

UNIVERSITY OF EDUCATION, WINNEBA

A STUDY OF THE ZONGO IMAMSHIP CONFLICT IN NANDOM

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A STUDY OF THE ZONGO IMAMSHIP CONFLICT IN NANDOM



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Master of Philosophy
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DECLARATION

Student's Declaration

I, Chrispin Mwinkyogtaa Kuupiel, hereby declare that this thesis is my own work and all secondary data employed in the study are acknowledged accordingly. No part of this thesis has therefore been presented in any form to any institution for the award of any other degree.

Signature:

Date:

Supervisor's Declaration

I certify that, the preparation and presentation of this thesis was supervised in accordance with the guidelines on supervision of thesis as laid down by the School of Graduate Studies, University of Education, Winneba.

Name of Supervisor: DR. VINCENT ADZ AHLIE-MENSAH

Signature:

Date:

DEDICATION

I dedicate this work to my family.



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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

DST	Dynamic Systems Theory
GSS	Ghana Statistical Service
MDGs	Millenium Development Goals
NYPD	Nandom Youth for Peace and Development
SHS	Senior High School
SIPRI	Stockholm International Peace Research Institute
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
WASCI	West Africa Civil Society Institute



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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this research was to understand the Zongo conflict in Nandom by exploring the dynamics involved, the actors involved and the threats to the resolution of the conflict. The study was approached qualitatively and designed as a case study. A total of ten (10) key informants participated in the study. Data was collected through in-depth interviews and observation. Data was analysed using thematic template analysis. The study unearthed that the illness of the Imam and his vice which created a position vacancy of the Imamship as the immediate cause of the conflict. The conflict degenerated into fierce struggle over the Imamship and disagreement over choice of candidates, introduction of 'minority' and 'majority' rhetoric, as well as use of abusive language and attacks caused the conflict among the orthodox Muslims in the Nandom Zongo community. The study revealed that the conflict has strong socio-political, economic, security and religious implications on the Zongo community. The study further found that apart from the primary conflict parties, there were state actors, traditional actors, group actors and independent actors in the conflict. The dynamics of the conflict were informed by the grievances of the conflict parties, actor interaction and conflict parties' commitment to the conflict. Threats to the resolution of the conflict exist at system level, actor level and traditional level. The study recommended that trust and confidence building in conflict parties by intervening parties should be ensured, politics should be decoupled from the conflict, there should be non-interference of political figures in the conflict, sensitization of the Zongo people on the need to be peaceful should be carried out by third parties mediating the Zongo conflict and continuous security surveillance of the Zongo community should be ensured. The study contributes to the understanding of conflict dynamics and actor interaction in conflict processes.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the study

Conflict has come to be part of our living as human beings, albeit some people may try to avoid it. Conflict is a shared consequence of our interactions, even if one may choose not to do so, especially in this era of interconnected and seemingly borderless world where things can easily cross geographies.

Virtually every society in the world has experienced one conflict or the other: *Africa* – Sudan, Rwanda; *Asia* – Pakistan, Cambodia; *Europe* – Ukraine, Bosnia and Herzegovina; *North America* – Canada; and *South America* – Ecuador, Peru. This explains why conflict has been described as both a global and a devastating phenomenon (Hegre, 2013; Malik-Kusi, 2012; Polachek & Sevastianova, 2010; Duker, 2018; Lund, 2003). Meanwhile, it is worrying that while conflicts are declining at the global level (Szayna et al., 2017; Einsiedel et al., 2017; Annan, 2014), low-scale violence are increasing and peaking at national levels (Annan, 2014; Duker, 2018). Previously stable states are now plagued with various forms of conflict (Annan, 2014).

Arguably, the African continent has been flooded with most of the world's conflict trajectories, leaving many societies ravaged. It has become difficult to narrate Africa's history without mentioning the trajectories of wars or conflicts that have bedeviled the continent. The conflicts in Sierra Leone, Mali, Cote d'Ivoire, Liberia, Guinea-Bissau, Rwanda, Somalia, Chad, *inter alia*, cannot be easily dismissed in our development, peace and security discourses. Annan (2014, p. 1) is worried and concerned that “internal and

regional violent conflicts” may occur again. They “remain a major social problem of the world” (Hegre, Nygård & Ræder, 2017, p. 243). For instance, one of the key challenges of the West African sub-region is ‘ending violent conflicts’ (Annan, 2014).

Currently, Ghana is battling with several ethnic, Chieftaincy, land, religious and many other forms of conflict, after several years of independence and several attempts to resolve them, with new ones emerging and taking various shapes. The insurgencies in Dagbon, Bawku, Nkonya-Alavanyo and the like have disrupted the peace and stability of Ghana, and paint a bad picture of the country in the eyes of the world. Most of these conflicts are related to the struggle for traditional leadership and have been prevalent in the Northern part of the country (Seini & Tsikata, 2004; Jönsson, 2007). The similitude among most of the conflicts in Northern Ghana and particularly the Northern region is in their recurrent nature (Debrah, Alidu & Owusu-Mensah, 2016). Yet, new conflicts continue to emerge and assuming various dynamics and proving difficult to resolve.

The Upper West part of Northern Ghana has been described in the past as a peaceful region with the lowest conflict cases in the country (UNDP, 2012). However, in recent times, there are emerging conflicts in the region that are appearing difficult to resolve. One of such conflict is the Nandom Zongo imamship conflict (Zongo conflict).

The Zongo community in Nandom is predominantly Islamic, encompassing seven ethnic groups, including the Moshi, Dagomba, Wangara, Fulani, Waala, Sisaala and the Zabarma. The Zongo community enjoyed peace and these different groups coexisted throughout their period of settlement in Nandom until few years ago when they began to be conflictual. Confrontations, violence and antagonism began to manifest among these

ethnic groups in the Zongo community in Nandom. In July 2015, confrontations and fighting ensued in the local mosque among these Islamic ethnic groups. Speculations were that the conflict ensued over who should be selected as the vice Imam, although empirical research is yet to confirm such speculations. When people feel excluded from power and opportunities, it creates conducive space for violence and antagonism (Avis, 2019). In situations like that, excluded personalities from leadership tend to mobilize people for violent rejection of those decisions that excluded them (GSDRC, 2014). Tensions began to build and grow and there were speculations of mobilizations. Security heightened and people lived in fear, uncertainty and mistrust in the township of Nandom.

A number of interventions were made. The police beefed up security, patrol and protection in the township and the mosque (especially during Friday prayers). The Nandom Youth for Peace and Development (NYPD) had a dialogue with representatives from the various ethnic groupings within the Zongo community and resulted in a Peace Committee comprising of persons from the various ethnic groups. Peace Council attempted a resolution a number of times. A number of community meetings and dialogue were held. The Paramount Chief of the Nandom Traditional Area also intervened. Call also came from the Member of Parliament and minister for the interior – Hon. Ambrose Dery for the emerging factions in the Nandom Zongo Imamship struggle to conduct themselves non-violently and to address the issue in that regard (Quaye, 2017).

However, the conflict remains unresolved. In August 2018, violence ensued again between the various factions (Yeboah, 2018). It was alleged that some people sustained

cutlass injuries, properties were destroyed, panic and fear and uncertainty and tensions were brewing. This generated concerns and attention within and outside Nandom. At some points, the government had to close down the mosque. Condemnation and express of grieve came from some Muslim Missions.

The Ahmadiyya Muslim Mission in 2018 issued a press statement on the violence in the Nandom Zongo over what they described as the “Appointment of Imam” (Yeboah, 2018). The general secretary of the Mission, Alhaj Abbass Wilson, in the press statement described the violence as ghastly albeit that is not the first time of such occurrence in Nandom (Yeboah, 2018). He again grieved that: the violence sends worrying signals about Islam; peace, love and compassion could be compromised; and the Mission could be at a greater loss when such considerations as ethnic, heredity, or political are placed over the Islamic requirements for Imamship (Yeboah, 2018).

The potential threat of the conflict to the peace, security, lives, property, business and the general development of Nandom is a concern and source of worry to many Nandome (natives of Nandom) within and outside the municipality. Research has acknowledged that although the consequences of conflict are not easily predictable (Ibrahim, Adjei & Boateng, 2019), in most cases they have been strong (Sulemana, 2009; Tsikata & Seini, 2004; Adzahlie-Mensah, 2007; Mensah, 2013; Bukari, 2013; Adzahlie-Mensah & Benson, 2018; Lund, 2003; Duah, 2014). For instance, growth and development could be retarded, livelihoods implicated (Bowd & Chikwanha, 2010; Hegre et al., 2017; Collier et al., 2003; Hegre, 2013; Collier, 2004; Brück, Justino, & Martin-Shields, 2017; Polachek

& Sevastianova, 2010; McIntosh & Buckley, 2015; Ray & Esteban, 2017) and quality of governance eroded (Hegre & Nygård, 2012).

The Zongo conflict in Nandom is appearing to be complex and dynamic. An understanding of the dynamics in the Zongo conflict in Nandom could be useful to unearthing the factors fuelling its recurrence. The recurrent nature of the conflict over the past years has made many people worried and concerned that similar incidences may be witnessed again in the future. This thought of the conflict recurring alone creates fear, panic and apprehension in people and makes the conflict sensitive (Sulemana, 2009). Meanwhile, it is important to note that what causes a conflict may not be responsible for its recurrence or sustenance (GSDRC, 2014). The fear and uncertainty among the people about the likely recurrence of the conflict is traumatic enough. There is growing literature on conflict recurrence across the world (Walter, 2004; Gates, Nygård & Trappeniers, 2016; El-Bushra, 2017; Jackson & Morelli, 2009; Payne, et al, 2017; Loyle & Appel, 2016; Braithwaite & Sudduth, 2016). The actors involved in the Zongo conflict are yet to be documented. No one seems to know what their interests are, who their allies are and why. Much is not known and is yet to be documented about the threats to the resolution of the conflict.

Meanwhile, Gates et al. (2016) indicate that unresolved or unaddressed concerns tend to fuel conflict recurrence. When the grave concerns and fundamental issues in a conflict are not addressed, they tend to fester and provide fertile ground for the conflict to reoccur and persist (Gates et al., 2016; Annan, 2014). The resolution efforts of the various stakeholders in the Nandom and in conflict resolution and peace-building circles have

been abortive. It is not certain as to what is making the Zongo conflict in Nandom to be irresolvable.

Literature has not been able to provide us with data that is required to understand the challenges to the resolution of the Zongo conflict in Nandom. As such, there is need for a rigorous research that employs approach(es) that sought and make sense of the perspectives, lived experience and the views of the actors and stakeholders in the Zongo conflict in Nandom, in order to gain a better understanding of the conflict and to stimulate strategies and decisions that could sustain peace and harmony, as well as contribute significantly to the enrichment of the body literature and the conflict resolution and peace-building discourses and practices. This research was therefore driven by the concerns indicated above and my hope to gain in-depth insights into the Zongo Imamship conflict in Nandom in terms of the dynamics at play, the actors involved and the threats to the resolution of the conflict.

1.2 Statement of problem

Despite several interventions that have been taken to resolve the Zongo conflict in Nandom and to return peace to the Zongo community, the conflict still remains unresolved. The Nandom Traditional Council, Peace Council, Youth Groups, and the Police institution have all attempted severally, to resolve the conflict among the Zongo people of Nandom and to return peace to the town, but their efforts have been abortive. The conflict is still there. Yet, no one seems to know the exact reason(s) behind the conflict, the issues involved, why the conflict keeps recurring and/or appear irresolvable.

But the people of Nandom Zongo cannot be fighting for a meaningless course. The conflict must mean something to the Zongo people.

However, it seems stakeholders in the Nandom municipality are helpless and/or do not know the next step to take to ensure that the conflict is resolved and peace, security and certainty, among others, are returned to the Zongo community and the entire Nandom municipality. All efforts at reaching a resolution and securing a sustainable peace in the Zongo community have proven abortive. People continue to live in fear, uncertainty, mistrust, apprehension and unsure of what and how the next minute could be. Also, apart from the interventions (closing down the central mosque, patrolling the Zongo community, etc.) that are usually taken whenever the conflict erupts, no one seems to be interested in or have taken the pain to sit down with the people of Nandom Zongo to listen to their own stories about the conflict in terms of why they continue to fight or 'refused' a resolution to the conflict. Research has not properly documented the successfulness and unsuccessfulness of conflict resolution interventions in Africa (Tchombe, 2006). Is it that the people of the Zongo community in Nandom just like to fight or there are certain factors that constitute threats to the resolution of the conflict? Why does the conflict appear too difficult to resolve and stakeholders appearing to have given up? What are the dynamics involved in the conflict? Who are the actors in the conflict? What are their interests? Who are their allies and why? These are begging questions that should call the attention of every stakeholder in conflict resolution.

Yet, although there is flourishing literature on conflict in northern Ghana (Tsikata & Seini, 2004; Tonah, 2012; Osei-Kufuor et al., 2016; Mbowura, 2012; Anamzoya, 2010;

Mumuni, 2016; Mbowura & Longi, 2016; Anamzoya & Tonah, 2012; Mohammed, 2018; UNDP, 2012; Brukum, 2001; Ibrahim, Adjei & Boateng, 2019; Sulemana, 2009; Bukari, 2013; Lund, 2003; Kendie & Bukari, 2012; Ahiave, 2013; Mahama & Longi, 2013; Jönsson, 2007; Debrah et al., 2016) and conflict dynamics in Ghana (Penu, 2016; Gati, 2008; Ayee et al., 2011), these research are deficient in providing information to understand the dynamics of the Zongo conflict in Nandom, the actors involved and the threats to the resolution of the Zongo conflict. Previous research on conflicts in the Nandom area have also focused on chieftaincy and succession conflicts (Lentz, 2000; Lentz, 1993) and decentralization and land conflicts (Lentz, 2001) while appearing silent on the Zongo conflict.

The Zongo conflict in Nandom continues to constitute a potential threat to peace, security, stability and social networks in Nandom. Research has not given the Zongo people of Nandom the opportunity to report their own stories about the conflict; as such their voices remain unheard. Our development, peace and conflict resolution discourses seem to be silent on the Zongo conflict in Nandom. Gates et al (2016, p. 1) reveal that “recurring conflict is a symptom of unaddressed grievances.” So, is it that interest in addressing the fundamental concerns fuelling the Zongo conflict in Nandom is little (Gates et al., 2016) or not there at all? There is need for research that looks into the Zongo conflict in Nandom employing an approach that seeks and make sense of participants’ views, in order that a holistic, deep and rich understanding of the conflict can be attained, and effective and appropriate resolution can be entered. Therefore, this research gives voice to the people of Nandom Zongo by exploring their perspectives,

lived experiences and views on the dynamics in the Zongo imamship conflict, the actors involved and the threats to resolution of the conflict.

1.3 Purpose of the research

The purpose of this research was to understand the Zongo imamship conflict in Nandom by exploring the dynamics involved, the actors involved and the threats to the resolution of the conflict.

1.4 Research objectives

The objectives of this research were to

1. explore the dynamics of the Zongo imamship conflict in Nandom
2. determine the actors involved the Zongo imamship conflict in Nandom
3. analyse the threats to the resolution of the Zongo imamship conflict in Nandom.

1.5 Research questions

The main research questions were

1. What are the dynamics of the Zongo imamship conflict in Nandom?
2. Who are the actors in the Zongo imamship conflict in Nandom?
3. What are the threats to the resolution of the Zongo imamship conflict in Nandom?

1.6 Significance of the research

My thesis would contribute substantially to knowledge and the shaping of the conflict resolution, conflict analysis and peace-building practices and discourses. Since the conflict emerged, little empirical research has been undertaken to understand it. The study contributes to the understanding of conflict dynamics and actor interaction in

conflict processes. The findings strengthen understanding of the conflict system as dynamically complex with interrelated and interdependent elements. The findings invite more discourse and depth of research into conflicts in Zongo communities in Ghana. My research provides entry and take-off points for research, interventions and discourses into the Zongo conflict in Nandom. My thesis report stimulates research-driven reflections on the processes of conflict resolution.

The study provides relevant insights into understanding the complex dynamics that are at play in the Zongo conflict in Nandom. An understanding of the dynamics involved in the conflict is important to the resolution process of a conflict. Conflict dynamics are very useful in conflict analysis. The dynamics of the Zongo conflict in Nandom give a clear picture of who and what is involved in the conflict as well as the tactics employed. That is, unearthing the dynamics in the Zongo conflict in Nandom help to know and understand the interests, needs, fears, issues, parties and other actors involved in the conflict. My thesis report provides strong evidence that suggest complex dynamics in the Zongo conflict in Nandom; ones that have strongly decided on the resolution of the Zongo conflict in Nandom.

The results of the research provide significant insights into the range of threats that have stalled the resolution of the Zongo conflict in Nandom. This would help interveners and stakeholders in Nandom and in conflict resolution to determine what they have overlooked or have been overlooking in their effort to resolve the conflict. The research report would help them to appreciate the conflict better and to be able to procure appropriate mechanisms, measures or actions that will not only be effective in nipping the

conflict in the bud but also efficient in preventing a recurrence. The results of the study would also help the various stakeholders who have engaged the Zongo people in a resolution in the past but failed to reflect on, evaluate and re-strategize their own resolution efforts. An understanding of the threats to the resolution of the conflict is necessary to tackling them and to securing a lasting peace in the area.

Further, this research is beneficial to the Zongo people or community in Nandom since they were given the opportunity to report their own stories. My thesis allowed me to get the Zongo people's perspectives about the conflict and made sense of them. As such, my research report could be fed back to the Zongo community in Nandom which could influence awareness and transformation. The study gave voice to the Zongo people of Nandom. In the end, their voices were brought to the fore and to inform our discourses around conflict resolution and peace-building. Sitting down with the Zongo people to understand the conflict from their own experiences gives them the opportunity to reflect on and evaluate their own actions.

Thus this research offered them the platform to share and communicate their own issues. Communication is very useful in conflict resolution process and demonstrates in part, the willingness of the parties to engage. It represents a significant means to conflict resolution processes – talking about the issue is a good sign that a resolution could be reached. My study offered the parties in the Zongo conflict in Nandom a platform to have a (re)think of their adversity, the effects on their lives and peace in Nandom. In general, my research report may stimulate policies and strategies to secure a lasting and sustainable peace in Nandom. Researchers could find the template (see appendix B)

developed from the findings of the study useful in applying to similar conflict situations to ascertain or determine how the findings play out in those other situations. These contributions of my research would be an added value to the body of knowledge on conflict and conflict resolution. In the end, the study enriched the dynamic system theory and informed conflict resolution practices.

1.7 Delimitation of the study

The study was confined to the Zongo community in Nandom. My thesis was interested in exploring the dynamics in the conflict, the actors in the conflict and the threats to the resolution of the conflict. My research was particularly focused on seeking and making sense of the conflict from the participants' (Zongo people's) own perspectives and lived experiences. Apart from the Zongo people, I interacted with a chief in the Nandom traditional area and the keepers of the Nandom stool whose land the Zongo people are sitting on.

1.8 Explanation of terms

Nandome: This refers to the people or natives of Nandom.

Zongo community/people: This refers to all those residing in the Nandom Zongo (i.e., the Moshis, Waala, Dagombas, Sisaala, Wangara, Fulani, Zabarma)

Dagara Muslims: Indigenes of Nandom who have decided to become Muslims.

Dagaare: Native language of the people of Nandom.

Muslims: People who believe in and worship the Islamic religion.

1.9 Organisation of the study

This thesis is organized into five chapters as per the house-style of the University of Education, Winneba. Chapter one presents the introduction to the research. The chapter gives the background of the study, statement of research problem and purpose of the study. It also states the research objectives and research questions of the study, the significance of the research, explains the key terms in the study and describes how the thesis is organized. Chapter two reviews the literature that is relevant to the study. The chapter also discusses the theory that I draw upon to inform the study. The methodology of this research was discussed in chapter three. The chapter describes the research philosophical paradigm, research approach, research design, population of the study, the study context, the research methods, delimitation of the research, data collection and analysis procedures, ethical considerations in the study and my position in the research. Chapter four presents, analyse and discusses the results of the research. Then chapter five provides the summary of the study. The chapter also presents the conclusions of the study and made recommendations based on the findings.

CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

2.0 Introduction

The purpose of this research was to understand the Zongo conflict in Nandom in terms of the dynamics, the actors involved and the threats to the resolution of the conflict. This chapter reviews literature that is relevant to the study. The study consulted and accounted for research on conflict dynamics, conflict recurrence, and conflict resolution in its search strategies to inform the review process. The relevant literatures consulted have been discussed, highlighting the gaps for which this study was undertaken to fill. The chapter also discusses the theory that I draw to inform my thesis.

2.1 Conceptualizing conflict

There is no consensus on the exact meaning of conflict. Research has acknowledged that (Avis, 2019). For UNDP (2012), the consensus among conflict and peace scholars is that conflict is something that no one can 'prevent' but can 'contain'. Various scholars have ascribed different meanings to conflict (Aremu, 2010). Depending on the ideological position, cultural background, circumstances of particular geographies or context, among others, people tend to define conflict in one way or the other. One thing that is certain is that conflict can occur within oneself, between persons, between groups or communities or organizations, and between two countries. The review does not intend to pursue definitions however, it is important to note that conflict can mean many things; disagreement over, or misunderstanding, or contestation over, or a struggle or fight over, or differing opinions or views over something. Mayer (n.d) thinks conflict is a perception, feeling, and action. According to Mayer (n.d), "this three-dimensional perspective can

help us understand the complexities of conflict and why a conflict sometimes seems to proceed in contradictory directions” (p. 2). For Sulemana (2009), conflict is a disagreement between individuals or groups which leads to violence. Galtung (1996) observed that “conflict is a triadic construct” and manifests or unfolds as goals, behaviour and attitude interact (p. 71).

When people’s needs or concerns or grievances are not addressed it could result to conflict (Collier & Hoeffler, 2000; Collier & Hoeffler, 2002; Collier & Hoeffler, 2004; Doorn, 2013; Hoeffler, 2011; Majeedullah, 2015). Also, when people think there is discrepancy in what they deserve and what they actually get, the result will be conflict (Gurr, 1970). Thus, Murshed and Tadjoeeddin (2009) shared that whenever there is that “disparity between people’s aspirations and achievement” it tends to lay the grounds for violence and confrontation (p. 11). The absence of direct or physical violence does not mean that there is no conflict; it also involves structural and cultural inequalities (Galtung, 1967; Galtung, 1969). There is no society – however developed or successful – in the world that has not experienced any form conflict. Conflict is thus a global concern (Duker, 2018; Hegre, 2013; Malik-Kusi, 2012; Polachek & Sevastianova, 2010; Lund, 2003). Conflicts are now “complex and protracted” in contemporary times (Avis, 2019, p. 3). Every continent right from North America to South America, Europe, Asia and Africa has recorded some form of conflict with varying degrees of violence, intensity and threats. The consequences of some of these conflicts are still being felt including health complications, slowed development, vulnerability of such countries to terrorist attacks and emergence of conflicts.

In recent times, there is reduction in the global conflict cases (Szayna et al., 2017; Einsiedel et al., 2017; Annan, 2014). Meanwhile, the conflicts at the national level seem to rather be on an increasing trend (Duker, 2018; Annan, 2014). Noteworthy, conflict is not a problem or as Mayer (n.d) puts, “a bad thing”. The issue about conflict is in how they are dealt with once they occur (Tchombe, 2006; Mahama & Longi, 2013; Bukari, 2013). In this work, conflict is understood as human interaction that results in strained relationships.

2.2 Brief History of the Nandom Zongo Conflict

Research has not documented the Nandom Zongo conflict. Thus, giving a detailed narration of the development of the Zongo conflict in Nandom is difficult due to the lack of literature on the conflict. The only information that exists is pockets of media, particularly online reports about the disturbances in the Zongo of Nandom. According to media reports, the conflict erupted as a result of a contest over who becomes the chief Imam of Nandom (Yeboah, 2018; Quaye, 2018; Quaye, 2017; Ghana News Agency, 2018). The struggle over who becomes the chief Imam is among the orthodox Muslims in Nandom (Quaye, 2018). Thus it is not a conflict involving all the Muslim Sects in Nandom. Quaye (2018) indicate that two persons from different tribes in the orthodox Muslim community are struggling over the Imamship of Nandom with their tribesmen or members of their tribes rallying behind them. Further, Quaye (2018) indicated that succession of the Imamship of Nandom has always been the cause of confusion within the Muslim community in the municipality. The Ahmadiyya Muslim Mission is concerned that greater loss would be recorded by the Mission when such considerations

as ethnic, heredity, or political are placed over the Islamic requirements for Imamship (Yeboah, 2018).

