L., and Verstegen, S., Conflict Prognosis: A Conflict and Policy Assessment Framework, (Netherlands Institute of International Relations 'Clingendael' conflict Research Unit, June 2000).

[xv] See Adjapawn, Q., 2005-6, Why Does Northern Ghana Stay Poor: Lack of Governmental Will or a Lack of Capacity? *The Australasia Review of African Studies*, Vol. XXVII, No. 2, December, pp 31-47.

[xvi] See Roger, 1974.

[xvii] See NEP Annual Report, 1912 by Captain Wheeler, NAGA (now called PRAAD), ADM 56/1/33.

[xviii] From sessional paper No. XVII, 1918 –1919, CO 98/31.

[xix] Ghana National Archives (now called PRAAD), File Number ADM/56/1/88, letter Number 30/M.P.2189/24 dated 6th January 1925, Cited in R. B. Bening, 1976, p 25.

[xx] He had been in Gold Coast since 1913 but serving mainly in the Colony, later, was transferred to the Northern Territories and in 1933 became Commonwealth Commissioner of Northern Territories (CCNT). He was charge with upholding and furtherance of Indirect Rule after previous successors like Walker-Leigh and Major F.W.F. Jackson. See Staniland, M., 1975, The Lions of Dagbon: Political Change in Northern Ghana, Cambridge University Press, London, p.100.

[xxi] Ghana Education Service Internal Budget Book, 2002.

[xxii] Equivalent of Middle School

[xxiii] Figures are derived from Ghana Population and Housing Census, 2000, Ghana Statistical Services.

[xxiv] Mr John Kwesi Hobenu Northern Regional Director of Education made the observation at the Northern Regional Education Sector Annual Review meeting in Tamale. The three-day meeting served as a participatory forum for stakeholders to assess the overall educational status in terms of achievements, challenges and strategise for improved educational performance. See: Northern Region records low enrolment, retention of girls in schools at: http://www.ghanaweb.com/GhanaHomePage/NewsArchive/artikel.php?ID=143530.

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