The struggle over the Imamship between the different tribes in the Zongo community generated bad blood between them. This culminated in some confrontations, violence and attacks (Quaye, 2018; Ghana News Agency, 2018). It is reported that people sustained injuries, some 'houses' got burnt and other properties destroyed (Quaye, 2018). The central mosque was locked up anytime violence occurs, sometimes close to a year. Although the conflict has been with the Muslim community in Nandom, the 2018 violence appears to be characterized with some violence. Quaye (2018) described that the 2018 one recurred in "the most unfortunate manner." When the violence occurred in 2018 the police quickly intervened to restore calm. The regional minister at the time, Alhaji Sulemana Alhassan, and other security functionaries visited the scenes and subsequently set up a five member committee to investigate the disturbances and make recommendations to ensure that lasting resolution is brought to the matter. The committee was chaired by His Lordship Sidney Braimah of the Wa Magistrate Court (Ghana News Agency, 2018).

However, it is yet to be ascertained what the committee's investigations were and their findings and recommendations, and whether the recommendations have been implemented. Aside the efforts by the regional minister, several other efforts have been made to ensure a resolution of the conflict. Peace Council, the Nandom traditional authority and other individuals intervened. Yet, all these efforts did not yield a resolution

of the matter. At a point, thousands of indigenous youth of Nandom demonstrated through the streets of Nandom town in opposition to the conflict.

Meanwhile, during the period of the conflict, some accused the Member of Parliament (MP) of Nandom and minister of the interior, Hon. Ambrose Dery as taking sides in the conflict. However, this allegation was refuted strongly by the MP when he told the large gathering on the Nandom Kakube festival that, he is not supporting anyone and does not have the power to decide the person who becomes the chief Imam of Nandom (Quaye, 2017). Since 2018, although violence has ceased, it is yet to be established based on research, the dynamics in the conflict, the actors in the conflict and the threats to the resolution of the conflict. This current research therefore is being undertaken to address these issues.

2.3 Conflicts in Africa

Conflicts are common features in the African continent. They are numerous, “diverse and complex” (Aall, 2015, p. 1). Arguably, Africa is plagued with most of the world’s conflicts. This has generated ‘concern and attention’ within and outside Africa (Grasa & Mateos, 2010). Majority of these conflicts are intra-state with few interstate ones. The conflict in Sierra Leone, Rwanda, Burundi, Somalia, Mali, Mozambique, DR Congo, Sudan, Cote D’Ivoire, South Africa, Liberia, Gambia, Namibia, Nigeria, Cameroon, Uganda, Chad, Libya, Ethiopia, Ghana, Guinea, Burkina Faso, among others are classic examples of conflicts experienced in the African continent.

Bowd and Chikwanha (2010) observed that “reconstructing these conflicts may be the greatest challenge of Sub-Saharan Africa” (p. x). Some of these conflicts have been

resolved while others have remained unresolved and assuming different shapes. The current – 2020 resurgence of military takeover in Mali (BBC, 2020; Aljazeera, 2020) continues to raise concerns about the management of conflicts in Africa. The worrying thing about conflicts in Africa is their violent nature. Bowd and Chikwanha (2010) attribute “direct and indirect deaths of millions of civilians and the low levels of human security in the region to violent conflicts” (p. x). Violent conflicts make achievement of Millennium Development Goals difficult (Wordofa, 2010). The causes of conflicts in Africa range from remote to immediate. Tchombe (2006) indicate historical factors, poverty, illiteracy, unemployment, demographic changes, bad public policies, economic mismanagement, and bad governance, among others as causes of conflicts in Africa. Similarly, Aremu (2010) mentioned that conflicts in Africa are caused by “arbitrary borders created by the colonial powers, heterogeneous ethnic composition of African states, inept political leadership, corruption, negative effect of external debt burden and poverty” (p. 551)

The effects of conflicts in Africa have been bizarre. Chiefly, lives and properties have been loss, development has been impaired, human rights implications have been strong, productivity in those areas tend to slow down, such territories become vulnerable to attacks, and investment flow could be unstable (Aremu, 2010; Greene, Buxton & Salonijs-Pasternak, 2006; Tchombe, 2006).

Conflicts persist in many African countries. Annan (2014) indicates that ‘new wars’ have left West African economies crawling and humanity in a suffering state. Greene et al. (2006) attested to that. It appears the approaches used to handle many of the conflicts in

Africa have not worked satisfactorily. Research is also deficient in documenting the successfulness and unsuccessfulness of conflict resolution in Africa (Tchombe, 2006). Research needs to analyse conflicts in Africa – both resolved and unresolved ones systematically and in much more detail, to unearth their dynamics, the resolution interventions and strategies that have been employed, why resolution was successful in some situations and unsuccessful in other cases, in order to draw useful lessons to secure lasting peace in Africa. Wordofa (2010) argued that unless measures are procured to deal with current conflicts and the threat of new ones in Africa, the region will find it difficult to achieve the Millennium Development Goals. The relationship between conflict and development has thus been well established (Bowd & Chikwanha, 2010; Hegre et al., 2017; Duker, 2018; Kendie & Bukari, 2012; Sraku, 2012; Collier et al., 2003; Aremu, 2010; Hegre, 2013; Collier, 2004; Ikejiaku, 2009; Brück, Justino, & Martin-Shields, 2017; Polachek & Sevastianova, 2010; Bukari et al., 2017; Yahaya & Tinab, 2015; McIntosh & Buckley, 2015; Macartan, 2003; Ray & Esteban, 2017)

2.4 Conflicts in Ghana

Studies have reported how Ghana has been touted over the years as a peaceful country (Pul, 2015; Bukari, 2016; Mahama & Longi, 2013; Ayee et al., 2011) or as the beacon of peace in the West Africa (Ayee et al., 2011). However, several works have equally cast doubts on Ghana's image as the beacon of peace and stability in the sub-region arising from the numerous conflicts that have characterized the country (Pul, 2015; Asamoah 2014). Pul (2015) argued that opinions in Ghana are divided on both the state of peace and the kind of peace in the country. In his study, Pul (2015, p. viii) found that while a section of Ghanaians think the country is peaceful, the other section of the population

indicated that Ghana was in “a steady state of unstable peace.” Research evidence exists that there are numerous inter-ethnic and intra-ethnic conflicts in Ghana (Adzahlie-Mensah & Benson, 2018; Bukari et al., 2017; Yahaya & Tinab, 2015; Kendie & Bukari, 2012; Tsikata & Seini, 2004). Some of these conflicts (for example, Bawku, Dagbon, Nkonya-Alavanyo) are traceable to the pre-independence era. Until the post cold-war era, arguably, conflicts in Ghana were not characterized by serious violence.

Conflicts in Ghana have involved the use of sophisticated weapons and some have required large scale military operation or permanent military presence in the area (Adzahlie-Mensah & Benson, 2018; Bukari et al., 2017; Yahaya & Tinab, 2015; Kendie & Bukari, 2012). Typical examples include the Bawku, Dagbon, Nkonya-Alavanyo, Konkomba-Nanumba violent conflicts in Ghana. Literature on conflicts in Ghana is flourishing (Tsikata & Seini, 2004; Ibrahim, Adjei & Boateng, 2019; Sulemana, 2009; WASCI & SIPRI, 2011; Adzahlie-Mensah, 2007; Mensah, 2013; Bukari, 2013; Adzahlie-Mensah & Benson, 2018; Lund, 2003; Duah, 2014; Kendie & Bukari, 2012; Sraku, 2012; Ayee et al., 2011; Ahiave, 2013; Brørby, 2013; Mahama & Longi, 2013; Asamoah, 2014; Gati, 2008; Penu & Osei-Kufuor, 2016).

Conflicts in Ghana ranged from ethnic, resource, to chieftaincy, religious, political, and sitting of institutions and services (UNDP, 2012; Tsikata & Seini, 2004). Some of the conflicts were/are over land (Nkonya-Alavanyo; Ga; Kwahu and Ewe settlers), chieftaincy and succession (Bawku, Dagbon, Kokwado, Konkomba and Dagomba, Winneba, Mepe), religious (Ga state and Christian churches) and political power (between supporters of NDC and NPP) among others. UNDP (2012) therefore describes

conflicts in Ghana as complex and varied. Noteworthy, the majority of conflicts in Ghana are related to chieftaincy (Tsikata & Seini, 2004; Jönsson, 2007). Anamzoya (2010) indicate that “chieftaincy conflict in any part of Ghana is a threat to national stability” (p. 209). Bukari (2016) puts the number of chieftaincy conflict cases in Ghana as exceeding 230. Although people have labeled the chieftaincy institution in Ghana as “anachronistic”, it remains capable of dealing with conflicts effectively in many societies in Ghana (Samuel & Halidu, 2018).

The effects of conflicts in Ghana have been strongly felt. Chiefly, there has been loss of lives and properties, strained relationships, stress on national budget, slowing development and productivity. For instance, Asamoah (2014) reported dire socio-economic, psychological and security implications of the Nkonya-Alavanyo conflict on the people’s lives. The cost of these conflicts to the country and the stress they put on the national budget have been acknowledged. Brukum (2001) accounted that the government of Ghana in 1994 alone spent six billion cedis to maintain peace in the country.

Brück, Justino and Martin-Shields (2017) indicated that the economic, social and health outcomes of conflicts are usually worrisome to populations experiencing conflict. UNDP (2012, p. 2) explains that when conflicts threaten “the very existence or survival of a social group”, resolution becomes difficult, leading to intractability (Bukari, 2013). Conflicts have thus become ‘sources of worries’ to many Ghanaians (Tsikata & Seini, 2004; Jönsson, 2007; Gati, 2008). They are phenomena that mankind may have to live and deal with throughout their existence. The important thing lies in how conflicts are approached, handled or managed once they occur. Due to these numerous cases of

conflicts and their associated destructions, Jönsson (2007) indicate that “the common view of Ghana as a peaceful country” cannot longer hold.

2.5 Conflicts in Northern Ghana

The Northern part of Ghana seems to be plagued with most of the conflicts in the country. Research on conflicts in northern Ghana has grown (Lund, 2003; Brukum, 2001; Ibrahim et al. 2019; Mahama & Longi, 2013; Bukari, 2013; Tsikata & Seini, 2004; Jönsson, 2007; Debrah, Alidu & Owusu-Mensah, 2016). The Dagbon crisis; Konkomba conflict; Konkomba and Nanumba conflict; Konkomba and Dagomba conflict; Gonja and Konkomba conflict; the Bimbagu conflict; Wellembele chieftaincy conflict; Nadowli chieftaincy conflict; Gusheigu conflict; Nawuris and Gonja conflict in Kpandai; Nawuris (between those in Kpandai and those in Balai); Buipe conflict; Bunkprugu Yooyuo (Nankpanduri, Teima, Kpamele, Jimbale) conflict; Chereponi conflict; Yapei/Kusawgu chieftaincy dispute; Kusasi-Mamprusi conflict; Namolgo-Tindongo conflict; Sirigu and Yekene conflict; Gbane conflict; Bimobas and Konkombas; Konkomba, Nawuri, Bassare, Nchuniurus and Gonjas; Mossis and Konkonibas; Konkombas and Nanumbas at Nakpayili, Nanumba District; Konkombas and Dagombas at Nakpaciei, East Dagomba District; Nawuris and Konkombas at East Gonja District; Gonja and Nawuri/Konkomba war; Gonja and Vagla conflict; Nalerigu and Gambaga conflict; among others are trajectories of conflicts that have occurred in the northern part of Ghana (Tsikata & Seini, 2004; UNDP, 2012).

UNDP (2012) indicate that conflicts in northern Ghana have been over chieftaincy and succession, religious, resource or political based. Noteworthy, most of these conflicts that

have been fought or are being fought in northern Ghana were/are over succession and chieftaincy. This feeds into the observation of Tsikata and Seini (2004) and Jönsson (2007) that most of the conflicts in Ghana are rooted in chieftaincy. UNDP (2012) indicate that “conflicts in northern Ghana are numerous and diverse, and their causes are varied and complex as their courses and consequences” (p. 10). The northern part of the Ghana has some of the longest running conflicts in the country including the Bawku skin crisis which dates back to the colonial era. Tsikata and Seini (2004, p. 29) argued that “majority of northern Ghana conflicts occurred between ethnic groups that regard themselves as indigenous and others that historically invaded and established traditional kingdoms of the North.” According to UNDP (2012), “the divide-and-rule tactic of the colonial masters created conditions for deepened mistrust and tensions between ethnic groups” (p. 9). Mbowura and Longi (2016) indicate that many of northern Ghanaian conflicts are colonial conflicts. The argument is that colonial policies and administration have had deciding effect on ethnic groups rising against each other.

The Konkombas conflict with the traditional kingdoms of northern Ghana is one conflict that has called significant attention in the country. The conflict was remotely caused by the demand by the Nanumbas from the Konkombas to “provide free labour on Nanumba chiefs farms; pay tribute such foodstuffs and livestock to Nanumba chiefs; give the hind leg of any animal killed to Nanumba chiefs during funerals; and to refer their disputes to Nanumba for settlement” (Tsikata & Seini, 2004, p. 30). This resulted in the conflict between the Konkomba and Nanumba in 1981. According to Tsikata and Seini (2004), the Konkombas fought for “recognition and self-assertion” (p. 31). A number of other ethnic groups were also drawn into the fight including the Dagombas, Nawuris,

Nchumuru, and the Gonjas (Tsikata & Seini, 2004). Both factions therefore had allies who fought for them (Mohammed, 2018).

Sulemana (2009) described the conflict between the Konkomba and these other traditional kingdoms in northern region as a “struggle for paramountcy and autonomy” (p. 110). Meanwhile, the immediate causes of the conflict were as a result of the deaths of Konkomba cows from the anti-rinderpest immunization which led to the ‘cow war’ in 1940; the contention over a fish pond between the Dagomba and Konkomba which resulted in the ‘fish war’ in 1946; and the 1994 ‘guinea fowl war’ between the Konkomba and Nanumba (Tsikata & Seini, 2004). The 1994 war was very destructive (UNDP, 2012; Tsikata & Seini, 2004; Jönsson, 2007). Jönsson (2007) indicate that thousands of people loss their lives. The security personnel on peacekeeping operation in the area were accused of being biased (Mohammed, 2018). The 1994 ‘guinea fowl war’ remains the bloodiest conflict in Ghana. The striking thing to note is that the Konkombas fought almost all the northern ethnic groups.

The Dagbon conflict is one other conflict in northern Ghana, fought mainly between the Abudus and Andanis royal families. Although the Dagbon conflict has been there for long, the killing of the Ya-Na in 2002 sparked serious violence in the region (WASCI & SIPRI, 2011). Since then the two families have constantly attacked each other leading to loss of lives and properties, insecurity, mistrust and fear in Dagbon, displacement of people and many workers fleeing. The conflict which is over chieftaincy has drawn in national politics. The conflict took a political dimension (WASCI & SIPRI, 2011; UNDP, 2012; Tonah, 2012). According to Tonah (2012), “the royals and educated elites of

Dagbon tend to involve themselves in national politics and often draw their influence in government to attain high traditional office” (p. 1). The effects of the conflict have been devastating.

WASCI and SIPRI (2011) argued that finding lasting solutions for the Dagbon crisis has been difficult. Several interventions were made but failed to yield a resolution and the conflict became intractable (Mahama & Longi, 2013; Ahiave, 2013) until recently in 2019 when a ‘truce’ between the two royal families – the Abudus and Andanis was secured, leading to the Enskinment of a new Ya-Na. However, how do the local people of Dagbon perceive the peace process or intervention? It is important to indicate that the local people’s perceptions of the Dagbon peace process may be useful determinants of whether a resolution has been secured or peace will last. Did the peace process allow the local people to define what forms part of the conflict and the peace process? Failure to find answers these questions is deliberately overlooking what may help to ensure lasting peace in Dagbon.

The Kusasis and the Mamprusis are still ‘fighting’ in Bawku. The Bawku conflict is yet to be resolved. All attempts at a resolution have failed and the conflict has travelled from the colonial era to date, assuming various dynamics. Mbowura and Longi (2016) indicate that the Bawku skin crisis is one of the colonial conflicts in northern Ghana. Ensuring calm in Bawku has not been easy over the years (Anamzoya, 2010). UNDP (2012) described the Bawku conflict as recurrent. There has since been permanent presence of military in the Bawku area (UNDP, 2012). The Bawku conflict is one of the longest running conflicts in Ghana. It has also assumed a political dimension over the years. Now, chiefs appear to lean towards political parties and tend to draw that when their

political party is in power to demand for “supreme position” (WASCI & SIPRI, 2011, p. 5).

Meanwhile, it is argued that political interference tends to further complicate conflict situations and makes it more intractable (UNDP, 2012). The Kusasis-Mamprusi conflict is over who becomes the chief or sits on the skin of Bawku. Attempts by each party to assert what each claims to be their right (the Bawku skin), which gives the power of control over the people and the land, resulted in bloody clashes most of the time (UNDP, 2012; Tsikata & Seini, 2004). Many people have lost their lives and properties from the conflict, relationships have been impaired, development has been slowed and people move around with uncertainty and mistrust. Though women tend to suffer most from conflicts, Mumuni (2016) revealed that “women in Bawku have refused to be victims of the conflict but rather social agents” (p. 7).

In Bimbilla, two princes from the same gate (Gbugmayili) have been fighting over the Bimbilla skin (Anamzoya, 2010; Anamzoya & Tonah, 2012). Both princes held themselves as having been appropriately enskinned as the overlord of Bimbilla by the Kingmakers of Nanum (Anamzoya & Tonah, 2012; Anamzoya, 2010). Anamzoya (2010) argued that there are two unique things in the Bimbilla succession dispute. Anamzoya (2010) indicated that first, “the dispute is intra-gate and [second] inherent power struggle between two powerful kingmakers in the making of the Bimbilla chief” (p. 41).

Despite the devastations presented by the Dagbon, Konkomba and Bawku chieftaincy crises, many communities in northern Ghana still appear not to have learned the lessons of these trajectories. There has been violence since 2019 in Kpatinga in the Gusheigu

municipality of the northern region over a chieftaincy dispute. Since 2019 violence has recurred many times in Kpatinga. Women and children tend to flee anytime the conflict reoccurs (Duncan, 2020). The recent violence in Kpatinga occurred on the 9th of October 2020 leading to shootings and the burning of the Chief's Palace (Joy Online, 2020). It has been reported that the conflict in Kpatinga has left several people displaced and others injured, properties destroyed and others losing their lives (Joy Online, 2020; Duodu, 2020; Duncan, 2020).

UNDP (2012) eulogized the Upper West region as the most peaceful region in Ghana. UNDP (2012) however acknowledged that there existed some pockets of disputes in the Upper West region including the Wellebele and Nadowli chieftaincy disputes. While the Wellebele chieftaincy conflict has been resolved democratically by the people themselves, the Nadowli chieftaincy dispute remains in court (UNDP, 2012) while the Zongo conflict in Nandom (which is the issue under study in this research) appears to have been hidden from the conflict, peace and development discourses and research in Ghana.

UNDP (2012) argued that the conflict situations in northern Ghana are 'disproportionate' to that of conflicts in southern Ghana, stating how poverty, marginalization, and lack of economic opportunities could serve as affordances of violence. According to UNDP (2012) the struggle between the centralized states and a-cephalous states is still responsible for the difficulty in ensuring peace and unity in northern Ghana, because "while the former continue to exert their superiority over the latter, the latter continuous struggle for independence and recognition always cause open confrontations and violent

conflicts” (p. 11). This has been acknowledged by Debrah et al. (2016) when they indicated that the Nawuri-Gonja conflict resulted from the “division of the northern chiefdoms into majority and minority groups” (p. 11). Thus, Debrah et al. (2016) insist that it will be difficult for conflict not to occur so far as people continue to regard others as “minorities” and some as “majorities”.

UNDP (2012) argued how ‘religious and ethnic affiliation’ has been sources of ‘tension’ in northern Ghana. UNDP (2012) and Anamzoya (2010) submitted that though the northern part of Ghana is poor, however, poverty is not the cause of conflicts in the regions. This has been affirmed in an earlier study by Oelbaum (2010) who used the ‘guinea fowl war’ in the northern region to understand the spatial dimensions of poverty and war. Oelbaum (2010) argued that the ‘guinea fowl war’ was not mainly caused by poverty “but rather by pressures related to increasing opportunities for income generation, poverty reduction and national integration under economic reform” (p. v).

The starkest revelation of Oelbaum (2010) is that “the most effective route for escaping poverty – the participation in agriculture markets – also generates conflict [and] conflict in turn generates poverty and reverses economic gains” (p. v). That is, agriculture, which is the means through which the people move out of poverty, became a source of conflict in the Konkomba land. Oelbaum (2010) argued further that “conflict should not necessarily be viewed as a development failure [because it was found] that conflict emerges as a result of development and poverty reduction” (p. vi). Brukum (2001) described that, conflicts in northern region are “wars of emancipation”. Yet, many of the

conflicts in northern Ghana remain unresolved (Osei-Kufuor et al., 2016). The Zongo conflict in Nandom is one of such conflicts.

The review highlight that numerous conflicts have been experienced in northern Ghana. The review also reveal that majority of the conflicts are related to chieftaincy and succession. The 1994 guinea fowl war is the most destructive of all conflicts in northern Ghana, and that of the entire country. The outcomes of most of the conflicts in northern Ghana have been disastrous. The review has highlighted some of the causes of conflicts in northern Ghana. However, the literature remains deficient in providing information on the Zongo conflict in Nandom. Research is yet to document the Zongo conflict in Nandom.

2.6 Conflict Dynamics

Conflicts are not the same. Every conflict has its dynamics. Understanding the conflict dynamics is significant to ensuring effective management of conflict and securing peace (Mahama & Longi, 2013; Penu & Osei-Kufuor, 2016; Mayer, n.d). Mahama and Longi (2013) studied conflicts in northern Ghana and attempted searching for solutions, stakeholders and the way forward. Their work is located within the conflict management discourse. Mahama and Longi (2013) argued that the best way to manage conflicts is to first understand the dynamics of the conflicts. They indicated that such understanding is useful to determining the approaches that are suited for managing particular conflict situations.

Mahama and Longi (2013) argument is informed by their comparative historical analysis of the dynamics of the cases of Bawku, Dabgon, Chuchuliga, and Konkomba conflicts in

northern Ghana. The consequences of these conflicts have been strong on development in the areas, relationships, lives and property and productivity. For instance, the Bawku conflict has assumed different shapes, intensity and patterns throughout, and has been very challenging to resolve and therefore protracted (Bukari, 2013). Yet, the Bawku conflict still remains unresolved. The Bawku area remains a potential ‘volatile’ spot in northern Ghana (Lund, 2003). What is driving the Bawku conflict? Bukari (2013) argued that the Bawku conflict goes beyond chieftaincy to include a fight to protect their identity.

This review agrees with Mahama and Longi (2013) that there is need to approach the resolution of conflicts differently by making use of the indigenous mechanisms in those areas. According to Mahama and Longi (2013), same approaches that were used by intervening parties or groups to resolve the conflicts worked in some of the conflict cases and failed in others. Mahama and Longi (2013) insisted that unless the underlying issues in the Bawku and Dabgon conflicts are dealt with, it would be difficult to secure peace in those areas. The means to unearth these underlying issues in the conflict is analyzing the dynamics involved in the conflict. For Körppen (2006), analysis of a conflict should be the primary thing to do when intervening in the conflict. Körppen (2006) explained why sometimes interventions in conflicts work and failed in others. Körppen (2006) argument is that “interventions are dynamic processes which can produce different results in different cultural contexts” and that it is not enough to “apply theoretical concepts alone” in determining the successfulness and unsuccessfulness of interventions (p 7).

The Dagbon conflict appears to be ‘resolved’. It is yet to be known, how the people of Dagbon perceive the peace process in their land. Understanding the dynamics of the interventions in the four conflict cases is necessary for the search for lasting peace (Mahama & Longi, 2013). Such understanding will also help in adopting or designing approaches or mechanisms appropriate for resolving the conflicts. At the same time, it would help to know what has been or is being overlooked in the management, resolution and transformation of conflicts in the past and to avoid making same mistakes again in the future. Mahama and Longi (2013) work is related to my research because I sought to explore the dynamics involved in the Zongo conflict in Nandom. The dynamics of the conflict are yet to be documented. Thus an understanding of the dynamics in the zongo conflict would help to ensure effective resolution of the conflict and the return of true peace in the Zongo community.

Brorby (2013) did a qualitative study of conflicts within a multicultural organization and found that the dynamics of conflicts in the organization were many and this led to the emergence of different conflict patterns within the organization and among the employees. Brorby (2013) mentioned employees’ expectations, organizational change, multicultural work environment and management as four key categories of dynamics that created the different patterns of conflicts experience in the organization and among employees. Brorby’s (2013) research is relevant to understanding the complexity of interactions within organizations, the behaviours that are produced there and how they are negotiated. Brorby’s study is relevant to my thesis because an understanding of the dynamics of the Zongo conflict would help to ascertain why the conflict is occurring the

way it occurring and the different patterns that are experienced, in order to determine how to approach it.

Brorby's study is located within the conflict discourse and grounded theory. The assumption of Brorby's study is that the different conflict patterns experienced within the organization and among employees are as a result of the interconnectedness and reinforcing nature of the conflict dynamics. This review agrees with the Brorby (2013) that it is difficult for employees in an organization to avoid conflict as long as they interact. This is because conflict is exemplified in our interactions, whether at the level of the individual or the organization or the nation (Gyamera, Duncan, Kuma, & Arko-Adjei, 2016).

Ahiave (2013) conducted a qualitative study of the Dagbon conflict. Ahiave (2013) argued that the interruption of succession to the Ya-Na Skin, political influence or politicization of the conflict, poverty and unemployment are responsible for the emergence and escalation of the Dagbon conflict. This affirms UNDP (2012) argument that whenever political lenses are drawn into a conflict, it tends to make the conflict more difficult to resolve. This is important in understanding perhaps, why for instance the chieftaincy institution in Ghana has been insulated from active party politics. Ahiave (2013) affirmed WASCI and SIPRI (2011) argument that chiefs tend to lean against political parties and to in return, draw that to seek "supreme positions". Ahiave (2013) further indicated how several resolution interventions have been made since the 2002 violence, including military and/or police deployment, the establishment of the Wuaku Commission of Inquiry to investigate the conflict, the mediation by the committee of

Eminent Chiefs and Civil Society Organizations but yielded no resolution. Until 2019, the Dagbon conflict has remained unresolved.

Ahiave's work is located within the conflict and conflict resolution discourse. This review shares in Ahiave (2013) argument that the Dagbon conflict was one of the intractable conflicts in Ghana. Ahiave's study is relevant to contemporary conflict resolution and management as it unearths the causes, dynamics and the reasons for the intractability of the conflict, which serves as useful lessons for addressing the Dagbon conflict and in approaching other conflicts in the country and the future. Ahiave (2013) study is related to my thesis because I seek to understand why the Zongo conflict has ignored all efforts or attempts to resolve it.

Certain factors tend to determine the dynamics that play out in conflicts. Nieuwpoort (2016) studied the dynamics of irregular armed conflicts using the Israeli independence war as a case. His work is located within the conflict analysis paradigm. For Nieuwpoort, the dynamics of irregular armed conflicts are not determined by a single factor. Penu and Osei-Kufuor (2016) similarly put that the dynamics of the Nkonya-Alavanyo conflict are "fluid and could be influenced by so many things" (p. 97). In his work, Nieuwpoort developed an initial fifteen-factor framework – social cleavages, popular support, grievances, local politics, national politics, international politics, natural disasters, state action – coercive force, state action – policy solution, state capacity, strong/weak government, strategy of armed groups, capacity of armed groups, factionalisation, and criminalisation that tends to have deciding effect on the dynamics of conflicts.

Nieuwpoort also unearth that these factors variedly decided on the dynamics of the four conflict cases. Penu and Osei-Kufuor (2016) argued that for peace to be built in conflict situations that are ethnic in nature, it should be ensured that the “peacebuilding efforts are informed by the interwoven factors that bring dynamism and complexities (intractability) to the conflict” (p. 90). Again, although Nieuwpoort (2016) indicated that the factors that influence the dynamics of conflict “interact”, the study could not establish the “direction of interaction” (p. 161). Therefore, a single factor may not give a holistic reflection of the dynamics of conflicts (Nieuwpoort, 2016).

Gati (2008) conducted a study of the dynamics of communal conflicts in the local government system of Ghana using the Adaklu-Anyigbe conflict as a case. Gati described the conflict as “latent generational” and “protracted” (p. ix). According to Gati (2008), identity, socio-economic deprivation, underdevelopment and traditional power struggle were issues involved in the conflict. Gati attributed the escalation of the conflict between the Adaklu and Anyigbe to “failures” on the part of state institutions and that of semi-traditional institutions to address the grievances of the two communities. Gati’s study demonstrated how state-local semi-traditional interaction in Ghana in conflict situations could in itself constitute sources of conflict. Thus, it is important that people seeking to resolve conflicts understand the kind of interaction that is going on between the parties in the conflict and how the parties construct their interactions, in order to determine where and when to enter into the resolution of the conflict.

Gati’s study is relevant to help in stimulating a rethink of how interaction between traditional systems and state systems could be favourably and effectively constructed to

deal with conflicts and prevent escalations. The study is also relevant to shaping decisions on contemporary citing of district assemblies and district capitals and demarcations in Ghana. Again, the review find this study relevant to my thesis as it provides the background to understand how the interaction between the Zongo community and state and traditional institutions could have had deciding effect on the reoccurrence of the Zongo conflict and the difficulty to secure peace in the community. The revelations in Gati (2008), Mahama and Longi (2013), and Ahiave (2013) seem to support that “local actors must define what forms part of the conflict system and what its specific characteristics are” (Körppen, 2006, p. 5).

Meanwhile, it is important to note the importance of conflict analysis in unearthing the dynamics of conflict. Körppen (2006) argued that conflict analysis is the primary activity to do when attempting to intervene in a conflict and suggested that the analysis of the conflict should be informed by what the local people think about the conflict. For instance, when conflicts persist for a long time other issues tend to emerge, thereby changing the dynamics of the conflict (Körppen & Ropers, 2011)

Penu and Osei-Kufuor (2016) revealed some “peace factors” and “tension factors” that have had deciding effect on the dynamics in the Nkonya-Alavanyo conflict. They argued that anytime there is anonymous killing in the area it tends to mar the peace process and makes it difficult for intervention efforts to yield productive outcomes. Thus, Penu and Osei-Kufuor (2016) suggested that setting aside the court decision, and demilitarizing the disputed land could offer windows of opportunities for a lasting resolution to be attained between the Nkonya and Alavanyo communities. Drawing data from six informants and

from secondary source from 1923 to 2015, Penu (2016) discovered that there were violent incidents, increased in peacebuilding efforts, violence have largely been superseded by intervention efforts, there were land related issues, overlapping and emerging identities, mobilizations along ethnic lines and socialization of the younger generation into the conflict. Penu (2016) argued that these were the dynamics occurring in the conflict between the Nkonyas and Alavanyos and are responsible for the complex and protracted nature of the conflict. According to Penu (2016) “violence has shifted from group action to individual action” (p. 124). It is argued that the Nkonya-Alavanyo conflict has implicated the years of inter-marriage between the two communities (Gariba, 2015; Kpormasi, 2013; Adzahlie-Mensah, 2007; Adzahlie-Mensah & Benson, 2018; Mensah, 2013). At a point the Nkonya-Alavanyo conflict became unparalleled to previous occurrences (Gariba, 2015; Kpormasi, 2013; Adzahlie-Mensah, 2007).

Penu (2016) indicated that the court rulings are responsible for the inability to secure resolution of the conflict between the two communities. It is important to state that Penu (2016) findings have been largely amplified in Penu and Osei-Kufuor (2016). Both works demonstrate how dynamics in the conflict have deciding influence on the resolution of the conflict. Their work is also related to my study of the Zongo conflict in Nandom, because the Zongo conflict is proving irresolvable after several attempts by traditional and state bodies failed to yield a resolution. In a perception study of the dynamics of conflicts and peacebuilding in Pakistan, Search for Common Ground (2013) found that the youth tend to be one of the key groups that suffer in conflicts and at the same time they are those who tend to easily resort to violence as a conflict addressing mechanism.

Debrah et al. (2016) revealed complex but intriguing dynamics in the Nawuri and Gonja conflict in northern region. Debrah et al. (2016) found that the conflict impacted differently on the economy, health, psychological, social spheres of the communities and on the life of the people. Debrah et al. (2016) argued that “recovery” from the conflict may take long. Also, Debrah et al. (2016) discovered that the conflict did not only visit strong consequences on the people but also created “tensions that intertwined with many other issues, political and traditional” (p. 21).

The review demonstrates how it is important to understand the dynamics of conflict. The review finds that the dynamics of conflict tend to affect the complexity and dimensions of the conflict. It is important to note that a change in the dynamics of a conflict tend to have deciding effect on the nature and extent of the conflict, intervention efforts and mechanisms for approaching the conflict. The distinctive line in the literature is how they looked at dynamics in conflict. The way people look at the dynamics of a conflict could influence how they understand, approach and manage the conflict.

The review process reveals also that there are different dynamics playing out in the different conflicts in Ghana. Thus, what dynamics are playing out in the Zongo conflict in Nandom? Meanwhile, the consensus in the literature is that understanding conflict dynamics is crucial to managing conflicts. The review again shows that the dynamics of conflict tend to affect the resolution and longevity of the conflict. How could the dynamics in the Zongo conflict help to understand why the conflict remains unresolved or be deciding on the resolution of the conflict?

2.7 Conflict Recurrence

Conflicts in Ghana are recurring and becoming more intractable (Mahama & Longi, 2013; Asamoah; 2014). Research on conflict recurrence is growing. Asamoah (2014) used the Nkonya-Alavanyo conflict as a case to study the threat to peace and stability in Ghana and found that “the constant reoccurrence of the conflict is a consequence of the land being regarded as a traditional heritage that needs to be protected and secured, regardless of the effect” (p. iv). Asamoah (2014) indicated that ethnic conflicts in Ghana are reoccurring constantly. For Asamoah (2014), the peace and stability of Ghana is threatened by such frequent reoccurrence of ethnic conflicts. Anumel (2017) questioned the effectiveness of conflict resolution mechanisms in Ghana. Thus, consensus seems to be emerging on reoccurrence of conflicts in Ghana. For Anumel (2017), the kind of mechanism that is employed to resolve conflicts and how the resolving parties conduct activities around the mechanism could be determinants of whether the conflict would reoccur or not.

In a quantitative study of military purges in non-democracies from 1969 to 2003, Braithwaite and Sudduth (2016) assess how the type of coup-proofing activity affects the likelihood of civil conflict recurrence. Braithwaite and Sudduth (2016) discovered “that purges of high-ranking military officials do in fact help prevent further civil conflict” (p. 1). Braithwaite and Sudduth (2016) then indicated that “purges appear to provide real benefits to dictators seeking to preserve stability, at least in post-conflict environments” (p. 1). In their ‘Conflict recurrence’, Gates et al. (2016) indicate that “war begets war; 60% of all conflicts recur; averagely post conflict peace last for seven years; most conflict onsets have been recurrences since the mid 1990s” (p. 1). This is corroborated by

United Nations University (2017) when it indicated an “increased relapse of conflicts, six-fold increase in battle deaths from 2011 to the time of the study and that 60% of conflicts in the early 2000s relapsed within five years” (p. 2).

Gates et al. (2016) argued that when conflicts recur it is a sign that people’s grievances have not been addressed and that the only way to ensure that peace last is to tackle those concerns. Further, Gates et al. (2016) indicate that “[out] of 259 armed conflicts identified by the Uppsala Conflict Data Program (UCDP), 159 recurred and 100 involved a new group or incompatibility” (p. 1). Gates et al. (2016) then bemoaned how there is a “deepening pattern of conflict recurrence, highlighting that, 135 different countries have also experienced recurring conflict situations” (p. 1). Also, Gates et al. (2016) observed that North Africa, Middle East and Sub-Saharan Africa are responsible for the increase in recurring conflict situations in the world. The factors that tend to make conflict to recur have been documented.

Gates et al. (2016) highlighted some these factors that could make a conflict to recur.

Conflicts recur because:

Conflicts between different ethnic groups strengthen divisions and hatred and make durable peace less likely; poor and underdeveloped countries are more likely to see conflict resumption because groups opposing the state have little to lose; lack of democracy prevents peaceful resolution of conflict; settlements without a clear victory create incentives to continue fighting to improve one’s position; and a lack of a security guarantee provokes resumption as a means to avoid marginalization by antagonistic groups. Lastly, natural resources have been shown to be related to conflict recurrence by exasperating grievances, providing a means of financing rebellion, and increasing the value of controlling the state (Gates et al., 2016, p. 2-3).

When parties to a conflict feel that stoppage of the fight will make them to lose their position or be marginalized, they may continue to fight or resume the fight so that they

could maintain supremacy. Gates et al. (2016) study is important to determine how conflicts in Ghana could be cases of recurrences. The northern region of Ghana exemplifies cases of conflict recurrence (Debrah et al., 2016). Sulemana (2009) surveyed 600 people in northern region to ascertain the people's perceptions of conflicts in the region.

Loyle and Appel (2016) noted that “motivation-addressing processes [were significant] in reducing conflict recurrence” (p. 1). Payne et al. (2017) analyse the relationship between institutional and civil society factors and conflict non-recurrence. Payne et al. (2017) found that “civil wars fought over control of the central government are much more likely to recur than secessionist wars [and that] a victory by one side or the other makes it less likely that civil wars will reoccur within 5 or 10 years” (p. 17). Jackson and Morelli (2009) put that, “war will last until either one side has emerged victorious, or the situation has changed so that the costs of continued conflict have become overwhelmingly high for all sides” (p. 3). Wordofa (2010) acknowledged the threat of new conflicts in Africa and suggest that the only way the region may be able to achieve the MDGs is to take measures to deal with them and that of present conflicts. Collier and Hoeffler (2000) noted that there were frequent recurrences of conflicts in some territories. El-Bushra (2017) observed that “hasty transition from ‘ongoing’ to ‘post’ conflict before addressing the underlying conflict factors satisfactorily” could cause a conflict to persist (p. 4).

Hegre & Nygård (2012) argue that “good governance reduces the likelihood of conflict renewal after conflict has ended; reduces the onset of and incidence of conflict” (p. 1).

The point is that a country whose governance process is good or has improved becomes a disincentive to eruption of conflict. Conflict recurrence could lead to a ‘conflict trap’.

Hegre et al. (2017) revealed that “the conflict trap is even more severe” in recent times (p. 243). In their simulations Hegre et al. (2017) discovered that:

large low-income country with no previous conflicts for two to three years of conflict over the 2015–18 period will have nine more years of conflict over the 2019–40 period than if peace holds up to 2018 [and that] large low-income country that has had major conflict with more than 1,000 battle-related deaths in several of the past ten years [and] succeeds in containing violence to minor conflict over the 2015–18 period will experience five fewer years of conflict in the subsequent 20 years than if violence continues unabated (p. 243).

Annan (2014) is thus worried that “violent conflicts and civil strife” have not been properly understood in West Africa and indicated that this could result in conflict recurrences.

2.8 Threats to Conflict Resolution

Resolving a conflict is not an easy task. It is “complex and multidimensional” (Adzahlie-Mensah & Benson, 2018, p. 9). In their process model of conflict resolution, Adzahlie-Mensah and Benson (2018) indicated that trust and confidence building, resources, patience and understanding of local issues are critical elements of conflict resolution. Adzahlie-Mensah and Benson (2018) observed that overlooking such issues could make resolution of a conflict difficult. Thus, El-Bushra (2017) argue that “conflict and peace [should be thought of] as complex, iterative, many-layered, and dynamic processes” if interventions are to yield productive outcomes (p. 2). It could be very challenging to try to resolve a conflict. In reflecting on the Nkonya-Alavanyo conflict, Kuupiel (2019) argued that a peace process that is not participatory or does not include everyone as well as fail to recognize the role of context, could find it difficult to result maximum

outcomes. Also, Kuupiel (2019) argued the need for reflection in conflict resolution. According to Kuupiel (2019), refusal to reflect could result in the overlooking of some issues or repetition of past mistakes which would constraint the ability to attain a resolution.

Research has reported a number of factors that tend to pose threats to resolution of conflicts. Ahiave (2013) found that lack of justice, mistrust among the Abudus and Andanis, lack of confidence in the peace process and the activities of ‘spoilers’ were responsible for the irresolvable nature of the Dagbon conflict. Conflicts breed mistrust between or among conflicting parties (Adzahlie-Mensah, 2007). Kanda (2019) found that the refusal to follow the “laid-down succession plan” and the interference of politics in the conflict made it difficult for a resolution and lasting peace to be secured. Resolving a conflict where parties do not trust or have faith and confidence in the intervening parties or mechanisms could be challenging to the attainment of lasting peace.

There is consensus that political interference made the resolution of the Dagbon chieftaincy crisis very difficult (Ahiave, 2013; WASCI & SIPRI, 2011; Kanda, 2019; UNDP, 2012). As Jackson and Morelli (2009) argued that “first strike advantage” is a major threat to peace. They explained that when people attack their opponent first and obtain gains becoming offensive, it tends to make it difficult to secure lasting peace as compared to when people know that regardless of whoever attacks first each side will gain equally from the war. Jackson and Morelli insist that “the offensive advantage of war makes wars inevitable” and securing lasting peace daunting. Although Ibrahim et al. (2019) argued that conflict outcomes are not easily ‘predetermined’, Jackson and Morelli

(2009) are of the view that largely, “war outcomes depends on the one who initiates the war” (p. 16).

Kutesa (2009) argued that the threats to resolution of conflicts in Africa are many. Kutesa (2009) and Oguonu and Ezeibe (2014) identified that finance is a major threat to peace efforts in Africa. Rogier (2004) observed that conflicts become more difficult to resolve than anticipated when there is no ‘international involvement’. Johnson (2016) attributed Africa’s successes in management and resolution of conflicts to international involvement. Contrarily, Aall (2015) indicated that “outside help has not been reliable” (p. 1). The ‘overestimation’ of conflicts ‘over peace efforts’ by the media (Grasa & Mateos, 2010) is worrying and could make achievement of resolution to take long.

The resolution of a conflict could become challenging when there is “state failure, apparent resistance to peace efforts and proliferation of warring parties” (Rogier, 2004, p. 5). Ducasse-Rogier (2004) explained that state “failure create political and security vacuum; increase in warring parties jeopardize mediation efforts; belligerents’ interest in the continuation of the conflict and badly intentioned neighbours” pose threats to resolution of conflicts (p. 9). Although conflict management is a contemporary ‘necessity’ (PIN Points, 2002), Madalina (2016) puts that management of conflict is now the new challenge in every organization. It is noted that “one important concern of today is the difficulty dealing with intrastate conflicts that may affect international peace and order” (Gody, 2012, p. iii).

2.9 Conflict Actors

In conflict, there are always various individuals, institutions and groups that play different roles in the conflict. How each of the different people in the conflict act could have a deciding effect on how the conflict would pan out, develop, or last. The way they act in the conflict could also determine the frequency, and pattern of the conflict and tactics employed therein. Adzahlie-Mensah, Golo and Gyamfuaa-Abrefa (2016) in discussing some issues to consider when approaching conflict prevention, highlight actors in conflict as important interacting part of every conflict. Adzahlie-Mensah et al. (2016) work is located within the conflict prevention paradigm or theory. Their work is significant to aiding contemporary approach to conflict prevention and in returning attention to how powerful, actors, issues, timing and context of every conflict is, in the conflict prevention and management space.

Adzahlie-Mensah et al. (2016) argued that “actors are people whose interests, needs and identities are at stake” in a conflict (p. 179). Adzahlie-Mensah et al. (2016) put forward that there should be a process – actor mapping, to identify and clarify those whose interests and needs that are at stake in the conflict. They furthered that such a process would help to unearth people in the community who are “opposed” to the conflict; the political way of life of the people; conflict spoilers; independent groups and personalities who are all playing varied roles and contributing variedly in the conflict process. Thus, for Adzahlie-Mensah et al. (2016), understanding the various identities, power relations and how they are interacting in the conflict are necessary and key for preventing, managing and resolving conflict.

According to Stedman (1999), in every conflict “there are external actors that aid and abet the factions in the conflict” (p. 4). Stedman (1999) argued that such external elements could be humanitarian groups, international financial institutions, peacekeepers, “well-intentioned mediators”, among others. Stedman (1999) seems to suggest that there are some mediators who tend to intervene in conflict with intentions that are detrimental to the prevention, management and resolution of the conflict.

Von Uexkull and Pettersson (2018) studied organized violence from 1989-2011 to unearth the issues and actors involved. Their work is significant in understanding the causes, dynamics and the effects of nonstate armed conflict in the African region. Pearlman and Cunningham (2011) “define a nonstate actor as an organized political actor not directly connected to the state but pursuing aims that affect vital state interests” (p. 1). Von Uexkull and Pettersson (2018) found 401 nonstate actors with “16% having religious identity” (p. 10). Also, Von Uexkull and Pettersson (2018) reveal that the “livelihood of actors shaped their identity, their communal needs and opportunities to compromise with another group rather than as income source of the group” (p.11). Pearlman and Cunningham (2011) observed that “the interaction of the nonsate actor and the external environment, and the divided character of the nonstate actor could produce opportunities [affordances] and constraints” (p. 5). That is, the livelihood of actors informed actor’s identities, needs, and interests and their willingness to give in to some of their demands in the conflict. Meanwhile, Von Uexkull and Pettersson (2018, p. 11) put forward that:

Actors providing external support to a warring party can be governments, either the national government or foreign governments, as well as groups residing in or outside the country in which the nonstate conflict is taking place.

Pearlman and Cunningham (2011) mentioned “nationalist and selfdetermination movements, rebel groups, and warlords” as typologies of nonstate conflict actors (p. 4). These various types of actors impact differently on the conflict process. Thus, Von Uexkull and Pettersson (2018) argued that the actors that tend to “impact greatly on the violent mobilizations by the nonstate actor and the dynamics of the conflict are usually external governmental actors” (p. 11). For Arasli (2011), state actors are stronger than nonstate actors in terms of what they seek to achieve and their ability to achieve those goals.

Noteworthy, Pearlman and Cunningham (2011) sought an understanding of how actor fragmentation and divisions could decide on the conflict processes. Pearlman and Cunningham (2011) argued that the “size, complexity and identities” of actors is dependent on how fragmented the groups are. Further, Pearlman and Cunningham (2011) argued that fragmentation within groups that share the same identity could affect the extent to which members participate in mobilizations for the success of the group’s goal. Pearlman and Cunningham (2011) indicate that the extent to which a conflict can be resolved is impacted on by fragmentation of actors. Again, they added that the fragmentation of actors tend to determine the emergence and role of new actors as well as the pursuance of collective action in the conflict (Pearlman & Cunningham, 2011).

Understanding the actors in the conflict, the roles they play, how they relate, their source(s) of power, their influence and interests in the conflict is important to aid understanding and approach to the conflict (Grönberg, Ring & Persson, 2011). For Grönberg et al. (2011), states, organizations or individuals could serve as actors in

various capacities in a conflict. Grönberg et al. (2011) argue that some actors could be opposing or supporting the conflict. Grönberg et al. (2011) further argue that actors can be at various levels and playing varied roles and thus identifying and categorizing them could be useful understanding the “connector-divider” interaction in the conflict.

Again, Grönberg et al. (2011) argue how perspective can influence how an actor is viewed – as a divider or a connector. Thus, the role an actor plays in a conflict could be viewed differently depending on the individual. Grönberg et al. (2011) explain that while people outside the conflict society may view an actor as supportive of the conflict those within the conflict society could see the actor as opposed to the conflict.

The consensus in the literature is that the interaction between the various actors in a conflict tends to affect the dynamics of the conflict. The review also reveals how the interaction among conflict actors has an influencing effect on the resolution, prevention and management of conflicts. Yet, it has not been established who the actors in the Zongo conflict are and how their interaction could have had an influencing effect on the difficulty in resolving the Zongo conflict in Nandom.

2.10 Theoretical Framework

This section discusses the theory that the study draw upon to inform the research. My search strategy was informed by the research questions of the study. After an account of the theories, the study find dynamic system theory as significantly useful and appropriate for explaining and grounding my research.

2.10.1 Dynamic Systems Theory (DST)

This research draws upon the dynamic systems theory (The DST) to explain the dynamics, interactions and changes in the Nandom Zongo conflict. DST is traceable to *General Systems Theory* by Ludwig von Bertalanffy (Schwaninger, 2005) with roots from mathematics, for instance, from the works of Henri Poincaré and Isaac Newton (Schwaninger, 2005; Holmes, 2007; Cummins, 2012; Aubin & Dalmedico, 2002).

According to Thelen and Smith (2005, p. 258), the DST

grows directly from advances in understanding complex and nonlinear systems in physics and mathematics, but it also follows a long and rich tradition of systems thinking in biology and psychology. The term *dynamic systems*, in its most generic form, mean systems of elements that change over time. The more technical use, *dynamical systems*, refers to a class of mathematical equations that describe time-based systems with particular properties.

However, the theory has found usage in the social sciences in recent times to understand the complex interactions and behaviours in humans and the consequences of those interactions. The application of theory to studying human development dates back to the 1990s (Lunkenheimer, 2018). DST holds that, “systems operate and change within a larger environmental context [and] that systems are organized as hierarchies” (Lunkenheimer, 2018, p. 3). The theory also recognizes that there are variations and changes in conflict, in terms of actors, interactions and relationship, and treats those changes in the conflict as “potentially informative data” (Lunkenheimer, 2018, p. 3). This theory explains that a system is made up of several interacting elements (such as actions, feelings, emotions) which changes over time, thereby creating a pattern of behaviour (van Geert, 2011; Lunkenheimer, 2018; Thelen & Smith, 2005). The DST would help to understand what dynamics are playing out in the Zongo conflict, the forms and shapes the conflict is taking and the patterns that are emerging from it. The application of the theory

is that a conflict that is dynamic is open, where there is continuous interaction with the “surrounding environment” thereby generating new conflict forms and patterns.

Thus, conflicts are not static; they change in degree, intensity and scale. They involve various actors with varying interests and needs. By drawing upon DST, this study would be able to determine how variations and changes in the conflict patterns and dynamics could have contributed to the difficulty in resolving the Nandom Zongo conflict. The theory would help to understand the dynamism and complexities in the zongo conflict and how they interact, influence each other and change as the conflict develops. DST is useful in studying nonlinear and complex processes (van Geert, 2011; Lunkenheimer, 2018). Conflict is a complex dynamic process. The theory acknowledges that small issues can impact conflicts hugely. The conflict system tends to form attractors, influencing behaviours in the conflict and makes the conflict to occur in particular ways that are complex. The recurrence and complexity of the conflict tends to depend on how those behaviours are reinforced, self-organized or perpetuated and functional.

Thus, as the conflict develops and new issues are introduced, the attractors tend to change. That is, for instance, the interaction between the factions in the Nandom Zongo conflict could change when issues such as “majority” and “minority” is introduced in the conflict. Using this theory allows me to determine and understand how the various elements in the Nandom Zongo conflict are interacting dynamically over time and to determine the factors driving the seemingly irresolvable nature of the conflict. Contemporary conflict research in Ghana has indicated the usefulness of DST in explaining and analyzing conflict dynamics. Penu (2016) employed the dynamic systems

theory to explain the dynamics in the Nkonya-Alavanyo conflict so that peace could be built. Penu (2016) unearthed interesting dynamics that are relevant to understanding contemporary complexities associated with conflicts.

2.11 Summary of Literature

The review reveals that conflict is not an uncommon human experience. The review shows complex dynamics in conflicts in Ghana and elsewhere. It shows how understanding of the dynamics of conflict is useful to the resolution of the conflict and determining approaches to conflict. However, the literature was deficient in providing data on the dynamics of the Zongo conflict in Nandom. Given the importance of conflict dynamics to conflict resolution, an understanding of the dynamics of the Nandom Zongo conflict could ensure that resolution is secured. Again, the review reveals that literature on conflicts in northern Ghana is flourishing, however, the Nandom Zongo conflict appears to have been hidden from the conflict and peace research. The review shows that conflict resolution is complex, iterated, multidimensional and difficult process that tends to be affected by many factors. The review could find in the literature the factors that are making the resolution of the Zongo conflict in Nandom very difficult to resolve. So, what is responsible for the unresolved Zongo conflict in Nandom? To be able to explain what is happening in the Zongo conflict, the chapter discussed how dynamic systems theory is useful and appropriate in that regard.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

3.0 Introduction

This chapter deals with the methodology, that is, the overall approach to studying the phenomena (Neville, 2007). It details how the research was conducted, what it employed in conducting the research, when the research was conducted, how the findings were reported, who was involved in the research and where the research is located. Specifically, the chapter discusses the research design, setting of the study, population, research methods, sample and sampling technique, delimitation of the study, data collection procedure, data analysis and ethical considerations. It also highlights and addressed my positionality in the study.

3.1 Philosophical underpinning of the research

The thesis is informed by the interpretative paradigm and constructionist epistemology. The research believes that people's thoughts, behaviour, and attitudes are not always easily measurable. At the same time, people's ascribed meanings to activities, events, and things may not necessarily represent meanings others give to those same events or activities. People interpret things and events differently. One cannot therefore easily predict the ways people will act or behave. Thus, one can only have a better understanding of people's behaviour from their own perspectives. As a social constructionist, I do not only believe that individuals develop subjective meanings of their experiences, but also share Creswell's (2014, p. 8) argument that such "meanings are varied and multiple" making researchers to seek understanding of the "complexity" of participants' views. For Creswell (2014, p. 8), meaning is "socially and historically

negotiated”; “formed through interaction with others and through historical and cultural norms” in one’s life. My research work studied the conflict among the Zongo people of Nandom. Not all Zongo people in Nandom will have the same interpretation of the conflict in their community. Their perspectives, experience and associated behaviour about the conflict will not always be the same.

Thus, the research studied the Zongo conflict in Nandom from within (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2007; Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2018). For instance, it is insisted that “...understanding of individuals’ interpretations of the world around them has to come from the inside, not the outside” (Cohen et al., 2007). It is on the premise of my beliefs and position about human behaviour that my thesis was informed by the subjectivist paradigm. This paradigm holds that behaviour should be understood from the participants’ own perspectives (Neville, 2007; Creswell, 2014; Cohen et al., 2018; Adzahlie-Mensah, Agordah & Gyamfuaa-Abrefa, 2017). The study believes that the Zongo conflict in Nandom can best be understood from the viewpoint of the Zongo people in Nandom who are involved in the conflict (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2000). The study can only make better sense of the conflict from the inside and not the outside (Smith & Caddick, 2012; Madill & Gough, 2008; Cohen et al., 2000). While allowing me to have a holistic understanding of the conflict, this philosophical leaning has helped me to recognize my connection with the phenomenon (Zongo conflict in Nandom) I was studying (Adzahlie-Mensah et al., 2017). I do not see myself as separated from the researched (Smith & Caddick, 2012). For that reason, my research report was the outcome of a process of interaction between me and the zongo people (Smith & Caddick, 2012).

3.2 Research Approach

This study was approached qualitatively. The study focused on the use of a case study to explore and understand the Zongo conflict in Nandom from the perspectives of the Zongo people and other stakeholders in Nandom (Neville, 2007; Madill & Gough, 2008; Smith & Caddick, 2012; Creswell, 2014). The focus of qualitative approach is on gaining understanding of what meaning participants ascribe to a social or human problem (Creswell, 2014). “Subjective meanings and context” are usually the focus in qualitative research (Smith & Caddick, 2012: 61). Qualitative research emphasizes on quality (Adzahlie-Mensah et al., 2017; Ary, Jacobs & Sorensen, 2010). My thesis explored how the conflict is experienced and given meaning (Adzahlie-Mensah et al., 2017). My research process involved open-ended questions, and the study collected the data in participant’s own context, and made sense of the data (Creswell, 2014).

By qualitative, the study sought the understanding of the conflict and why things are the way they are in the Zongo community in Nandom (Degu & Yigzaw, 2006). The study collected data through interacting with the Zongo people and other stakeholders in Nandom, by being with them, interviewing them and observing them and the environment. In this research, the study was interested in the multiple meanings that the Zongo people in Nandom attached to the conflict and sought to identify, describe and make sense of the structures, spaces and processes that shape those meanings (Smith & Caddick, 2012). To make good sense of the meanings the Zongo people in Nandom ascribe to the conflict, I had to be present in the community and with them. The data published in this work was informed by a “holistic and depth understanding” of the views, experiences and perspectives of the Zongo people and some stakeholders in

Nandom on the conflict, rather than quantifications or numeric analysis of the conflict (Ary, Jacobs & Sorensen, 2010, p. 29). As such, this work studied the Zongo conflict in Nandom in totality and not breaking it into variables. This approach allowed the research participants to share their thoughts, feelings and experiences on the conflict and why it has been difficult to resolve. Qualitative approach brought the Zongo people's voices to the fore and to inform the discourses on or around conflict resolution and peace-building.

Approaching this thesis qualitatively revealed great insights into the conflict because the study explored the Zongo people's perspectives on the conflict or asked them to reflect on their experiences (Biggerstaff, 2012). This approach aided my departure from the positivistic analysis of data. As a qualitative researcher, the study believes that "people's lives, societies and cultures are complex" and in order to understand them in complex ways, the study drew a small number of research participants for my thesis (Smith & Caddick, 2012, p. 61). For that reason, the study chose people who could provide my research with rich information on the Zongo conflict in Nandom. Employing a qualitative approach also helped me to fulfill my goal of understanding or gaining insights into the conflict. As an interpretivist, this approach gave me the opportunity to be with my study participants. My belief is that an interpretive qualitative study is ideal for discovering and understanding the perspectives of the Zongo people about the conflict (Merriam et al., 2002). It afforded me the opportunity to have a face-to-face interaction with the Zongo people. I spent two weeks interviewing research participants as well as observing them and the community. Interviews were in-depth. My motivation for approaching this research qualitatively was due to the fact that there is no research that has sought and made sense of the perspectives of the Zongo people about the Zongo conflict in Nandom.

The departure from positivistic approach was thus informed by the lack of in-depth scholarship on the Zongo conflict in Nandom and my goal to produce a thesis report that gives the Zongo people a voice.

3.3 Research design

My work studied the Zongo conflict in Nandom in depth through collecting meaning data (Adzahlie-Mensah, 2013). The study was conducted using a qualitative case study design which afforded me the opportunity to study the Zongo conflict in Nandom in depth. Case studies involve having a sustained-detailed study of a phenomenon (Ary et al., 2010). Case study seeks to produce “detailed description and understanding” of a unit or case (Ary et al., 2010). Thus, in this research the focus was on the depth of the Zongo people’s perspectives and lived experiences and not the breadth. The study therefore made sense of the Zongo people’s views about the conflict “through detailed contextual analysis” of their experiences and perspectives and how they interact or relate (Adzahlie-Mensah et al., 2017, p. 53).

As a design for my thesis, case study helped me to understand the conflict as a complex phenomenon that requires detailed contextual analysis of the conditions within it and allowing me to use a variety of methodologies to explore and understand the complexity of the conditions within the conflict (Ary et al., 2010; Adzahlie-Mensah et al., 2017). Case study permits multiple methods of collecting data (Ary et al., 2010). Data was collected over a sustained period through personal interviews and observation. This design suited my philosophy as an interpretive researcher and allowed me to draw meaning from participants’ perspectives. Due to little knowledge on the Zongo conflict in

Nandom, this design helped me to provide a detailed description of the dynamics involved in the conflict, the actors in the conflict and their interests and the threats to the resolution process. In qualitative case studies, a case can be a program, an individual, an institution, an event, a community or a process (Creswell, 2014; Ary et al., 2010; Cohen et al., 2007). This research took and studied the Zongo conflict as a case because “it offers a unique example of real people in real situations” (Cohen et al., 2007, p. 253).

Designing this research as a case study allowed me to both observe and study the research participants from their real context, and to recognize context as having a powerful influence on the experiences of the research participants (Cohen et al., 2007). In qualitative research, the context or setting where the views, thoughts, feelings, attitudes, experiences, perceptions or emotions are emanating is important to understanding the behaviours or the phenomenon in that context. This is because context is “unique and dynamic” (Cohen et al., 2007, p. 253). Thus my choice of a case study design was informed by this dynamism and uniqueness of the Zongo conflict in Nandom, and this helped me to study the conflict from the Zongo people’s perspective and lived experiences in order that, the “complex dynamism and unfolding interactions” within the conflict can be uniquely reported (Cohen et al., 2007, p. 253; Ary et al., 2010; Adzahlie-Mensah et al., 2017). As such, the emphasis was on why the Zongo people think the conflict remains unresolved and how those perspectives change as they interact with the environment (Ary et al., 2010). Meanwhile, research has shared the three types of case studies highlighted by Stake (1994): *intrinsic* – to understand a particular issue, perhaps because of its uniqueness or unusualness; *instrumental* – provides insights to help

understand other issue(s); and *multiple or collective* – many cases that are studied to understand an issue further and in full (Ary et al., 2010; Cohen et al., 2007).

This study was also designed as a qualitative case study because much is not known about the Zongo conflict in Nandom; research is yet to report and bring the voices of the Zongo people in Nandom to inform discourses on conflict resolution. Adzahlie-Mensah et al. (2017) indicate that case studies are very useful in situations where there is no previous research or where little is known about the phenomenon. Therefore, this design was employed to provide a holistic, rich and in-depth understanding of the perspectives of the Zongo people in Nandom, thus allowing me to depart from the mere presentation of abstract ideas, principles or theories, to providing a clear and deeper understanding of the Zongo conflict in Nandom. By using a case study design, the study draws upon varied methods and/or relied on different sources to conduct the study (Adzahlie-Mensah et al., 2017). Therefore, this research emphasized quality and intensity but not quantity (Cohen et al., 2007). By designing this research as a case study, I was not only able to study the Zongo people's perceptions now, but was also able to probe their past, environment, emotions, feelings or thoughts (Ary et al., 2010).

3.4 The Study Context

The Nandom Zongo community is predominantly Muslims with few Christians residing within the community. The Zongo community is made up of many different ethnic groups, including the Moshi, Dagomba, Fulani, Wangara, Sisaala, Zambarma, and the Waala and all of them have their chiefs who oversee the welfare of the group. These different groups are settlers who came from different parts of Ghana and outside Ghana.

Many of the people in the Zongo community are into trading. The Nandom Zongo community is located in the capital of the Nandom Municipality – one of the eleven Local Assemblies that make up the Upper West Region. The district lies in the north-western corner of the Upper West Region of Ghana between Longitude 2°25W and 2°45W and Latitude 10°20N and 11°00S. It is bounded to the East and South by the Lambussie and Lawra Districts respectively and to the North and West by the Republic of Burkina Faso (See figure 3.1). The total area of the District is put at 404.6 square km (Ghana Statistical Service, 2014).

According to the 2010 population and housing census, it has a population size of approximately 46,040 (Ghana Statistical Service, 2014). Religiously, 85.7% are Christians, 6.6% are Muslims, 1.0% are traditionalists, and 2.0% belonging to no religion (Ghana Statistical Service, 2014). In the District, 85.3% of households are engaged in agriculture. With regard to school facilities, the District has four (4) private basic schools, sixty-nine (69) public basic schools, two (2) Senior High Schools, and three (3) Vocational/Technical Schools. Considering the topography of the district, it is rolling with a few hills ranging between 180 metres and 300 metres above sea level. In terms of the drainage features of the district, it is drained by mainly the Black Volta to the West and its several tributaries like the Kamba/Dangbang and Kokoligu-baa.

Figure 3.1 District Map of Nandom



Source: Ghana Statistical Service, GIS, 2014.

3.5 Population

Research population is concerned with the individual units to be studied (Degu and Yigzaw, 2006). The population in my thesis included the actors involved in the Zongo conflict in Nandom.

3.6 Sample and sampling technique

The study collected data from 10 participants. The participants were drawn from the Zongo people and other key stakeholders in Nandom. Purposive sampling technique was used to draw the participants for the study. Purposive sampling was employed because not everyone within the Zongo community in Nandom has the required knowledge and experience that the study sought to explore, hence the need to select people who possess the required and necessary knowledge and experience about the Zongo conflict in Nandom. Participants who meet the selection criteria are usually used in purposive sampling (Alvi, 2016). Therefore, my thesis believe that since the elders or chiefs of the Zongo people are those who are directly involved in the conflict, then they are those who possess the required and necessary experience about the conflict, and are thus the people capable of providing this research with the relevant and needed information.

The use of purposive sampling in drawing my research participants afforded me the opportunity to only select those who possess significant information about the conflict. The study interacted with six (6) key persons (elders and chiefs) from the two factions involved in the conflict. As leaders of the groups in the Zongo community, they speak on behalf of their group and as such are representative of the different groups or community. When I got to the field and contacted a gate keeper in the Zongo community and explained the purpose of my visit, he introduced me to the people who could provide my research with significant information about the Imamship struggle. Most of the people he introduced me to were the elders and chiefs in the community. Even some of the people he introduced me to were not elders or chiefs but whom he believed could provide me with much useful information ended up referring me to their elders and chiefs hence, my

choice of the elders and chiefs as my research participants. One (1) traditional leader in the Nandom paramountcy who was once involved in attempting a resolution of the conflict was also involved in the study. The study also interacted with three (3) 'keepers' of the Nandom stool as a group, whose land on which the Zongo people sit. The study was convinced that all these category of respondents possess the required knowledge and experience about the conflict and are the appropriate people to draw information from if seeking to understand the conflict in the Zongo community of Nandom. The number of respondents selected for the study was also appropriate and significant to offer the research the information that is required to answer the research questions and to address the research issue. Penu (2016) in a qualitative study of the dynamics in the Nkonya-Alavanyo conflict used six research participants and obtained information that is relevant to the contemporary understanding of conflict dynamics.

3.7 Research methods

Data collection was mainly collected using interviews and observations. Interviews were conducted using semi-structured interviews and the questions were open-ended, allowing research participants to voice their views and experiences. Questions on the interview guide were such that they addressed the research questions guiding the study (see appendix A). My study sought to find answers to specific questions which were interested in the dynamics and actors in the conflict and the threats to the resolution of the conflict. The study asked questions that led the research participants to provide information that is needed in the thesis. The study therefore designed the interview guide in a way that it sought participants' views and experiences on specific questions. While having one-on-one interviews with the research participants, I was equally observing the Zongo

community and the participants – their interactions, use of language, behaviour, posture and/or facial expression, conduct of events or activities and the manner in which they are conducted. An observation jotter was employed to take down notes when observing.

3.8 Data Collection Procedure

The study interviewed participants to gain insights into the Zongo conflict in Nandom. I had a pre-data collection conference with my supervisor to discuss my research instruments and the whole research process. This prepared me intellectually and psychologically for the field. Also, the study obtained an introduction letter from the Centre for Conflict, Human Rights and Peace Studies, University of Education, Winneba to which I identify and presented to the research participants as a proof of my studentship and my research being purely academic. Upon getting to the field, I looked for a gatekeeper of the Zongo community and introduced myself to the person and the purpose of my visit. For the purposes of confidentiality, the study decided not to mention the person's position in the community. The letter of introduction and a copy of the interview guide were presented to the gatekeeper. After going through the letter, the gatekeeper told me that he would inform the elders of the community and get back to me. The Muslim community has high regard for hierarchy and their elders; no one is allowed to speak to an outsider on an issue of such nature unless permitted by the elders or chiefs. Three days later, I called the gatekeeper and he said the elders have been informed and have agreed to respond to my research. The gatekeeper also introduced me to the key persons of the factions in the conflict to interact with them, indicating that they are the people who can give me correct information about the conflict. The informed consent of my research participants was verbally sought before commencing data collection. Also, before the

commencement of any interview, participants were asked to give their verbal consent again so as to ascertain whether a participant wants to continue with the research or not. That is, participants were asked whether they wish to still partake in the research. Only participants who consented were interviewed.

3.8.1 Interviews

I began the interviews as soon as participants consented to participate in the research. During interview sessions a mobile phone was used to record (with the participants consent) all discussions throughout the interviews to avoid data loss. All the participants consented to the tape recording of the discussions. Research participants were asked specific open ended questions addressing the research questions guiding the study. Participants were probed to clarify statements and issues they raised during interview sessions that appear ambiguous. Questions were asked in a language and at a level that the research participants understood better to avoid inaccurate responses and to ensure that the study sought the needed information. Participants were made ware that they can choose to opt out of the study in the course of data collection. All the interviews were conducted in participants' own chosen location. Meanwhile, it was very challenging scheduling interview times with some of the research participants. Sometimes interview date and time may be reached with a participant and upon reaching there the person has travelled or is attending to the community issues. On one occasion, an interview was scheduled with a research participant at 1:30 PM at his house. Thus, at 11:30 AM, I set off on a motorbike to his house and got there at 11:55 AM. Upon arrival I called to let him know I was already around but the participant told me he has travelled a neighbouring community to attend a funeral and would be back late in the evening and

thus rescheduled the interview to the following day. The interview was rescheduled several times and finally, on the fifth time we were able to interact.

The study interviewed only the elders of the Zongo community because most of the people who were initially contacted declined and indicated that their elders speak on their behalf in such matters and that I should contact their elders or chiefs if the study wants much or 'correct' information about the conflict. That is, after the gatekeeper introduced me to potential participants, many of them referred me to their chiefs and elders. During the interview data collection, I intermittently paused after two interviews and took some days off. This helped me to reflect on my entire data collection process, my practices and to challenge my held beliefs, opinions and thoughts about the conflict, allowing me to question my actions and practices in the field.

It also helped me to identify issues that the study may be overlooking as well as new and developing issues from the data that need further investigation to obtain a comprehensive data to inform my discussions in the thesis. Again, such pauses afforded my thesis participants to also think through their participation process. Such a reflective moment helped them assess themselves, their contribution to the research and the whole research process, which would help them to decide whether to withdraw their data from the research process or to maintain it. Respondents who decided to withdraw from the research process were not stopped.

Participants have the right to withdraw data or to provide additional data later to the research even after an interview has been terminated. Therefore, my thesis participants were made aware of their right to withdraw data or from the research process, provide

additional information to the research or terminate the research process without providing any reason for doing so. The study observed ethical guidelines and address all ethical issues in going about collecting the data. Also, all Covid-19 protocols were observed while interviewing the research participants. The study collected data in a manner that it did no harm. The study used two weeks to complete the interviews with all the participants. Interviews lasted between 10 minutes and 45 minutes.

3.8.2 Observation

The study began the observation as soon as I entered the Zongo community through to the entire period of interviews with participants. The setting and the people of the Zongo community and their interactions were observed. The study observed how events such as marriage ceremonies, prayers, are organized and participated in. The study was also interested in the use of language and expressive body movements such as body posture or facial expression during interviews and the interactions among the Zongo people. The study observed “what is being said, how it is being said and the tone of conversation among participants” (Adzahlie-Mensah et al., 2017). The study employed note taking to record observations. Aside observations during interviews with participants, I equally observed the community. I visited the community at different times – during Friday prayers, marriages ceremonies, naming ceremonies, early in the morning, afternoon, during the evening and the night (not exceeding 10pm). The study took two days break each week and this allowed me to think through the data and the research process.

3.9 Data Analysis

I transcribed the data collected throughout the interviews after the interviews with the participants. The study started data analysis as soon as it began data collection and this allowed for developing issues to be factored in the study. The study compared interviews using the Constant Comparison Method (Anfara, Brown, & Mangione, 2002) which allowed me to be making sense of the data simultaneously with data collection. As such, the study did not treat the analysis and data collection as two separate activities. The study was analyzing the data while data collection was in process. This helped me to know the kind of questions to probe in subsequent interviews. It also enabled me to address issues arising from the data and not to overlook them. Since the study sought answers to specific questions in the study, I coded the data, categorized them and formed themes that emerged from the data addressing them. The study made sense of the data through thematic template analysis. I first read through the transcribed data of all the interviews. Then I coded the data by underlining things in the data set that the study hold relevant or is likely to help understand the research questions.

The study used the themes from the data set to develop an initial template based on the research questions of the study and applied it to further data (observation data) and modified when seems necessary. The process was iterative and the final template was developed. It was based on this final template (see appendix B) that the findings of the study were published, discussed and interpreted. The study described each theme and provided a quote or quotes to buttress the finding. By using template analysis, the study was able to acknowledge each participant experience(s) and at the same time addressing my research issue. Noteworthy, template analysis is not a separate method of data

analysis but a form of making sense of data thematically (Brooks & King, 2014; Brooks et al., 2015). According to Waring and Wainwright (2008, p. 86), “[template analysis] emerged from grounded theory and interpretive phenomenological analysis”. As a form of thematic analysis, it afforded me the opportunity to ‘clearly, systematically yet flexibly’ analyse my data (Brooks et al., 2015). It is also “modifiable to different study needs, adaptable to different research topics and can be used from a range of different epistemological and methodological positions” (Brooks et al., 2015, p. 217).

Template analysis can be employed for both within and across case analysis (Waring & Wainwright, 2008; Brooks et al., 2015; Brooks & King, 2014). Meanwhile, the study acknowledged that using this technique of data analysis has certain limitations including “some loss of holistic understanding of in relation to individual accounts” (Brooks et al., 2015, p. 218). In addressing that the study draw upon the summaries of the experiences shared by the individual respondents in the research to illustrate a path of thinking. This technique of making sense of data acknowledges the multiple perspectives the Zongo people in Nandom give to the conflict. In the end, the study acknowledged the individual Zongo person experience and provided a rich and holistic understanding of the Zongo conflict in Nandom.

3.10 Research rigor

The study ensured that the quality of data collected was rigorous. Rigor in qualitative research concerns with the extent to which the data emerging from the study is credible, dependable, transferable and confirmable (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Ary et al., 2010; Cohen et al., 2007; Cohen et al., 2018). In addressing the issue of rigor in my thesis, the

study made sure that the data collected was credible, trustworthy, transferable and confirmable. “Credibility in qualitative research concerns the truthfulness of the inquiry’s findings. It also involves how well the researcher has established confidence in the findings based on the research design, participants, and context” (Ary et al., 2010, p. 498). In addressing the issue of credibility, the study used more than one method (interviews and observation) to obtain the data for the study. Thus, data was obtained from different sources. The different data sources (interviews and observation) showed, as Ary et al. (2010) indicated, ‘convergence’ or ‘corroboration’ of the major themes that emerged from the data (see chapter 4).

Also, the study reported the accurate meaning the Zongo people ascribe to the conflict. I made sure that my thesis report is a reflection or representation of participants’ thoughts, experiences, views and feelings. As such, in reporting the results the study made use of verbatim or direct quotations to support and strengthen the themes that emerged from the data. The study is thus a ‘thick’ description of participants’ experiences and this would enable readers of my thesis report to have an understanding and appreciation of the situations of the research participants. Again, throughout the study and data collection process, I constantly engaged in self-reflection to recognize and question biases that I might be holding which could influence the study. I bracketed all my thoughts and feelings while going to the field. Apart from the research process, there was no other tool the study carried to the field.

Also, in ensuring that the data collected was trustworthy, the study purposively selected and interviewed the elders and chiefs of the Zongo community. As key actors and leaders

in the Zongo community, the elders and chiefs possess significant information about the conflict and thus information they provide on the Zongo conflict can be dependable. At the same time, I established good relationship with my research participants and explained the whole research process to them and the benefits and dangers associated in participating in the study. This built trust between me and the research participants and made them to provide the study with credible, accurate and trustworthy information on the Zongo conflict. Aside interviewing the chiefs and elders of the Zongo community, the study used two methods (interviews and observation) as indicated earlier, to collect the data. The study coded and recoded the data twice. After the first coding, the analysis process was paused and later recoded the data for the second time to develop the final template (see appendix B) for the analysis of the results. The coding process was iterated. The study subjected the research participants to the same interview guide and process. All the participants were asked the same questions and in the same ordering as it is on the interview guide. This, according to Silverman (1993) as cited in Cohen et al. (2007) would ensure that the study is reliable. Also, the same electronic recorder was used to record the interviews with all the participants. I was neutral and reflected throughout the data collection process and presentation of results. Thus, the issue of confirmability was addressed.

Furthermore, the study described in detail the research process including the research approach, design, context, collection and analysis of the data, thereby making it possible for other researchers to subject it to other situations. I also discussed the entire research process with my supervisor. The pre-data collection conference with my supervisor helped to shape the research instrument in manner that it sought and obtained the

information the intended to obtain. The study asked specific questions on the research instrument so that it focused the research participant on what the study is intended to find. My thesis report is a representation of the views and experiences of the Zongo people and not my biases. Therefore, the study addressed the issues of credibility, dependability, transferability and confirmability surrounding my study.

3.11 Ethical issues and considerations

In research, observance of ethical guidelines need to be observed and issues well explained and addressed (Adzahlie-Mensah et al., 2017; University of Cape Coast Instructional Review Board, 2018). The study maintained and guaranteed the confidentiality of the participants. The purpose and significance of my thesis was explained to the research participants. The study sought the informed consent of participants verbally. Additionally, an introductory letter from the Centre of Conflict, Human Rights and Peace Studies (CHRAPS) to which I identify was obtained, introducing me as a student of the centre and presented it to participants as proof of the research being purely academic.

Participants were assured that their views expressed on the issue will not be identified with their names, will be generalized in the final report and direct quotes will remain anonymous. Pseudonyms were assigned to participants to prevent the clue of identifying participants to particular responses. Participants were not coerced into taking part in the research process, albeit they were purposively sampled. No participant discontinued the research process during data collection. Participants who refused to participate in the research were not questioned. The study made participants aware of their right to answer

questions during interviews and to terminate interviews at any time they wish. The study discussed the interview process, the number and range of questions to ask, and the duration of interviews with the research participants.

Though the study knew it may be invoking emotions, it made sure that questions asked do not do any harm but addressed the research questions of the study. Participants' "freedom from" and "freedom for" participating in my study were well observed (Cohen et al., 2007). The study ensured that recorded data were stored on Pen drive and kept where no third party can have access to. Observation notes were equally properly stored to prevent anyone from seeing and/or reading them. Although the study appeared interested in the research participants, I was as well neutral and detached. The benefits, opportunities and risks involved in participating in the study were explained to my research participants. Meanwhile, I was also aware that the study was seeking information from people who are the parties in the conflict; as such their preconceived ideas, knowledge and experience about the conflict may influence the responses or information they would provide.

Thus, their bias may influence the information provide in this research. Yet, they are the people who have experienced and are in the conflict, and are thus best positioned to provide the relevant and necessary information to inform my thesis. Their views shared provided significant insights into the conflict in terms of the dynamics involved, the parties in the conflict and challenges to the resolution of the conflict. Meanwhile, because my research was being conducted amidst the Covid-19 pandemic (a period that the world is not in normal times), I observed all the protocols as put out by Health organizations

and the government of Ghana. I wore nose mask throughout the data collection process. I carried along with me hand sanitizer and three additional nose masks throughout the data collection period. Participants who are not wearing nose mask were always given one before we commence the interview session. We sanitise our hands before starting and after interview sessions. This helped to ensure that the study did not put me and the research participants at risk of contracting the virus. Noteworthy, I bracketed all my emotions, thoughts, opinions or views about the conflict while going into the research. The only tool that the study carried to the field was the research process.

3.12 Positionality

I entered into this research as a student-researcher and someone who believes in human rights. My identity as student and a native of Nandom where my thesis research is located are very much known to me while conducting the research. My choice of a qualitative research approach and other methodologies in my thesis is informed by the nature of my research questions, my desire to obtain meaning data or to gain meaning from participants own perspectives and to give voice to the Zongo people. I have lived in Nandom for most part of my life and schooled in the Nandom municipality from Kindergarten to Junior High School and thus have some experience of conditions and issues in Nandom. I entered into this research with a Social Studies and Human Rights, Conflict and Peace background. Having studied Social Studies at my undergraduate level which is concerned with studying human beings, their interactions and consequences of their interactions, I have an understanding that the interactions between people, communities and nations have the potential of producing conflict. Also, my experiences,

values, interests and commitment towards ensuring peace, harmony and stability, the full enjoyment of everyone's rights and development in Ghana shaped this study.

Although I hail from and schooled in the municipality, I do not constitute an 'insider' in this research. I do not live in the Zongo community in Nandom neither have I ever lived in a Zongo community in my entire life. Also, the conflict is among the Muslim community. Religiously, I am a Christian and a Catholic by faith. Therefore, I am an outsider in this research although collected data from a familiar environment. As an indigene of Nandom, I am aware that my experiences of issues in the municipality might influence my research. Therefore, the study was mindful of my experience of issues in Nandom, my preconceived knowledge and thoughts about the conflict that could influence my biases. The study ensured that these were bracketed before entering the field. Thus, I deconstructed my held positions and beliefs and intermittently took a pause during data collection to reflect on and question my own actions.

Going into such a community with hierarchies and gatekeepers, the study recognized and respected the necessary gatekeepers and all structuring or ordering in the community. All structures, social relations and positioning in the community were observed, recognized and respected. The study took note of the power relations and identities within the community and respond to them appropriately.

My choice of the Zongo people as my participants is because they are those who directly experience the conflict and thus, could better describe the dynamics in the conflict, the actors in the conflict and threats to the resolution of the conflict. By that, the study sought to give voice to them. Meanwhile, the study was also mindful that I might constitute an

intruder in the community since I am not a Muslim or do not reside in the Zongo community and as such, participants may want to withhold certain information from me. The study was equally aware that I might be met with some initial unwillingness to share some information with me, due to power relations in the community and my identity as a Christian.

My awareness of the possibility of resistance to release some information for the course of the research, which participants might think are not meant for my hearing, prepared me to take steps to break that silence or fear in them. To address that the purpose of the whole study was explained to participants as well as assured them of their anonymity and confidentiality. The study therefore did not ask participants of their names. The study also asked questions in a simple language; one that the participants understood and can respond appropriately. The study again ensured that questions asked did no any harm by making sure that it did not arouse emotions or intrude into participants' personal lives. This research was conducted purposely for academic reasons and thus do not have any hidden motive. At the same time, my research was self-funded. No organisation, agency, government or third party funded this research; as such it is not possible for me to produce results to the personal interest of anyone, group or organisation. The study did not receive any payment from any quarters for my thesis neither did I have a vested interest or hidden motive in the Zongo conflict. Noteworthy, I entered into this research with the belief that I do not know the dynamics in the conflict, the actors in the conflict and why the conflict has proven abortive to resolve. Therefore, the only tool that was entered into this study with was the research process. My research data emerged from participants' own perspectives, experiences and views.

CHAPTER FOUR

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

4.0 Introduction

This study was undertaken to understand the Zongo conflict in Nandom, in terms of the dynamics involved, the actors in the conflict and the threats to the resolution of the conflict. The questions included: what are the dynamics involved in the Zongo conflict in Nandom? Who are the actors in the conflict? And what are the threats to the resolution of the Zongo conflict in Nandom? In this chapter, the study present and discuss the results of the study, indicating how they interact with the literature and the theory.

FINDINGS

4.1 Dynamics involved in the conflict

This section presents the dynamics involved in the Zongo conflict in Nandom. In exploring the various dynamics in the conflict, I asked the participants series of questions in order to obtain significant information necessary for providing a good explanation of the dynamics involved in the conflict. Participants were asked what caused the conflict, its nature and effects. The results show multiple but complex and complicated dynamics in the conflict.

4.1.1 Causes of the conflict

One of the major aspects explored to understand the dynamics involved in the Zongo conflict was the causes of the conflict. In so doing, the participants stated several reasons. A typical comment from all the participants was,

Initially the conflict was about who performs the functions of the Imam. Although it later transformed into something else we knew it was about Imam duties.

The conflict started as a conflict over Imam duties. Everyone knows it has different dynamics now but the whole conflict was initially about who performs the functions of the Imam. The truth is that it has now gone beyond that.

...it is about the Imamship. I can say that any day. Yes yes. It is the imamship. (Field Data, 2020)

From the comments, it seems there is some agreement that the conflict has roots in who performs the functions of the Imam at the mosque. Thus it can be argued that the original cause of the Zongo conflict is a dispute over who performs the functions of the Imam. This issue is rooted in the illness of the Imam at some point as discussed in the following sub-section.

4.1.1.1 Illness of the Imam and the vice Imam

When I explored the reasons why the participants insisted the origin of the conflict is traceable to the performance of imam duties, I realized the conflict was traced to the illness of both the Imam (Malam Haruna) and his vice (Alhaji Mohammed Saana) in 2013. For example, a respondent in the interviews indicated as follows:

Within the Islamic communities, there is always an Imam who leads the Friday prayer. Now the Imam then was Malam Haruna. He was assisted by Alhaji Mohammed Hamid Saana, okay. So there was a particular time that this Malam Haruna could not come to the Mosque because he was unwell. Now on that particular Friday, Malam Haruna could not come to lead the prayers, so he sent the sermon and there is always a staff which shows a symbol of authority, to the son to go and give to the assistant Imam to come and lead prayers. Unfortunately he too was unwell... (Field Data, 2020)

The comment suggests that a different person had to lead prayers the day both Imams were unwell and could not come to mosque. The Imam or in his absence the vice, are the people who leads prayers in the mosque especially on Fridays and performs most of the

Islam occasions including naming and marriage ceremonies for the Muslim community. However, the unfortunate illness of both Imams meant that someone has to be chosen to lead Friday prayers. I realized in the interviews that on a particular Friday both the Imam and his vice were still sick and could therefore not come to mosque. Since the vice too was sick, the Imam sent the Quran and his Staff to be given to someone to lead the prayers. The choice of someone to lead prayers on Fridays during the period that both Imams were unwell created confusion, causing the conflict in the Zongo community in Nandom.

Participants indicated in the interview that the Quran (sermon) and the Imam's staff of office were given to about three different people but all of them declined. One participant explained this as follows:

...On that day he gave the sermon and the staff to three different people and they all declined. Two people were sitting in front, okay. ...if you are conversant with what happens in the Islamic this thing, the first line, are people who are scholars. So in case there is a mistake they are able to correct it, so that is what happens. So he gave to the first person he said no, he gave the second person he said no. Then there was another person sitting at the fourth line back, he mentioned his name Alhaji Issah, then he said oh Alhaji Ibrahim lead the prayers. So Alhaji Ibrahim, sent his son to go home and bring him his regalia; a bigger shirt for him to wear. So when he brought it then he led the prayers.
(Field Data, 2020)

The comment of the participant suggest that Alhaji Ibrahim, who preached that day in the Mosque, was given the sermon and staff and he accepted and led them to pray. Meanwhile, some participants shared in the interview that due to the illness of the Imam, that the Imam on one occasion told the congregation in the mosque that if he is not able to come to mosque on any day that the person preaching on that particular day should lead the prayer. In Islamic worship, on Fridays the vice Imam and in his absence

somebody (an Islamic scholar) comes to preach before the Imam will come and lead the prayers. According to some participants, the Imam who was sick said that anybody who preaches on a day he and his vice are not able to come to mosque should lead the prayers.

Some participants in the interviews shared as follows:

But the time that he [the sick Imam] was able to come to mosque... he himself suggested ... that if he is not well, that any day he is not able to come to mosque that the person preaching should lead. We didn't say anything... (Field Data, 2020)

The [Imam said that] if it is that something is wrong with him and he cannot come to mosque that day the person who is preaching to the people will lead the prayer that day. So that was what they were doing. So the day that he is sick and cannot come and when they go and he says he can't come to mosque they always come and give it to the person reciting the Quran and preaching the people. He is the one they always give the thing to, to lead us to pray. (Field Data, 2020)

The comments of the participants suggest that everyone in the Muslim community is aware that the person who preaches a day that the Imams are unable to be present at the mosque will lead prayers. However, the interviews revealed that that was not adhered at some point as someone who did not preach was made to lead prayers on a particular Friday. When I asked one of the main actors in the conflict what caused the conflict, he narrated that as follows:

... one day the Imam couldn't come to mosque. That day, I was the one preaching. Because he couldn't come to the mosque that day, I was preaching, so the person who used to bring the Imam to Mosque came and told me that the Imam said he can't come that he is not also well. ...the assistant said he is not well also ... So he gave me the staff and the sermon and I said no, I cannot take it. The Moshi has an elder they called Alhaji Morure, he said no that I should take that they have all agreed. That day he mentioned his own direct younger brother and said that I shouldn't say I can't that it is not supposed to be like that and he said that I should take, that their brother cannot lead us to pray because he has a [health] problem. I took the Quran and the staff and kept it down and I sent my son to go home and bring me my regalia to wear and lead the prayer because when I was going I didn't know that I will be leading the prayer. I led them to pray. When I finished praying, the following week, I was standing preaching and I was the only one preaching. I was preaching and time was drawing closer and the Imam didn't

come and the person they said he cannot lead us to pray because he has a [health] problem, came and walked and went and stood in where the Imam always stand and lead us in the prayers. He went and entered there, I didn't say anything so it was time for prayers and I stopped the preaching and went and sat down and he led us to pray. After he led us and we finished praying, so that is where people started talking, tension began mounting. Ah why did they allow me to pray last week and when it came to this week he came and led in the prayers?
(Field Data, 2020)

That is, for him since he was the one preaching that day, he was supposed to be the one who should have led the prayer but rather, the person whom they indicated in the previous week that he cannot lead the prayers because of his alleged 'health problem' decided that he will lead the prayer. Thus, for him it is a deliberate attempt to deny him the leadership of the prayer session that day.

I realized in the interviews that there are two factions in the Zongo conflict in Nandom; the Moshi faction and the faction of the other six tribes (Wangara, Dagomba, Waala, Sisaala, Zabarma, and Fulani). According to the Moshi faction, that the Imam himself asked the other person (Moshi tribesman) who did not preach that day to come and lead the prayers. For the six tribes' faction, it was supposed to be the one preaching (a Wangara man) that day who should have led the prayer. Thus, the person who preached that day felt denied the opportunity to lead the prayers and bitterness began growing.

However, a participant from the Moshi faction explained that the person (the Wangara man) who finally accepted and led the prayers on the previous Friday that the Imam and his vice could not come humiliated them when he was preaching. Further, the Moshi elder stated that because the Wangara man who preached and led prayers last week was not made to lead them that day (the following Friday, of which he was the one preaching

again), that he became bitter towards the other person (Moshi man) who led the prayers that day. He narrated in the interview as follows:

... When it was Friday the person who always go and bring him went and he said that today that he is not well but that take this Quran because every Friday they always recite this Quran so he should take and come and give it to one Moshi man, they call him Alhaji Morure, that he should take and they should look for someone to lead them to pray. So when they brought the Quran on the Friday...they sent it first to give it to Malam Issah who died, and he said he can't and they brought it back to Alhaji Morure. Alhaji Morure took it and sent it and gave it to his younger brother Malam Abdulai that is at the back. Then that is where he said that Alhaji Ibrahim should take and go and pray. ... So when [Alhaji Ibrahim] wanted to recite the Quran there he always mention someone's name, mention another person, mention this person, that it is because of a day like this that they always say everyone should go and study. ...It looks as if in the mosque nobody is there who can lead us to pray and that is why they went round and came and gave it to him. When he finished praying on that Friday, it was the elders who got up and went and were on Malam Abdulai that he has to lead, that because how this man insulted them, everybody has seen. So on one coming Friday the Imam said that he cannot pray so that they should bring it for Malam Abdulai to lead the prayer. So when he prayed like that that was where the man thought that it is him that the thing has reached and they deny him to lead the prayer. So that was where he started behaving towards the man like he is envious of him. (Field Data, 2020)

The perspectives of both factions in the interviews indicate that the conflict started when choices were being made as to who leads the prayers in the absence of the Imam and the vice. However, it seems that much of the conflict begun to become more serious following the death of both the Imam and the Vice which created a vacancy. This is explained in the next sub-section.

4.1.1.2 Vacancy of the Imam position

From the interview, it became apparent that the conflict in the Zongo transformed into Imam Succession dispute following the death of the Imam and the Vice. Some participants' statements illustrating this claim included that

Our issue became a succession dispute when the vice and chief Imam who were sick died respectively thereby making their positions vacant.

...the assistant Imam passed away but the Imam was still alive but unwell, so they needed someone to take charge to become the assistant Imam but that one was not concluded until the Imam too passed away. (Field Data, 2020)

Their death meant that the Imamship position was vacant. There was need for people to be selected to fill the vacant positions, so as to ensure effective continuity of Islamic activities. The vacancy of the Imamship position and people's quest to fill in the vacant Imamship position resulted in the conflict among the Muslim tribes in Nandom Zongo. The idea is that, the conflict became manifest due to disagreement over choice of candidates for Imamship.

The story was told that when the vice Imam first died, Aljaji Abdulai (Moshi tribeman), started acting as the vice Imam. However, some participants indicated that Aljaji Abdulai was not properly elected. Since his father was the Chief Imam, the Zongo community in Nandom were not happy with him acting as vice because the Imamship of the mosque is not inherited. Some participants noted this in stating as follows:

...Alhaji Malam Abdulai, then in 2014/2015 in Lawra announced to the public that he has nominated his son, his brother's son to become the assistant Imam. Then the confusion then was building. ... And they [other six tribes] also said no you can't be the Imam and your son the assistant Imam. It is not a family thing, then that is where the tension started building up. Okay so tension started building up then it got to a time there were attacks in the mosque... (Field Data, 2020)

Well their issue what I was able to hear is that it is like their Imam issue... it has gone like the direction is tribalism issue. I think it is the Wangara that first started to be the Imam in Nandom here and it was there then moved to the Moshis hands. So I think when the Imamship entered the hands of the Moshis they also have a vice, the person that will assist the Imam. So the small thing I know about their issue is that when the imam is not there the vice take over. So when the Moshi was the [Imam]... they wanted someone to [assist] him. But when we went they told us that the Wangara person, who [has been nominated as] the vice Imam doesn't

respect him [the Imam]. That since he [vice Imam Nominee] doesn't respect him [the Imam] that they cannot work together. So I think sometimes on their prayers days (Fridays), he [Imam] ask one of his sons to always lead them to pray so these people [the six other tribes] now said they will not agree that the thing is not a family thing for you to pass it to your son when you are not there. So I think that is where their conflict started. (Field Data, 2020)

The comments suggest that people were concerned about the Imamship of the mosque being treated like it is hereditary. The comments further suggest an attempt to deny other people the opportunity of leadership in the mosque. I realized in the interviews that when the Imam himself died, the elders asked the person (Aljaji Abdulai) who was already acting as the vice Imam to step in as the chief Imam while they look for someone to assist him. Then the contest for the Imamship began. Tribal lenses were drawn into the contest. According to some participants, since the person who was acting and now made to step in as the main Imam is a Moshi that the vice should come from the other tribes. Thus, the other tribes (Wangara, Dagomba, Waala, Zabarma, Fulani and Sisaala) came together and nominated Alhaji Ibrahim (the one who was preaching and Alhaji Abdulai came and said he will rather lead the prayer that day) to be the assistant Imam.

A chief in the Zongo community shared as follows:

...there is one of our sons he is in one of our tribes called Wangara, called Ibrahim. One of our Imams who died and [they said] somebody should replace him and the person replaced him. So once he has replaced him [the Imam] and already he [the person who replaced the Imam] was not a vice but once this one died he stepped in. We don't want disturbance, so we left him like that, have it. Then we said if it is like that let's look for someone to add to him. Instead of us saying we didn't collectively select you, if we say that it will bring misunderstanding so we left it for him, have it. But that we will want to select this person [Alhaji Ibrahim] to be assisting you [Imam]. That is what brought the misunderstanding. He [the Imam] said he will not agree. We asked why and he said that the person we want him to assist him that he [Imam] and the person are not in good terms, that person doesn't respect him. We said how, you don't have to say this person or this person doesn't respect you, it is not an offense. If you know you and the person are not in good terms then you will leave [and not that person]. So that is the misunderstanding and he [Imam] said he will not agree to that. (Field Data, 2020)

The comment suggests that the two people struggling over the imamship already have a past; where one thinks he should have been the one to lead prayers the day he was preaching since the Imam and his vice could not come again but the other decided to come with the Quran and staff of the chief Imam and said he is going to lead the prayers. There was thus already some bitterness between the two persons who have been put forward to occupy the chief and vice Imamship positions of the mosque. Definitely, one should expect some kind of struggle or difficulty. The study found that when Alhaji Ibrahim who is from the Wangara tribe was put forward for the vice Imamship position, there was disagreement to his nomination by Alhaji Abdulai who was now the chief Imam and from the Moshi tribe. Throughout the interviews, some participants indicated that Alhaji Abdulai said his reason for disagreeing to the nomination of Alhaji Ibrahim is because he (Alhaji Ibrahim) allegedly, does not respect him and refused to give him the state of accounts (since Alhaji Ibrahim was the mosque finance committee chairman) of the mosque when he (Alhaji Abdulai) requested for it. For example, one participant indicated as follows:

...he [Alhaji Abdulai] said that I don't respect him. Secondly, that we were doing some work in the mosque, that he [Alhaji Abdulai] ask who sponsored the work and that I told him [Alhaji Abdulai] that I don't know who sponsored the work, so means I don't respect him. (Field Data, 2020)

Also, one of the main actors in the conflict indicated as follows:

[My elders] met the other tribes and the other tribes also agreed then they sent someone to go and tell the Moshis and when they told them they said they will not agree, that if it was a different person that they will but if it is me they will not agree. Then he [the then Imam] also said he also want his son, his younger brother's son, the one that we preach after the other in the mosque to be his assistant. Then the [six other tribes] said they will not also agree. Then they [Moshis] said if they [six other tribes] bring a different person, that they [Moshis] will agree but me in particular they [Moshis] will not agree. Then they [six other tribes] also said they don't have anybody, it has to be me. Then that is where the

issue started...then that is where tension started, people's anger began growing.
(Field Data, 2020)

The comments suggest that the disagreement to certain nominations further created tension, divisions, hatred and bitterness among the Muslims in Nandom Zongo. The comments also reveal that the Moshis supported the decision of their tribesman (Alhaji Abdulai) disagreeing with the nomination of Alhaji Ibrahim while the other six tribes (Wangara, Dagomba, Waala, Zabarma, Fulani, and Sisaala) rallied behind Alhaji Ibrahim and insisted that he (Alhaji Ibrahim) should be made the vice Imam. However, an elder from the Moshi faction narrated why Alhaji Abdulai who was now the Imam decided to nominate his son as his vice. The elder narrated in the interviews as follows:

...all the people he [the Imam] selected [were] kicked against and insisted on Alhaji Ibrahim and Alhaji Ibrahim too doesn't respect him. I can't have a deputy and he doesn't respect me, we can't work together. So because of that he was there for some time then he told the people that see, I called you people and told you that I want to choose my deputy and I chose a number of people and you declined so I have given you two months, within these two months you try and select a deputy for me. It was left with one week the two months will elapse then he reminded them... Then after the one week elapsed, then he said he has given them another two weeks that they should go and look and think through and select his deputy for him... Then the two weeks elapsed. That was where he now told them that in a week's time if you are not able to bring someone then I will select my person. When that week came they didn't say anything and he said if that is it since I have given you all this time and you are not saying anything, I have chosen my son, Alhaji Mahammud as my deputy and they were silent and everybody got up and left [the mosque]. Then the following Friday they were planning to send him [the 'deputy Imam'] down to show to the Nandom Naa... So that was when the Wangara chief got up in the mosque and said that last week when the Imam said that he has selected Alhaji Mahammud to be his deputy that they have not agreed. Then he [the Imam] asked them, you and who didn't agree? That day it wanted to bring a fight in the mosque. One young man got up and wanted to beat the man and they separated them. That is where the conflict started. **(Field Data, 2020)**

The Imamship of Nandom was being contested or struggled over. One participant in the interview attributed this struggle over the Imamship and disagreement over choice of

candidates to an attempt to stop a long tradition of Imamship alternation between the various tribes. He explained in the interviews as follows:

Actually what caused the conflict is about Imamship. And normally what we all heard was that it is a certain tradition, the Imamship has to come from the two major tribes in the Zongo community that is the Wangaras and the Moshis. So when this one takes and passes away it has to go to the other side. But what they were doing was a traditional principle they were following, it wasn't an Islamic principle per se. The two guys who are fighting to be the chief Imam all of them went to Saudi to go and learn and come. So when they came, out of the two of them one said I am more knowledgeable than you but in terms of the Islamic principles the one who is more knowledgeable supposed to be the imam. But the other one said yes you are more knowledgeable than me but it is our tribe time to take over and that is where the conflict started from. (Field Data, 2020)

The comment seems to suggest that over the years that the Imamship alternate between the tribes in the Zongo community and when it got to one of the tribes to produce the Imam that the other said they will not agree. Thus, while one faction seems to be disagreeing based on a traditional principle the other is disagreeing based on Islamic principles. Similarly, one of the participants shared:

This thing it is not like when this Imamship started you were the people in charge. No, you also came and started and the thing got to you. The thing moves round and got to you and you said you will not agree that the tribe that you came and met you will now decide how things should be done. Then that tribe also said how, this is a religion, it is not like a tradition, it is not inheritance for you to say you started and you will have it, no. So that made the other tribes to also say they will not agree. (Field Data, 2020)

The issue became more complicated when the Imam (Alhaji Abdulai) at the time who nominated his son to be the assistant Imam died. That is, the Imam who disagreed to the nomination of Alhaji Ibrahim by the six other tribes as the vice Imam died. This issue became more complicated because the assistant Imamship was already being contested. Thus his death meant that there were no Imam as well as a vice Imam. The data from my observation strongly support that the various factions are still in disagreement. The voice

tones, gestures, facial expression and the manner in which they referred to their opponents during the interviews showed that the various factions are not ready to agree to each others' demands. For instance, during one of the interviews with an elder of one of the factions, he shooked his head continuously while saying that they will not agree to the nomination of the person from the other faction. However, the conflict became more serious when 'minority' versus 'majority' language, as would be presented next, was introduced into the matter.

4.1.1.3 Introduction of 'Majority' versus 'Minority' language/label into the Imamship contest

One other thing that caused the conflict that became apparent during the data collection was the introduction of 'minority' versus 'majority' label into the Imamship contest. One participant shared in interviewed as follows:

Then they [the Moshis] went to the Nandom chief's palace. That time the paramount chief was still alive and they went and told him that in the Zongo they [Moshis] are the majority. That they are the majority, so what they will decide that whatever they want, it has to happen. [And] that we [the six other tribes] are minority. We said religion is not like that. The person who merits is selected. That is the misunderstanding. This is the issue. So the entire Zongo we are seven chiefs; Dagomba chief, Moshi chief, Waala chief, Sisaala chief, Zabarma chief, Wangara chief, and Fulani chief. [All the other tribes are] against the Moshi, that is our misunderstanding. (Field Data, 2020)

Within the zongo tribes we have a number of [tribes], the Moshis are the majority and so the minority we have the Wangara, we have the Waala, we have the Dagombas, and the Zabarmas but all of them, the Moshi can divide them into two, so the rest of them have come together to support Alhaji Ibrahim. (Field Data, 2020)

Thus, the Moshi argued that if you are to choose a chief for the community, that the chief has to come from the majority while the minority will be the subjects, hence the Imamship should come from their tribe. However, six tribes' faction rejected their

analogy and explained that they are rather the majority because they are made up of six different tribes. For them, six tribes (Wangara, Dagomba, Waala, Fulani, Sisaala and Zabarma) cannot agree on a candidate and then one tribe (Moshi) alone would say no and insist that what they (Moshi) say should be final. Having labeled each other as minority, the next thing was to rule over the other. The situation worsened further as people began to identify with their tribes thereby creating a polarized and fragmented atmosphere in the community. People from each faction begin to regard those from the other faction as threats to their identity and not recognizing them. The polarization of the community made tensions to grow. According to participants, people from both factions treated each other as enemies leading to violence and attacks at certain points. Each side wants to produce the Imam so that they could self-assert themselves and be recognized.

My interaction with the keepers of the Nandom stool also revealed this majority versus minority label as playing a fuelling role in the conflict. When I approached them to interact with them, they initially hesitated, indicating that as far as they are concerned, there is no conflict in Nandom Zongo. However, when I explained the entire research to them and its purpose, they began talking about the issue. They explained that the Moshi tribe represents the largest in the Zongo community and that even if all the other tribes are combined, that the Moshi still outnumber them. For instance, the ‘acting reagent’ indicated that some of the Zongo people said that since the Moshis are the majority, that they should rule over the rest and the Imam should thus come from them.

The contestation of the conflict along ethnicity or tribal lines further generated anger, hatred and bitterness between the two factions. Each side took uncompromising stands and none was ready to be ‘taken for granted’ by the other. For each faction, it appears

giving in to the other side is an insult on them and weakness on their part. Thus, they continued to struggle over the Imamship. A participant shared in the interview:

The Wangara per se is saying that the Moshi is trying to take them for granted since it is something that has been happening from time immemorial, that you take it and after that you pass it to the other people, these people will also take it when they finish they pass it over. So why is it that it got to the Moshi Imam and he has passed away and you [Moshi] are claiming that you [Moshi] still want to keep the thing [Imamship]. Because the late Imam was a Moshi man, [and] has passed away, the thing [Imamship] has to be given to the Wangara. So they [Wangara] see that they [Moshi] are trying to insult their tribe, so that is where they also said it is not possible, they will not agree. (Field Data, 2020)

The classification of some people as minorities and others as majority and the usage of that to argue for the Imamship of Nandom Zongo among the orthodox Muslims contributed to the conflict among the Zongo community. People thus rallied behind their tribes or ethnic groups and fought those who they believed to be threats to their identity and their quest to be recognized and to self-assert themselves.

My experiences during observations further confirm the majority and minority language effect. During one of my observations, I sat at a shop, where many of the Zongo people go to sit and chat. During my interactions with the shopkeeper 'she' introduced the 'minority' versus 'majority' language. She said“

you see in the Zongo we have a lot of tribes but we are the majority and the rest put together will still not be up to half of our number. .. the thing is they want the Imamship to come to their side and our people also said they will not agree, so the whole thing started

The comment is a testimony of the mentality driving the conflict. Thus an immanship conflict transformed into a conflict driving by linguistic categories. The linguistic categories also established ethnic categories - The Moshi on the one side and the Sisaala, Waala, Wangara, Zabarma, Dagomba and Fulani on the other. Overall, the discussions

here support the view that unaddressed grievances fuels conflict (Gates et al., 2016; Collier & Hoeffler, 2000; Collier & Hoeffler, 2002). Avis (2019) indicated that when people feel excluded from power and opportunities, it creates conducive space for violence and antagonism. Thus, excluded persons from leadership tend to mobilize people for violent rejection of those decisions that excluded them (GSDRC, 2014). It is argued that conflict tends to occur when there is disagreement between individuals or groups (Sulemana, 2009). The findings therefore confirms the media reports that the zongo conflict erupted as a result of a contest over who becomes the chief Imam of Nandom (Yeboah, 2018; Quaye, 2018; Ghana News Agency, 2018; Quaye, 2017). It has been argued that greater loss would be recorded by the Muslim Mission when such considerations as ethnic, heredity, or political are placed over the Islamic requirements for Imamship (Yeboah, 2018). The refusal to follow “laid down procedures” of Imamship succession contributed to the cause of the zongo conflict rather than, as Kanda (2019) argued, responsible for the difficulty in the resolution of the conflict. Research has argued that when people regard some as majorities and others as minorities it tends to create conflict situations (Debrah et al., 2016). Debrah et al. (2016) argued that it will be difficult for conflict not to occur so far as people continue to regard others as “minorities” and some as “majorities”. Collier and Hoeffler (2000) indicated that when one group wants to exert dominance over others in a community or society where there are many ethnicities, the chances of conflict are high. The introduction of minority versus majority language in the conflict, as Galtung (2000, p. 1) argued, has “receded the root cause of the [Zongo] conflict [that is, unaddressed grievances] into the background.” Thus, a conflict situation is created when people attack others, with or without provocation. At this stage the conflict has changed

in degree. The DST explains that conflicts are not static; they change in degree, intensity and scale (Lunkenheimer, 2018).

4.1.2 Nature of the Conflict

As part of understanding the dynamics in the conflict among the Zongo community in Nandom, the study sought to determine the nature of the conflict. Thus, participants were asked about how long the conflict has been there, the frequency of occurrence and the pattern(s) it took. This section presents and describes the nature of the conflict.

4.1.2.1 Length of the conflict

All participants agreed in the interviews that the zongo conflict in Nandom has been there for long. However, many of participants could not indicate the exact year the conflict started. Meanwhile, from the few participants who attempted to provide the period the conflict started, it was realized that the conflict is about a decade old. Some participants in the interviews shared as follows:

Today I can say it may be up to ten years. Because 2012 that they gave us the district but the conflict started before we became a district. Because that is why I told you earlier that Karbo was the district Imam, that time we were still under Lawra district and the issue was happening so it has been long. (Field Data, 2020)

The issue started it is up to five six years. (Field Data, 2020)

The conflict is long but when we were intervening let's say 2016, it was in 2016 before I was a Chief that the paramount Chief delegated some of us to intervene... (Field Data, 2020)

It has been long. Yes, it started long before getting to this stage. ...it's more than four years, four years, it has been long. (Field Data, 2020)

I think roughly, it will be somewhere up to or more than five years now. (Field Data, 2020)

The comments suggest that the Zongo conflict in Nandom is not more than a decade old.

4.1.2.2 Frequency of the conflict

The study asked participants how frequent the Zongo conflict in Nandom occurred. The interviews revealed that the Zongo conflict in Nandom used to be quite frequent. Participants indicated that attacks and confrontations were frequent. When I asked participants that was the conflict frequent in occurrence some indicated as follows:

Yes. It is a mosque issue. (Field Data, 2020)

Oh yes, it used to be very frequent like within two three like sometimes every Friday when you are going to mosque you are prepared you know that anything can happen....the last event happened in 2018. (Field Data, 2020)

The comments of participants suggest that the zongo conflict in Nandom was quite frequent. The interviews reveal that the conflict tends to occur anytime people attempt to resolve it. One participant shared as follows:

...the time that they ask peace council to intervene and resolve it that was bringing a lot of disturbance but when the peace council stopped and were no more coming we have not been experiencing anything. (Field Data, 2020)

The comments suggest that the Zongo conflict in Nandom is expected to reoccur anytime attempts are being made to resolve it. For some participants, the conflict was very frequent until when the native Youth decided to demonstrate to register their displeasure about the way the Zongo people were conducting themselves. A participant stated:

I think it is that demonstration [demonstration by the youth of Nandom] that made us not to be witnessing the conflict frequently. (Field Data, 2020)

4.1.2.3 Pattern of the conflict

Under this, the study sought to understand from the participants whether the conflict was easily predictable. Some participants indicated that one could easily detect that there was going to be a confrontation before 2018. I realised in the interviews that the behaviour, utterances, and actions of the Zongo people in Nandom especially, the youth were not difficult for one to predict that there was going to be some form of confrontation either in the mosque or outside it. When I asked a participant in the interviews that was the Zongo conflict in Nandom predictable and he said:

Yes. Their behaviour will show first [and] their young men utterances will let you know that they will fight. So I think that is the thing that always makes the police to come around. So when they are to enter the mosque on prayers days [Fridays] and they hear signals that they will fight, they always ask the police to go and guard them and they will pray. (Field Data, 2020)

Another participant indicated:

...every Friday when you are going to mosque you are prepared you know that anything can happen. (Field Data, 2020)

The comment suggests that the mosque was where confrontations were staged. Some participants shared that the way both sides would be issuing threats to each other would tell one that they were going to fight or engage in a confrontation. The interviews revealed also that anytime a resolution is attempted that the conflict normally occurs again. Thus, participants indicated that they tend to 'expect' a reoccurrence of the conflict anytime people come to resolve it. That is, anytime a third party says it is coming to sit with both sides and resolve the conflict people begin to expect that confrontation will ensue again. Some participants explained that tempers, hatred and bitterness are still within many people and as such when a third party comes to sit with the parties in the conflict confrontations normally ensue again. This confirms why during one of my

observation moments a community member told me that they no longer tolerate anyone who claimed to be coming to resolve the conflict. According to him, their elders were initially hesitant to respond to my interview because they thought I was coming to resolve the conflict. This lack of trust and confidence in intervening parties, as would be presented later under threats to the resolution of the conflict, made it difficult for the conflict to be resolved.

4.1.2.4 Tactics

The study revealed that the two factions were blaming each other for causing the conflict. The Moshi tribe indicated that if the other tribes had presented a different person aside the one whom they view as 'disrespectful' towards the Imam at the time that the conflict would not have occurred. On the other hand, the six tribes that have come together as one have also blamed the Moshi for causing the conflict when the Moshi rejected their candidate for the vice Imamship position.

Also, the two factions were using threats as a weapon to make the other to yield. Both sides have threatened each other openly and at some times before intervening bodies or authorities. The factions were also labeling each other. Each side has labeled the other as minority. The Moshi faction regard the six other tribes as minorities indicating that even if all the six tribes are combined that they would still not reach half of their number. Then the other six tribes also said that the Moshis are rather the minorities because that they are six tribes and the Moshi is just one. Thus, while the Moshi is using the total number or population of their group to advance their argument, the other tribes are using the number of tribes that are on each side to advance their position. The conflict was also

characterized by the usage of insults, attacks and confrontations. The interviews revealed that the two sides were making irrevocable comments. That is, the two factions were committed to continue to behaving antagonistically and as enemies.

4.1.3 Effects of the Conflict

The analysis of the data showed that the conflict has visited some strong consequences on the people and the Zongo community of Nandom. This section discusses the effects of the conflict as distilled from the data collected.

4.1.3.1 Strained relationship and division

The study discovered that the conflict has marred the long healthy relationship that the different tribal groups in the Zongo community shared. One participant highlighted as follows:

So there was some time as at this year, when we were celebrating the Eid-ul Adhah, so the youth were trying to come together but some of the older people were still not agreeing. (Field Data, 2020)

The comment showed that people no longer interact freely with members of the other factions who they perceive as their enemies. The conflict has made it difficult for people who have friends from the other faction to interact even if they want to do so. According to some participants, even when people make attempts to socialize with people from the other faction that they tend to be prevented by the elders of their faction. Thus, while the youth seem to be tired of how the conflict is prolonging, the elderly is appearing uninterested in resolving the issue. Throughout the interviews, participants have indicated that the conflict has brought a situation where the two factions now perform or celebrate

occasions separately. Each side now celebrate naming ceremony, wedding (Amariya), funerals, among others alone.

One participant highlighted:

So when someone pass away, when a Moshi guy pass ... it is only Moshi people that will go. Naming ceremony and everything we now celebrate them alone. They are not part. We are no more mixing. ...you cannot go to your colleague other home who is your best friend. Even when the quarrel come even if you are my best friend and your father pass away I can't even go to the funeral. (Field Data, 2020)

Another participant shared the effects of the zongo conflict in Nandom that as follows:

They [the effects] are enormous. Previously you could see that you could go about your duties freely okay, you will move down to the moshi area and come up here, everything was fine. When we have a naming ceremony everybody comes together, when we have a funeral everybody comes together, we have a marriage ceremony everybody comes together, but now it is no longer like that. It is no longer like that....Those who are rooting for Alhaji Mahammud to become the imam are doing their things separately. That is how things are happening here. Even to the extent of which there a funeral, they do it separately. You only hear that there is a funeral here but the time you go there are separate people digging their graves, they finish they move away. ... If it is marriage ceremony, we don't invite them they don't invite you. So we are doing things separately. (Field Data, 2020)

From the comments both factions in the Zongo conflict in Nandom agreed that the conflict have produced negative effect on them. A Moshi elder in the interviews highlighted how the conflict has divided them and marred their community relationship.

He shared as follows:

... we have separated. For instance, if I have my child's naming ceremony it is only the Moshis who will come. If they also have their naming ceremony they are the only people who will also do it. Now what is in our community is this. (Field Data, 2020)

Another participant shared that:

We cannot say the relationship is good because some don't greet each other, some the relationship is not good but they are still there. (Field Data, 2020)

The comments suggest that members from both factions no longer do activities together. Some participants indicated that some have gone to the extent of not greeting each other. The point is that the two factions now treat and hold the person each wants to be the Imam as their Imam, who now performs all their occasions (weddings, naming ceremonies, funerals, etc.) for them. The emergence of the conflict has marred long years of intermarriage between the groups in the Zongo community. According to some participants, now people especially, women who are married to a tribe in the other faction are divided between supporting their husband's side or their father's side. Some marriages, as some participants have indicated, are experiencing turbulence while others have broken. A participant shared for example that:

When they were not fighting their relationship was good. Bare they were intermarrying but now because it is like this that relationship is not like what it used to be. (Field Data, 2020)

Another participant indicated as follows:

We used to intermarry and even currently the intermarriage was there before the quarrel came and they have to destroy everything. And even within those who were married, within the quarrels it was affecting them because some don't know where to go. Maybe I am a Moshi lady and I married a Wangara guy so because of the quarrel where do I run to? So do I support my father's side or I go to my husband's side? That is affecting everything and even as a result some marriages have got broken. That is the war we are fighting. (Field Data, 2020)

Also, the two factions now pray separately. While the Moshi people pray in the central mosque the other tribes now use a mosque at the Nandom Senior High School (SHS) for their Friday prayers. A Moshi elder interviewed indicated how the other faction no longer pray with them in the main mosque on Fridays:

They [the six tribes] don't come and pray. Friday they don't come and pray. So when they fought like that the mosque was closed. The mosque was locked for eight good months. ...they didn't agree that the mosque be opened again. They want if the mosque will be opened it should be Alhaji Ibrahim who should be

leading the prayers but because it is still the mediator who still comes and be leading they said they won't like that. All the other people they no longer come to the mosque to pray. (Field Data, 2020)

4.1.3.2 Uncertainty and fear

One learning from the interviews was that the Zongo conflict in Nandom has created uncertainty and fear in people. People from the two factions walk around unsure of what will happen in the next minute or hour. Everyone has become 'careful' when moving about in the community. Two participants described this as follows:

Well actually it [the conflict] doesn't bring anything good. Because it is because of the quarrel that now if you are a Moshi and you are walking in town you are a bit careful. If you are not a Moshi and you are in the other tribe and you are in town if you are entering the Moshi area you are also a bit careful. (Field Data, 2020)

...they were threatening one another. It always looks like they will wound someone or kill someone. (Field Data, 2020)

The comment suggests that although people from each faction sometimes venture into the territories of the other, they are always very careful of their actions and what they do and say. I also realized in the interviews that both sides threatened each other and committed to behaving antagonistically. Such threats perhaps made people to be living in fear and uncertainty. There is currently relative calmness in the Zongo community in Nandom but some people are still not sure of their safety since the conflict has not been resolved.

4.1.3.3 Destruction of properties and Injuries to people

The conflict has made some people to lose their property. The interviews revealed that when some people were attacked during the conflict, their properties were destroyed. The burning of the room of one of the main contenders for the Imamship during the conflict

destroyed some properties including clothes, and other belongings which may run into thousands of Ghana cedis. One participant indicated as follows:

...one of them they went to one of my sisters here and fought there, the day they burnt my room, they also destroyed her things in the room, they ever went there to destroy things, their motorbikes. So when that passed that this also happened. (Field Data, 2020)

The interviews also revealed that confrontations and violence injured some people. Some participants accounted how cutlass or knife was used on people during the outbreak of violence leading to hospitalization of some people. One participant shared that:

...nobody died. It is only this person who got injured. The person they used the knife to cut. ...So they picked both of them to hospital. (Field Data, 2020)

Such acts of violence and confrontation have left some people injured in the process.

Thus, although the interviews reveal that no death has been recorded in the conflict the comments above agree that the conflict visited injuries on people.

4.1.3.4 'Bad' image

Some participants are of the view that the conflict is painting a bad picture of Nandom in the eyes of the rest of the country. Participants stated that the conflict is spoiling the name of Nandom and paints a bad picture of the community to the outside world. For instance, one participant highlighted as follows:

The [way the] conflict is happening I see it is destroying the society, it is spoiling the name of the land because some of the conflict does not even reach a particular stage but they will tell lies that they fought, shot guns and things. So when it happens like that our community's name is spoiling... (Field Data, 2020)

From the comments it suggests that people outside the Nandom municipality may view the community as a conflict zone and that it could prevent investors from coming into the community as well as damage the long held view of Nandom as a peaceful district.

4.1.3.5 'Self-restricted' movement

The conflict has also led to a situation where the zongo people themselves are not comfortable moving about freely and exercising their right to freedom of movement as a free human person. Participants indicated that people in the Zongo community used to move about freely into each others' neighbourhoods without a problem, however, that the conflict has come to impair their freedom of movement. Arising from the uncertainty of the future and the fear of being attacked by people from the other side, some people in the zongo community have tended to restrict themselves from moving around the neighbourhood of their opponents. One participant shared as follows:

...it is almost more than five years now and we still cannot cross. And some of them have tied friends and you look at your tied friends doing something but you cannot move back to. If I go there something will happen. They will beat you mercilessly so you wouldn't go. So likewise if have an issue he cannot come to me. (Field Data, 2020)

The comment suggests that although people want to move freely in the zongo community, the fear of being attacked is making some to self-restrict their movement.

Another participant shared that:

Previously you could see that you could go about your duties freely okay, you will move down to the moshi area and come up here, everything was fine. ...but now it is no longer like that. (Field Data, 2020)

The comment suggests that people are not effectively enjoying and exercising their freedom of movement. My observation confirmed that people from each side do not feel comfortable going to the neighbourhood of the other side. I confirmed this when I asked a gatekeeper who happens to be from one of the tribes of the two factions to send me to a potential participant in the study and he declined. His reason was that if his elders see him around the other side's area or with them that they may think that he is siding with

their opponents and that would create a problem between him and his elders. Yet, interestingly, their houses are somehow mixed.

4.1.3.6 Trade between the two factions has reduced

Before the two sides started contesting over the imamship of Nandom, there used to be a healthy trade relation between them. Identity was not a basis for buying of goods and services among the Zongo community. Noteworthy, majority of the Zongo people are into trading. According to participants, until the conflict erupted there was exchange of goods and services among the various tribes in the community. Participants indicated that people used to buy things without tribal considerations however, that the Zongo conflict in Nandom has marred that good trade relationship that existed among the various tribes within the Zongo community in Nandom. Now, more than ever, people prefer buying things from their tribesmen. Some participants shared in the interviews as follows:

It is not only about greetings, some will not buy the other factions' things. That one is there. (Field Data, 2020)

If I use to buy something from you I won't buy again. If I used to eat from you I won't eat from you again. Because the various sides sell food whether raw food or cooked food or transportation, farm inputs, now we don't trade again. So you see the effects. (Field Data, 2020)

The comment suggests that if one used to buy things from someone from the other side now he will not buy again. Some participants shared that it got to a point that some would travel to neighbouring Hamile or as far as Wa (the regional capital) to buy things if they do not find them in their tribesmen's shops. One participant stated as follows:

And because of that quarrel too we don't buy things from each other. So you have to definitely look for your tribe people to buy. When they don't have some have to move to Hamile [a bordering town to Burkina Faso], some have to move to Wa [the regional capital] to go and buy and that is where the war has sent us to. (Field Data, 2020)

The comment suggests that each faction is willing to take the risk of travelling to other towns to buy goods and services other than buying from their opponent. Perhaps, each side feels that buying things from people from the other faction is enriching them or growing their business for them (economic power) which they may in turn use to fight them. The interviews also reveal that some of the Zongo people involved in the conflict may not mind buying things from their opponents. An elder shared in the interview that:

As for trading they buy each other's things. They buy each other's things because they are things for sale. You see sometimes this we don't take it to be something. Because when women entered into the matter and started insulting each other that brought the issue to this level if not we still buy each other's things. (Field Data, 2020)

The comment suggests that there are some people in the Zongo community who may not have tribal considerations in buying goods and services. Meanwhile, as part of my observation, I had a casual interaction with some people in the community to ascertain how the two sides trade now. Their views were divided; while some reinforced participants' assertion that trade between the two factions was now impossible others told me that they still buy things from people from the other faction but admitted that some of their people do not.

4.1.3.7 Lack of a substantive Imam

I realized in the interviews that the conflicting parties took uncompromising positions throughout the conflict. No one wants to yield to the demands of the other. As a result, there is currently no substantive Imam of Nandom to lead the Muslim community and perform their activities for them. Due to the contestation over the vice Imamship, the last Chief Imam did not have a deputy before his death. As a result, there is no Imam at the moment in Nandom. Some participants shared in the interviews as follows:

There is no substantive Imam ... (Field Data, 2020)

So, the one [Imam] who was there like that is also dead. So first they were looking for only deputy but now the Imam is dead so that means we don't have any imam again so it is the mediator he is the only one who is there leading us to pray. (Field Data, 2020)

I realized in the interviews that somebody perceived to be a neutral person has been brought from Wa (the regional capital) to be leading the Friday prayers. So every Friday the person comes from Wa to lead prayers in the central mosque and go back. One participant indicated as follows:

There is no substantive Imam until they brought somebody from Wa to come and be acting. (Field Data, 2020)

...it [the conflict] is not settled until and unless we have a substantive Imam and assistant and whatever. How long will the person continue to travel from Wa to Nandom every Friday? (Field Data, 2020)

The comment suggests that addressing the grievances in the Zongo conflict in Nandom and getting a substantive Imam installed is the effective way to dealing with the conflict but not bringing someone elsewhere to be leading prayers.

I also realised in the interviews that the Wa chief Imam is an actor in the conflict. Some participants indicated that he attempted on one occasion to pronounce and install one candidate in the Imamship contest as the Imam.

...he got up one day and went to Wa and met the Waala chief imam and the imam supported him and said he is coming. (Field Data, 2020)

The Wa chief Imam's attempt to 'impose' someone on the orthodox Muslim community (although was stopped as indicated earlier) demonstrates that he has interest in the conflict, hence an actor in the conflict.

Gates et al. (2016) argued that when conflicts recur it is a sign that people's grievances have not been addressed. Research has indicated that conflict situations soil or taint relationship between or among conflict parties (Gariba, 2015; Kpormasi, 2013; Adzahlie-Mensah, 2007; Adzahlie-Mensah & Benson, 2018; Mensah, 2013; Tsikata & Seini 2004). The findings thus support the literature that conflict affects the social spheres of conflict communities (Debrah et al., 2016). Conflicts impose worrying social consequences on people experiencing it (Brück et al. 2017; Asamoah, 2014). Again, the Zongo conflict in Nandom poses an image threat to Nandom. Conflicts create situations of insecurity in societies where they are occurring. Thus, people are concerned and worried that the zongo conflict in Nandom could taint the image of Nandom as a peaceful community. This feeds into Tsikata and Seini (2004), Jönsson (2007) and Gati (2008) argument that conflicts are worrying issues to many Ghanaians. Thus the finding supports Brück et al. (2017) and Asamoah (2014) argument that, conflicts visit worrisome economic consequences on populations experiencing them. Identity has become a consideration in the buying of goods and services among the zongo people in Nandom. This supports the literature that trade between conflicting groups tends to be daunting (Adzahlie-Mensah, 2007). Another economic implication that the study discovered was the loss or destruction of properties. Research affirmed that loss of property is common in conflict situations (Aremu, 2010; Adzahlie-Mensah, 2007; Greene, Buxton & Salonijs-Pasternak, 2006; UNDP, 2012; Tchombe, 2006; Tsikata & Seini, 2004). Asamoah (2014) argued that such security implications impact strongly on people's lives. The conflict among the zongo people in Nandom is religious and tribal in nature. The Zongo conflict in Nandom is among different tribes in the orthodox Muslims family. Religious and tribal/ethnic

conflicts are among the range of conflicts in Ghana (UNDP, 2012; Tsikata & Seini, 2004; Jönsson, 2007).

The findings agree with the literature that actors can be at various levels and playing varied roles (Grönberg et al., 2011).

4.2 Actors in the Conflict

The study was also aimed to determine the actors involved in the conflict. Under this section, the study explored the various actors in the conflict and their needs. The study was equally interested in determining who the allies of the actors in the conflict are and why. The interviews revealed that there were many actors in the conflict. Apart from the two main individuals in contestation over the Imamship, there were also state actors, traditional actors, independent or individual actors and group actors in the conflict.

Parties in the conflict as actors

The interviews revealed that the main actors in the zongo conflict in Nandom are Alhaji Ibrahim from the Wangara tribe and Alhaji Mahammad from the Moshi tribe. They are the two individuals who are still contesting each other over the Imamship of Nandom since the death of the last Imams. When Alhaji Ibrahim was put forward as the candidate for the vice Imam, the Imam (Alhaji Abdulai) at the time as indicated earlier, kicked against his nomination indicating that they cannot work together and claimed that he does not respect him. When Alhaji Abdulai was still alive he nominated Alhaji Mahammad (his son) to be the vice Imam but was also kicked against by the six other tribes. Thus, when he died and the Imam and vice position were both vacant, the Moshi faction now wants Alhaji Mahammad to be the chief Imam and the other six tribes also want Alhaji

Ibrahim to be the chief Imam. As such, the two people are now those contesting over the Imamship of Nandom. A participant indicated:

The parties involved are Alhaji Ibrahim and Alhaji Mahammud. They are the two people fighting for the Imamship. (Field Data, 2020)

The comment suggests that the two individuals are the main people who seem to now be at the forefront of the Imamship struggle. The interesting thing in the Imamship struggle is that Alhaji Ibrahim has always been put forward by the six other tribes to contest all the candidates of the Moshi tribe since the conflict started (from the time Malam Haruna and his vice became sick till now). That is, the six faction's candidate has contested all the candidates of the Moshi faction for the Imamship till date.

Group actors

The interviews revealed that there are tribal or ethnic groups that are acting in the conflict. Various ethnic or tribal groups within the zongo community have tended to support one of the individuals in the conflict for the Imamship. Six tribes (Dagomba, Wangara, Waala, Sisaala, Zabarma, and Fulani) have been and are still 'hooting' for Alhaji Ibrahim to be the Imam. The remaining one tribe (Moshi) is also seeking to produce the Imam. Given their support for their tribesmen in contention over the Imamship, the various tribes have become active actors in the conflict. Thus, there are group actors in the conflict. When I asked participants who the actors in the conflict are, some of them highlighted as follows:

The tribes in Zongo [and added,] we have Wangara, Dagomba, Waala, Fulani/Hausa, Moshi, Zabarma, Sisaala. But of all these chiefs it is only the Moshis that are alone but the rest of the chiefs are together. (Field Data, 2020)

Moshi chief is there, Wangara chief is there, Waala chief is there, Fulani chief is there, Hausa chief is there. So it got to a point that the Moshis were standing alone and the rest of these tribes are together. (Field Data, 2020)

The various ethnic groups, because the Dagombas, the Waalas, the Wangaras, the Sisaalas and the Fulanis and the Zabarmas they agree that Alhaji Ibrahim should become the chief Imam. The Moshis are the only people who are saying no they don't agree ... (Field Data, 2020)

The youth of Nandom at a point became actors in the conflict. The native Nandom youth according to participants, became angry at the way the zongo people whom they regard as non-indigenes, want to destroy the peace and image of the district with the conflict, and thus demonstrated in the streets of Nandom town. The study discovered that at some point the native youth issued warnings to the two sides involved in the conflict that anyone that fights or cause violence because of their Imamship issue would be sacked from the land. For instance, a traditional leader interviewed highlighted:

...the indigenes of Nandom saw that the way they are going about their issue they don't want peace to be there, so they also organized. The chief palace people organized and the people in the villages came up and joined and they did a demonstration ...the demonstrators also told them that if they hear that you and this person fought that that day they will sack them from the land... (Field Data, 2020)

The action of the youth of Nandom to oppose the conflict has made them actors in the conflict. This is because since their demonstration, they have continued to watch the two sides carefully and committed to follow through their threat of banishment from the land if any disturbance is recorded again. This was confirmed when I interacted with the keepers of the Nandom stool. The acting reagent indicated that they are watching them and that anyone who dares to misbehave again would be sacked from the land.

Traditional actors

There were traditional actors in the conflict. I realized in the interviews that the late Nandom Paramount chief, Naa Dr. Charles Puo-ure Puobe-Chiir II intervened in the conflict. The former Paramount chief until his death has engaged the two factions in an attempt to restore calm in the Zongo community. Aside the paramount chief, other divisional chiefs and elders at the Nandom chief's palace also attempted to engage the two sides to restore peace in the community. However, their efforts did not yield a resolution. Even, the study revealed that some of the zongo people viewed that their efforts were biased.

State actors

Also, the study unearthed that there were state actors in the conflict. The police and the military have always risen to the occasion whenever there is disturbance in the zongo community, restoring calm and the smooth running of business in the town. The study found that the police in particular, sometimes mount stand in the mosque to ensure that people worshipped without violence and confrontation as well as patrols in the community. Participants indicated that Peace Council has been active in the conflict since the conflict started. Participants indicated in the interviews that Peace Council has on several occasions engaged the two sides in the conflict to reach a resolution. However, though their efforts did not yield positive results in terms of resolution, their engagement of the two sides in the conflict to a resolution made them actors in the conflict. Government through its functionaries became an actor in the conflict. A participant stated:

... Peace Council, the DISEC, the REGSEC, they made several attempts... (Field Data, 2020)

Government functionaries such the former District Chief Executive of Nandom (Hon. Cutbert Baaba Kuupiel), the current Member of Parliament for the Nandom constituency and minister for the interior (Hon. Ambrose Dery), and former Upper West regional minister (Alhaji Sulemana Alhassan) have in various capacities attempted to ensure calm between the two factions. On one occasion that violence ensued leading to the burning of a room in one of the contender's house, as indicated in the interviews by participants, the then regional minister (Alhaji Sulemana Alhassan) visited the scene, encouraged both sides to remain calm and committed to setting up a committee to investigate the whole issue. A participant indicated in the interview that Hon. Ambrose Dery, the MP and minister for the interior also warned the two sides that anyone who engages in violence again would be arrested and dealt with in accordance with the law. Another participant also shared how the then DCE – Hon. Cutbert Baaba Kuupiel acted to prevent a gathering and the Wa chief Imam from coming to install one of the contenders for the vice Imamship which according to the participant, would have been very disastrous and bloody if the DCE had not intervened. The participant explained that the other faction was also planning to cause mayhem at that occasion but that the intervention of the DCE to halt the occasion prevented the clashes from occurring.

Independent or individual actors

Other independent persons played roles in the conflict and thus have become actors in the conflict. Throughout the interviews, participants mentioned some individuals who have been trying since the conflict started to ensure that the two sides reach a resolution.

Participants mentioned that Rev. Fr. Koyag (a priest in the Nandom Minor Basilica) and late Madam Rosaline Baatuolkuu (a respected woman in Nandom and peace promoter) have engaged the two sides severally to ensure a resolution. But their efforts were abortive too. A participant shared:

...the late madam Rosaline Baatuolkuu attempted severally... (Field Data, 2020)

Grönberg et al. (2011) affirmed that states, organizations or individuals could serve as actors in various capacities in a conflict. This supports the literature that some conflict actors could be opposing or supporting the conflict (Grönberg et al., 2011; Adzahli-Mensah et al., 2016). Those who are opposed to the conflict were making efforts to secure a resolution. Some were engaged in acts that will ensure a stoppage of the conflict. However, some of the people who claimed to be against the conflict were perceived by some of the zongo people as even fueling the conflict or making the antagonism between them worse. Grönberg et al. (2011) explained that while people outside the conflict society may view an actor as opposed to the conflict those within the conflict society could see the actor as supportive of the conflict. However, the extent to which members participate in mobilizations for the success of the group's goal would be affected when there is fragmentation within groups that share the same identity (Pearlman & Cunningham 2011).

4.2.1 Interest(s) of the Actors in the Conflict

The interviews revealed that the two contenders and their tribes' interest has been in the Imamship of Nandom. The two main individuals in the conflict are interested in becoming the Imam of Nandom. According to participants, the tribes' interest is to

produce the Imam of Nandom who would be leading the Muslim community during Friday prayers and performing all their Islamic occasions for them. Some participants shared as follows:

That is what I said that it is the Moshi who said that they will not agree that I be made the imam, even it is not the Imam but assistant and they said they will not agree. And the other tribes said no it is a must because you were first in charge. (Field Data, 2020)

The interest is in the Imamship. They want the imam. They want the imam to be a Wangara because Moshis was having it. So I think their interest they [Dagomba, Wangara, Sisaala, Fulani, Zabarma, Waala] have is that they want the Imamship to be in the hands of the Wangaras. (Field Data, 2020)

Their interest is in the Imamship. Who becomes the Nandom municipal Imam, because it comes with benefits. (Field Data, 2020)

The comments suggest that every faction wants to produce the Imam. Apart from the main actors and the tribes in the conflict, the rest of the actors including state, traditional and other independent actors and the Youth of Nandom were regarded as interested in ensuring a resolution of the conflict. According to some participants, they were not interested in who becomes the Imam of Nandom. Rather, participants stated that their interest was in ensuring peace and calm in the zongo community. However, in the interviews, both factions at one point or the other accused some of the intervening parties or persons as having vested interest in the conflict.

Therefore, Galtung (2000) indicated that the realization of one's goal is synonymous to the satisfaction of one's basic needs. The dynamics of the Zongo conflict in Nandom show that there were many elements such as emotions, behaviour, feeling, actors, interests, and needs that are interacting. This interaction has created a pattern of

behaviour where conflict parties no longer trust intervening parties and their ability to resolve the conflict. DST explains that a system made up of several interacting elements changes over time and creates a pattern of behaviour (van Geert, 2011; Lunkenheimer, 2018; Thelen & Smith, 2005).

4.2.2 Allies in the conflict

The study asked participants who the allies of the two contenders for the Imamship are. The interviews reveal that the allies of the two people who have been contesting over the Imamship are their various tribes. That is, now, while Alhaji Mahammud is supported by his Moshi tribesmen, Alhaji Ibrahim is being supported by his Wangara tribe. I realised in the interviews that the Waala, Dagomba, Zabarma, Fulani and Sisaala tribes rallied behind and supported the Wangara tribe and Alhaji Ibrahim for the Imamship. A participant stated:

...the six chiefs they said I am the one they have chosen and the moshi also said that they will not agree. (Field Data, 2020)

Other participants shared as follows:

Their allies are their tribes. So everybody rally behind their tribe. They sponsor you they do everything for their person to take over. (Field Data, 2020)

The various ethnic groups because they feel like, this is my tribe's man so he should be. (Field Data, 2020)

The comments suggest that every tribe supports their kinsman for the Imamship. However, the interviews also reveal that there may some people who may not support their own tribesman for the Imamship. For instance, an elder indicated as follows:

...we have some people who are Wangara and supporting the Moshis. But you see we have all the tribes, we have Wangara, Fulani, they have Fulani chief, have Dagomba, within the Dagomba some of them are there who are supporting the Moshis, we know them. (Field Data, 2020)

Although there are Dagara Muslims, participants stated that they have decided to remain neutral throughout the conflict. According to participants, the Dagara Muslims said they are indigenes of the land and as such would not want to side with anyone. The Dagara Muslims are indigenous people of Nandom who have decided to become Muslims. Meanwhile, I realized in the interviews that the Moshi faction accused some elders at the Nandom chief's palace of supporting the other faction. For instance, a Moshi elder indicated in the interviews as follows:

...they got up and wanted to come and announce that they have chosen Alhaji Ibrahim. But you too you don't worship our religion you don't know how they choose deputy or Imamship here. So when it got to that point I think Ambrose [the MP] heard of it. Ambrose [the MP] called them and told them that the meeting that they want to call that the day they are scheduling that meeting that they should call the meeting off. That he doesn't want them to call that meeting and bring any disturbance here. (Field Data, 2020)

On the other hand, the faction of the six tribes also accused the late paramount chief of Nandom, Naa Dr. Charles Puo-ure, and the MP of the Nandom constituency, Ambrose Dery of supporting the Moshi. A chief from the six tribes interviewed in the study stated that no one can convince him that the MP and the late Paramount chief have not supported the Moshi tribe. The chief added that, that the MP and the late paramount chief both said that the Moshi tribe is the majority and thus, supported them. The chief claimed that the MP is supporting the Moshi because of votes. However, contrary to this claim of the MP supporting a faction, a traditional leader who was once involved in a resolution attempt indicated that the MP is not supporting any faction. The traditional leader explained that because the MP was performing his duties as a minister of the interior, by trying to ensure peace and stop some gatherings that were potential threats to peace that

some people whose agenda could not pull through as a result of the intervention decided to accuse the MP of supporting a particular faction.

I realized in the interviews that the chief Imam of Wa attempted to come and install Alhaji Ibrahim (one of the contenders for the Imamship of Nandom) as the Imam:

...one day we were sitting and heard that the Wa chief imam has given a date that he is coming to install alhaji Ibrahim as the imam deputy in Nandom here.
(Field Data, 2020)

The comment suggests that the then Wa chief Imam was supporting the faction of the six tribes. According to an elder from the Moshi faction, when they heard of the planned installation, that tensions began to grow and the late Nandom paramount Chief and the then DCE had to involve the BNI to detain the Wa chief Imam deliberately so that he could not come on that day since he had insisted to come after several calls on him by the paramount Chief of Nandom not to come. Interestingly, both factions have tended to deny these accusations from the other side in the interviews.

After establishing who the perceived allies are in the conflict, I asked participants why these perceived allies supported the people they claimed they are aligning with. Participants explained that the ethnic groups allied with contenders because they identify with them. I realized in the interviews that a perceived 'neutral' person from Wa who now leads prayers every Friday in the central mosque was being accused of taking sides in the conflict. He stated as follows:

...because they were doing that that the late chief said they will bring someone from Wa to come and be leading their prayers. Even the person was coming and at a point he was having a problem these people will say he siding, these people will say he is siding here and the other will also say he is siding there. So it is always a problem for the person. **(Field Data, 2020)**

4.3 Threats to the Resolution of the Conflict

The study also sought an understanding of why the conflict has been difficult to resolve despite several attempts by state and traditional systems and other individuals to resolve it. The purpose was to unearth the various factors that constitute threats or constraints to the resolution of the conflict and how they have decided on the conflict throughout, so that conscious of them, subsequent resolution attempt(s) could be approached in a manner that would deal with these issues and to produce outcomes that will ensure lasting solution to the conflict. Thus, participants were asked what made the resolution of the conflict difficult.

Emerging themes from the interviews were: lack of confidence and trust in intervening bodies; poor interaction between state and traditional systems and the conflict parties; perceived political interference; failure of intervening bodies to analyse the dynamics of the conflict before attempting a resolution; poor perception of the conflict; perceived economic gains, recognition and prestige; and rumours. I realized in the interviews that there were no threats posed by resources or financial wherewithal in the resolution of the conflict.

4.3.1 Poor interaction between state and traditional intervening systems and the conflict parties

The study found that the Zongo people were not happy with the way state institutions and traditional institutions handled the conflict. Both factions indicated in the interview that how the conflict was handled by the traditional authorities and the Peace Council further caused tension and at some times, confrontations. An elder shared:

So they brought peace council, peace council tried for long. Many people tried to intervene but any day that they will be bringing someone to come and intervene in the matter and resolve it you always see that tension begins to rise again. (Field Data, 2020)

The comment suggests resolution attempts rather tend to cause more tension than reduce it. Some participants claimed that some intervening authorities were using power rather than mediation in handling the matter and that made the issue not to be resolved. Again, participants indicated that some intervening bodies were forcing solutions on them and that made them not to listen to them again. For instance, a participant stated how some intervening authorities confessed not to have handled the issue well:

...the paramount chief knows, he said he used chieftaincy power but that the issue is not solved and in fact the issue is not solved. (Field Data, 2020)

A chief from one of the six tribes' faction in the interview indicated how someone who was brought from the regional capital to be leading prayers was not shown to the entire Zongo community but only to one of the factions in the conflict. The chief added that when they heard that the neutral person who was brought from Wa was presented to the other faction (their opponent) that they also decided that they will not do whatever the Nandom traditional authority say. For instance, the chief recounted:

When they brought the Waal-bie [the neutral person from Wa], instead of you to call all the Zonguole [people of Zongo], you are having the misunderstanding so we are bringing this person to give you to lead you to be praying so that when you resolve the issue he will go. But you took the same thing to Kotoko. Kotoko and Hearts cannot live together. So when they brought they went and presented him to him [Moshi candidate for the Imamship]. We also kept quiet. We said that you can force a cow to the river but the water, it will not drink. (Field Data, 2020)

According to some participants, at a point, while the paramount Chief will be saying a different thing that Peace Council will also be telling them another thing. Participants indicated that Peace Council will come and talk to them and go and the traditional

authority will also summon them to talk to them and at the end what they will be told will be different from what they were told by the Peace Council. Thus, two institutions were talking to and seem to be telling the conflict parties different things at the same time. According to participants, that made it difficult for them to accept whatever they say. A chief in a proverbial statement shared in the interview:

Do you know corn husk? When you sow them will they grow? That is our issue.
(Field Data, 2020)

For the chief, intervening bodies have already spoiled the whole thing in the way they dealt with it initially and that it will be difficult for them to resolve again. Perhaps, this was one of the reasons why on one occasion, as indicated by a traditional leader in the interview, that the Nandom traditional authority and Peace Council decided to sit together with the two factions. However, that appeared too late as parties in the conflict had already been unhappy with the way the two institutions handled the matter and have decided not to heed to anything they say.

The study found that traditional authorities seem not even aware that at the time they were intervening in the conflict, a state institution (Peace Council) had also been engaging the conflict parties. Again, the study revealed that intervening bodies at a point left the Zongo people to their fate and this made the parties to continue to engage in the conflict. A traditional leader interviewed shared for example:

Oh the resolution of their issue hmmm...when we intervened we thought when intervene with the Peace Council people they will be able to talk to them to understand. But the time that we were entering into the matter it was even late because the peace council people told us that they have been in the issue for long so and thought they could resolve the issue but they were not able to resolve it. And we brought them again...and that was the time they were now telling us that if they come again that they will burn their vehicles. So that is where we got to a

point and said ok if it is like that we will also remove our hands and leave their matter to them. (Field Data, 2020)

According to one of the elders interviewed, the conflict would not have gotten to its current state if traditional authorities and elders had addressed the issue properly when it first began. The participant stated as follows:

But for me, the chiefs at the beginning I said like the chiefs, if they had done their work, the chiefs if they had done their work...perhaps the issue would have been resolved. They were also the people who supposed to follow and ensure that this issue is resolved but they didn't do it. (Field Data, 2020)

A traditional leader interviewed confirmed this assertion when he indicated;

But the time that we were entering into the matter it was even late... (Field Data, 2020)

Some participants also accused that some intervening bodies and committees that sat them down to ensure a resolution never gave them feedback after they told them their stories. Particularly, the interviews reveal that a committee that was set up to investigate the issue and to make recommendation for a finality to be brought to the issue has not given them feedback as to what their recommendations are. Such situations breed suspicion and could make people un-cooperative towards subsequent efforts at resolving the conflict. For instance, some participants shared as follows:

The committee members are five plus the chiefs in Nandom. So we sat and they ask me like the way you asked me what is the issue like then I narrated what I know. ...we finished the issue and we left. Up till now I have not heard anything. I wrote a letter and asked. I gave a copy to the regional minister, a copy to the DCE, and said I have not heard anything from the committee, I want to find out has the issue finished like that. What shows that the issue will not occur again? As I am talking to you now, I have not heard anything. (Field Data, 2020)

I am telling you again the committee report was ready as at 15 September 2018, exactly ten days [after it was inaugurated] but the committee report is till not out. So where is the committee report? So people are beginning to feel that somebody has got an interest in it... (Field Data, 2020)

The comments suggest intervening parties' interaction with conflict parties were not forthcoming. The comments also suggest that there is interference in the work of the committee set up in 2018 to look into the Zongo conflict in Nandom.

4.3.2 Lack of confidence and trust in intervening bodies

I realized in the interviews that the Zongo people no longer have confidence and trust in intervening bodies bringing resolution to the conflict among them. Participants stated that instead of intervening bodies ensuring that the conflict was resolved, that they were rather biased and tend to be supporting their opponents. One participant indicated as follows:

Let's say me and you have an issue and someone called us to resolve the issue and the person I have the issue with came and called you the person who called us to resolve the issue and you entered into a room about fifteen minutes and then came out said that you go when I am ready I will call you. How will you think? You went to the judge and they came and called the judge and said that judge let's go into the room and talk and you sat waiting for the judge and he came out fifteen minutes later and said that you should go home that he will find a day and call you again. How will you think? Even if they go and didn't do anything but what will you think? (Field Data, 2020)

The comment suggests that intervening bodies' conduct were rather fueling the conflict. Also, the comment suggests that the neutrality of intervening bodies was questionable and this made them to loose confidence and trust in them. The interviews also reveal how both factions warned Peace Council not to come to them again claiming of wanting to ensure peace. I realised in the interviews that the two factions in the Zongo conflict in Nandom threatened to burn the vehicles of Peace Council should they see them again. One participant indicated in the interviews as follows:

Even when the Peace Council people came they told we the chiefs to tell them that if the peace council people come again that they will burn their vehicles. So that means they meant the fight. (Field Data, 2020)

The comment suggests that both factions in the zongo conflict in Nandom were not happy with how the resolution of the conflict is being handled. Some of the participants believe intervening parties rather worsened the conflict situation among them. A participant indicated as follows:

...people who even entered into the issue rather spoiled the whole thing. (Field Data, 2020)

The comment suggests that instead of intervening bodies ensuring peace, they were rather worsening the situation. It also suggests that anytime a resolution is attempted the conflict normally escalates again. I realized in the interviews that the two factions tend to want to fight again whenever intervention efforts are procured. A traditional leader stated in the interviews as follows:

...when we intervened, we and the Peace Council people, after we sat with them that is where it looks like they want to fight again...because they were threatening one another. (Field Data, 2020)

Many people tried to intervene but any day that they will be bringing someone to come and intervene in the matter and resolve it you always see that tension begin to rise again. (Field Data, 2020)

These comments further strengthen the earlier claim that the Zongo conflict in Nandom tend to occur again whenever intervening parties attempt a resolution. During one of my observation exercises, a day after I had interviewed three participants in the study, I went and sat again at the seamstress place that I indicated earlier since we could not finish our conversation the last time I was there. Noteworthy, the “seamstress” used here is a pseudonym so that I can protect the identity of the person and the shop. We continued our conversation about the Zongo conflict in Nandom. During our conversation, she told me that now they do not want to talk to anyone who comes claiming of wanting to resolve the conflict. She explained that the reason why they no longer tolerate anybody or

mediators ‘who claim to be conflict resolution experts’ is that, that anytime such people attempt a resolution that the conflict normally occur again and as such they no longer trust anyone.

4.3.3 Perceived political interference

I realized in the interviews that the conflict parties’ perception of interference of political figures in the conflict decided on the resolution of the conflict. Interviews with some of the Zongo chiefs and elders revealed that their refusal to accept some recommendations was because they think that some political figures are supporting one of the factions. I realized in the interviews that the faction of the six tribes believe the MP of Nandom is supporting the Moshi tribe for the Imamship. One of the chiefs in the interviews stated:

The paramount chief supported them...Ambrose Dery [the MP] supported them. We said, me in particular said chief have you seen, if NDC people are fighting over chairmanship if you ask NPP to come and resolve the case will they be able to resolve it? How can they resolve it? They can't resolve it. That means he doesn't want it to be addressed. (Field Data, 2020)

The comment suggests that a conflict party which believes that an intervening party is supporting their opponent may not accept any recommendation that will come from such intervening parties. When I asked an elder from the Moshi tribe that is politics a threat to the resolution of the conflict he indicated as follows:

Yes it is a threat. You see the time that Ambrose said they shouldn't pronounce him, if they had pronounced, people would have died. If they had pronounced Alhaji Ibrahim as the deputy Imam, the Moshis too will not accept him to lead us to pray. When we were not even fighting but if that had happened we would have even killed each other. Because of that he [the MP] prevented it and because of that they are fighting Ambrose [MP] up till date. (Field Data, 2020)

His comment suggests that because the MP once stopped a meeting that was meant to pronounce one person as the Imam, for peace and security reasons that the six tribes decided

to accuse him of supporting the Moshi. Others indicated in the interview that they cannot deny the involvement of politics in the zongo conflict in Nandom. One participant shared:

Everybody is a political animal. We all have political interest, okay I am not trying to deny that there are no political interests or needs or that. It is there, we all belong to various political parties, so that is it. (Field Data, 2020)

The comment suggests that there are political undertones in the conflict although others may try to deny it. One of the contenders for the Imamship accounted in the interview how he was asked by the late paramount chief of Nandom that he heard that he (the contender) belongs to a particular political party. The participant shared as follows:

I was there and one day he called me again, that is the third time and he told me that he heard that I am an NPP member, that day I was angry and I told the chief that is it a crime for me to be an NPP? People are in NPP and they crossed carpet to NDC and he told me that he is part. Then I said chief what brings NPP and NDC issue in our path of worship. What even brings the issue to the chief's palace? It is about worship. I am a Ghanaian I have the right to choose the party I want but what brings party issues into our worship and he said that I should take it easy that I should go that he has heard. (Field Data, 2020)

The comment reveals that the actor was unhappy when the paramount chief asked him of the political party he belongs. The comment suggest also that the actor became convinced by the question from the late paramount Chief that there are political hands in the conflict. Thus, when people perceive that political lenses are being drawn into the issue they may not accept anything that comes from resolution efforts.

I realized in the interviews that the 'refusal' to publish or implement the finished report of the committee that set up by the then regional minister of Upper West region to investigate the zongo conflict in Nandom made some people to be convinced that there is political interference. One participant indicated as follows:

Now it was published on Ghana News Agency that, the reporter quoted the chairman of that particular committee, that, he said that if they are to implement

the recommendations of the committee there will be peace in Nandom. So who doesn't want peace to be in Nandom? So people are beginning to say that perhaps there is someone who doesn't want peace in Nandom. So why is the report still there? 23rd August is going to be exactly two years. Several attempts have been made to get the report out but nothing. (Field Data, 2020)

The comment suggests how frustrated some people are in terms of the inability to implement or publish the Justice Sidney's committee report. The comment also suggests that some people somewhere do not want the publication and/or the implementation of the report of the committee. Some participants claimed that such persons are afraid that if the report is implemented they may lose the votes of a faction that will be disadvantaged. One participant indicated as follows:

Since the issue came and we got to know those whose hands are in the issue, they are refusing the issue to be resolved because they see that if they resolve the issue they will lose their votes. If they see to it that the issue is resolved, and it goes one way, they will lose the other side's votes. (Field Data, 2020)

Another participant said:

This person will enter into it and they want votes. (Field Data, 2020)

An elder in the interview recounted how he was informed that there are unseen hands in the zongo conflict in Nandom:

Peace Council came after that lady. One Rev. Father from Kaleo we call him Alhaji, he is in Wa, all of them came here. And they told us that we should leave the issue that the issue is not here. I grew up and met my father so when he said that I understand. (Field Data, 2020)

This was corroborated by another participant in the interview when he indicated how some interveners were stopped from ensuring a resolution of the conflict:

There was a day that they said they were coming to finalise everything but they were stopped. They didn't come again so why. Okay fine peace council has been stopped, even members of the community who tried, the natives of Nandom who tried to resolve the issue were also stopped. A committee was set when the issue happened in 2018 and they finalise everything and said this is what we recommend. So why is the recommendation not implemented? (Field Data, 2020)

Some participants believe that there is political interest in the conflict but seems not to want to mention names. Some participants highlighted as follows:

So people have interest...people are there. If you check well, I will stop here they will tell you the people who are there. If it reached that I should mention names I will mention names and show you why I say they are in the issue. (Field Data, 2020)

Somebody has got an interest in it. ...there is someone, I don't know who but I am sure. Something is hiding somewhere. (Field Data, 2020)

The comments suggest that there is interference in the Zongo conflict in Nandom. However, a traditional leader interviewed in the study was of a contrary view that politicians were rather responsible for the reduction of the conflict. He shared as follows:

I can say it is the politicians who are even making the thing to be reducing because they always want to say it is the MP that is responsible but the MP said since he is the interior minister he can't be the interior minister and be addressing issues while there is conflict or fight in his house. So before they will hear that fighting will occur he always let the police to come and keep guard at the place so that fighting will not ensue. The interior minister is keeping guard so that fighting will not erupt perhaps destruction will come. (Field Data, 2020)

The comment suggests that the claim that the MP of Nandom is interfering in the Zongo conflict in Nandom is not true. Again, it suggests that the MP's interest was in ensuring peace and calm in Nandom and not to determine who the Imam of Nandom should be.

4.3.4 Perceived gains (economic, recognition and prestige) from the conflict

The conflict has led to a situation where both sides now conduct their activities separately. Each side now recognize and treat their candidates for the Imamship of Nandom as their Imams who perform their occasions including naming ceremony, funerals, marriage ceremonies and every other occasion within the Islamic tradition. As such, some participants indicated in the interview that the prestige and recognition that

comes with one being regarded as an Imam and that are being enjoyed by both contenders currently are perhaps, making them to continue to act in certain ways that will not bring a resolution to the conflict. The interviews reveal that the contenders for Imamship are reaping benefits and would not want the conflict to end. One participant shared as follows:

...the two Imams we are talking about do not have a specific job they do apart from talking about Islam. So at the end of the day they are fighting simply because when you become the imam you get salary, you get allowances and what have you. So all of them are looking at the benefits they are going to get from. And you know the two major political parties, the president of the republic and the Flag bearer of the major opposition, all of them come and they come to meet them. So look at the prestige and all that. And so all of them have two-two wives with children and they need them to attend better schools, so they are looking into that how much I can benefit and take care of my family. (Field Data, 2020)

The comment suggests that it is not that there are no resources to ensure a resolution of the conflict but that people's personal interests and their quest to fulfill them is making the resolution of the conflict daunting. It also suggests that the contenders perhaps feel that if the issue is resolved and they happen not to be the Imam they may lose all the benefits they are currently enjoying. Again, the comment suggests that the economic benefits (salaries and allowances) and the respect that comes with being the Imam is motivating the two individuals who have been contesting the Imamship position over the years to be uncompromising. Particularly, some participants claim that both contenders for the Imamship position are being sponsored by their tribesmen who are abroad and outside Nandom and because of that the contenders in the conflict do not want the conflict to end so that they could continue to reap those benefits. One participant indicated as follows:

When you look at especially the two people that are fighting for the Imamship for example, out that currently Alhaji Ibrahim got people to sponsor him. I may not know the sources but currently he has two cars but initially he was only having a motorbike. But the tribe also wants to raise him so high to upgrade, so right now

some people have bought him two pickups cars. So right now he is using cars. So indirectly he wouldn't like the quarrel to stop. And because Alhaji Mahammud too the Moshi too, those who are outside and what have you have also been calling, sending him money, so indirectly the two of them they wouldn't want the thing to come down. And political wise all the MPs will visit them separately but initially they would have only just gone to the Imam. But now the two major political parties, all of them will move to this man will move to this man in order to say that we did not support only one. So, all of them are reaping benefits. (Field Data, 2020)

The comment suggests that the main actors in the Zongo conflict in Nandom acquired certain properties due to the conflict and may thus not want the conflict to end.

4.3.5 Failure to of intervening bodies to analyse the dynamics of the conflict before attempting resolution

The interviews also revealed that the failure of intervening bodies to analyse and understand the dynamics in the conflict before proceeding to make efforts to ensure the resolution of the conflict was one of the factors responsible for the conflict still being unresolved. One of the elders indicated how on one occasion he told the paramount chief and palace elders that they do not understand how things are done within the Islamic religion and as such cannot tell them what they should do or not do. The elder in the interview stated as follows:

...Then the chief said if that is the case that he will go to Wa and bring someone to come and lead prayers in the mosque. Then I told them again it will not happen that way, leave our religion matters to us, you don't know the paths in our religion, what you can do for us as a chief you can, Ghana here everywhere you have the power you can roam and ask them to look for an Islamic scholar someone who understands the Quran to come and sit with us and teach us the way. ...we will follow what he says. But you who don't know the Quran what will you do? (Field Data, 2020)

The comment suggests that any intervening party who does not understand the Zongo conflict in Nandom may find it difficult to resolve it. Also, I realized in the interviews

that some of the intervening parties had little knowledge of the Zongo conflict in Nandom and thus could not ensure a resolution of the conflict. One of the chiefs in the interviews shared as follows:

Peace council came and entered into the issue. One lady...her name is Rosaline Baatuolkuu, she entered into the issue and realized that the issue is more than she thought and said this your issue, that there is something. (Field Data, 2020)

Thus, the comment suggests that instead of intervening bodies and individuals understanding the conflict and the issues surrounding it first before attempting a resolution, they appeared to have rather rushed into addressing it and this made the resolution of the conflict difficult. Other participants shared similarly that understanding of the conflict is key to resolving it:

...the people that are there and can address the issue when they know the issue well they can resolve it. (Field Data, 2020)

...not everybody can just come and resolve it. (Field Data, 2020)

The comments suggest that intervening parties that have little knowledge and understanding of the Zongo conflict in Nandom may end up making recommendation based on incomplete stories and that may not address the issue of concern.

4.3.6 Communal Friday prayers in the mosque

I realized in the interviews that the central mosque became a threat to resolving the conflict. The interviews reveal that the mosque was the avenue or locus where most of the fights and confrontations occurred. Since the two sides are contesting over who should be the Imam and lead them to pray on every Friday, some participants indicated that people tend to prepare for fight whenever they were going to the mosque for Friday prayers. For instance, when I asked a traditional leader in the interview that is it when the

Muslims are celebrating their occasions (naming, funeral and wedding ceremonies and Friday prayers) that the conflict even occur thereby making it difficult to resolve the conflict, he answered:

That is where the fight even occurs. Oh yes it [the mosque] was a threat. They were threatening one another there. So I think that is why the mosque was locked till when they themselves agreed that they will agree that someone from Wa should come and be leading them to pray. When they are having their prayer occasions that is when the fight normally emerges. Even there was a time we heard that they went to mosque with pepper spray, cutlasses and others. I think that was the period that it was proper that the mosque be locked. They were threatening each other. (Field Data, 2020)

Another participant statedm similarly as follows:

Mostly it happens too on Fridays but now it hasn't happen again. From 2013 to 2018 August, there was time that they have to close down the mosque. (Field Data, 2020)

The comments suggest that violence and confrontation were mostly staged in the mosque during Friday prayers. Also, the comments suggest that different acts of violence were being carried out in the mosque during Friday prayers. The comments further suggest that anytime fighting erupts in the mosque the police always lock up the mosque. The comment also suggests that the two sides were finding it difficult to worship together without fighting and heated quarrel erupting. This could perhaps, explain why the two factions now pray separately on Fridays since the last opening of the mosque for Islamic activities. The study discovered that while one group is praying in the main mosque the other is using a mosque at the Nandom SHS for their Friday prayers. An elder indicated in the interview:

What will bring disturbance we don't want it, we will leave, nobody should go there. Once we have mosque at secondary school, when we get up on Friday we always go there and leave this one [the central mosque]. Once we know where the powerful people are we can't also be challenging them but they cannot also force

us to go to the mosque or pray so we left the mosque [central mosque] for them.
(Field Data, 2020)

4.3.7 Poor perception of ‘conflict and peace’ by some intervening parties

The interviews revealed that intervening bodies’ perception of conflict could have had deciding effect on the difficulty in resolving the conflict over the years. During my interaction with elders in the Nandom chief’s palace, I observed that their perception of conflict or peace may have influenced the way they handled the conflict between the two Muslim factions in the Zongo community. When I first approached them during the data collection process, they were hesitant in responding to the research indicating that as far as they (paramountcy) are concerned that there is peace in Nandom Zongo and that nobody is currently fighting. One of the keepers of the Nandom stool indicated during my interaction with the m as follows:

... As far as we are concerned there peace in the zongo. Are you seeing people fighting when you pass through town?... (Field Data, 2020)

The comment suggests that some intervening parties had narrow understanding of peace since it suggests peace as when people are not actively fighting or there are no physical confrontations. Thus, it appears their perception of the conflict in the Zongo community may be influencing the way they handled or are handling or approaching it.

4.3.8 Perceived presence of ‘spoilers’

The interviews reveal that there could be spoilers or conflict profiteers in the Zongo conflict in Nandom. For instance, when I asked some participants in the interviews that do you think there are people who are profiting from the conflict and as such are doing things that will make the conflict to continue so that they can continue to profit and they answered:

Of course, yes. ...they see that if the issue is resolved they will loose. (Field Data, 2020)

Yeah, they don't want the conflict to go because indirectly or directly they are all benefitting. (Field Data, 2020)

There is something or somebody somewhere who doesn't want the lasting peace in Nandom. That is it, so they want it to continue so that they will continue to benefit. (Field Data, 2020)

That is it. But that one I cannot show you. You see if you are not a Muslim and you are entering into Muslims affair you have an interest. But that one I cannot show you. (Field Data, 2020)

The comments suggest that there profiteers in the Zongo conflict in Nandom who could be acting to stall the resolution of the conflict. Other participants were of the view that people could be profiting from the conflict not being resolved but that such things are always kept away from the public. For example, a participant intimated:

Well because it is always like that such things are always underground they don't come out clear for us to see because some of them you will hear and realize that it is a rumour. (Field Data, 2020)

4.3.9 Rumours

The interviews reveal that there were rumours about planned attacks or attempts to pronounce one candidate or the other as the Imam by one faction and which tend to increase tensions in the community. In one of an earlier comment, a participant indicated how they prepared and waited for the other faction when they heard that people from the other faction were coming to attack him. Another respondent explained that sometimes they will be told that the other side is planning to stage an attack in the mosque and when that happens they also prepare when going to the mosque to pray. Some respondents indicated that rumours always cause tensions to rise especially, when such rumours lead to heavy security presence in the community. A traditional leader explained:

...some of the conflict does not even reach a particular stage but they will tell lies that they fought, shot guns and things. So when it happens like that...they will bring police and soldiers but when they come they will say what they heard about the conflict when they come, it is not always like. (Field Data, 2020)

One participant also shared that sometimes their tribesmembers (youngmen) in another town will hear that the other side is planning to attack their people back home and would sometimes travel home to help and upon reaching home they would discover that it was not true. One participant indicated in the interviews as follows:

Yeah, for example some of the brothers that are in different towns and what have you sometimes they will hear this before you realize they are calling and everything. Some will even say we have to enter car to go home that we have heard that these people are planning to do this so we have to enter car and go home. Sometimes they will pick a car and rush home before they realize things are not that way and they will come back. [So] yeah, [it is] a serious threat. (Field Data, 2020)

The interviews reveal that when it happens like that tensions tend to grow and confrontations which would not have occurred tend to occur and thus making it difficult for resolution and peace to be attained. Due to the threat rumour posed to the resolution of the Zongo conflict in Nandom, a participant indicated that now when they hear of any rumour that they tend to treat it with the seriousness it deserves by informing the security.

He stated as follows:

Oh yeah we hear those things. We hear those things. You see there are times you will get the information we know how to act... There are times that I think two or three months ago there was a particular time on Friday there was rumours that they were planning to do something like that, okay. People came to the mosque and saw policemen they were surprised but I wasn't surprised... So once you hear a rumour you put seriousness into it, you tell the security agencies... (Field Data, 2020)

When I asked one of the tribes' elders in the interview that does rumour pose a threat to the resolution of the conflict he indicated that:

Yes, at the beginning. The time that it use to happen like that we used to hear that they said they will do this that these people said they will do this but we realize later that it was all lies. But it was happening like that. (Field Data, 2020)

The comment suggests that rumours were fuelling the Zongo conflict in Nandom more at the initial stage of the conflict. Thus, this could have contributed to frequent confrontations that characterized the conflict at the initial stages.

Research has indicated the interference of politics in conflicts in Ghana (WASCI & SIPRI, 2011; UNDP, 2012; Tonah, 2012). Some of the people in the Zongo community in Nandom believed that there are political hands in the conflict. The six tribes' faction believe that the MP of Nandom is supporting the Moshi and this made attempts to get both factions to come to an agreement difficult. However, contrary to this claim by the six tribes' faction, it has been reported that the MP does not have power over who becomes the Imam of Nandom (Quaye, 2017). It appears state and traditional intitutions that intervened in the conflict were finding it difficult to procure appropriate solution to the conflict. Perhaps, this explains why Aall (2015) argued that it is daunting to 'diagnose and design' solutions for conflicts in Africa. It seems there was no interaction between intervening state institutions and traditional authority at the initial stages of intervention in the Zongo conflict in Nandom.

State and traditional institutions that were intervening were more interested in securing a resolution but appear not to be addressing the underlying grievances of the conflict parties. When such things happen it makes it difficult for the conflict parties to accept recommendations. For instance, Gati (2008) stated that the conflict between the Adaklu

and Anyigbe people escalated because of state and traditional institutions' "failure" to address the grievances of the two communities. Since the conflict has its roots in people's grievances not being addressed, it is proper that any effort for a resolution of the zongo conflict in Nandom be focused on addressing those concerns. Therefore, Mahama and Longi (2013) and El-Bushra (2017) insisted that unless the underlying issues in conflicts are dealt with, it would be difficult to secure peace. The conflict parties did not own the resolution processes that were procured throughout. When conflict parties feel that they do not own the resolution of their conflict securing lasting solutions tends to be difficult (Adzahlie-Mensah & Benson, 2018). Therefore, the crucial issue about conflicts is in how they are handled or approached once they occur (Bowd & Chikwanha, 2010; Tchombe, 2006; Mahama & Longi, 2013; Bukari, 2013).

Research argued that when parties in a conflict feel that stoppage of the fight will make them to lose their position or be marginalized, they may continue to fight or resume the fight so that they could maintain supremacy (Gates et al., 2016). I realized in the interviews that both contenders for the Imamship appear not to have job(s) that they do apart from talking about Islam. Collier and Hoeffler (2000) argued that when there is diaspora involvement, especially financial support, in the homeland conflict, it tends to make conflict more likely and the resolution difficult. Given the established link between the size of diaspora and influence on homeland conflict (Collier & Hoeffler, 2004; Collier & Hoeffler, 2002), a larger Nandom Zongo diaspora could make resolution of the Zongo conflict in Nandom more daunting and this may lead to intractability of the Zongo conflict in Nandom.

This supports Penu and Osei-Kufuor (2016) and Penu (2016) that intermittent violence and/or attacks in a conflict situation tends to mar peace processes and makes it difficult for intervention efforts to yield productive outcomes. The conflict parties now appear to be resistant to intervention efforts. Rogier (2004, p. 5) indicated that “resistance to peace efforts” makes conflict resolution challenging. The seemingly commitment of the conflict parties to the conflict, as Ducasse-Rogier (2004) stated, is a threat to the resolution of conflict. The lack of confidence and trust in third party interveners has been one of the strong threats to the resolution of the Zongo conflict in Nandom. Adzahlie-Mensah and Benson (2018) argued that conflict resolution could become very difficult when trust and confidence are not built in conflict parties. Therefore, trust and confidence building has been argued as essential in conflict resolution process. This is because mistrust and suspicion are exemplified in conflicts (Adzahlie-Mensah, 2007).

Also, Adzahlie-Mensah and Benson (2018) explained that when the confidence and trust of conflict parties are not built in the resolution process it tends to create a situation where the resolution process is not legitimated; parties may not value the conversation and feel uncomfortable to express their views. The finding also supports Ahiave (2013) revelation that lack of confidence of conflict parties in intervening bodies tends to impact negatively on the resolution of the conflict. Another threat to the resolution of the conflict was the failure of intervening efforts to analyse the dynamics in the conflict before attempting resolutions. Research has argued that an understanding of the dynamics of a conflict is significant for the resolution of the conflict (Mahama & Longi, 2013; Penu & Osei-Kufuor, 2016).

I realized in the interviews that intervention efforts did not try to understand the issues better before procuring a resolution. Körppen (2006) argued that conflict analysis is the primary activity to do when attempting to intervene in a conflict. The resolution of conflict is rooted in the analysis of the conflict. Thus, Kuupiel (2019) indicated that a conflict would be well resolved when it is well analysed. Many of the efforts that have been taken to resolve the Zongo conflict in Nandom failed to understand the local or contextual issues characterizing the conflict. As such, the resolution efforts were rather hasty to solving the conflict rather than understanding the underlying issues in the conflict. Conflict may persist unless the “underlying conflict factors [are] satisfactorily addressed” (El-Bushra, 2017, p. 4). It appears that intervening parties were not also patient. Conflict resolution is a process; requiring third party interveners to be patient and not rush through the process (Adzahlie-Mensah & Benson, 2018). Intervenors did not take time to analyse and understand the complex interaction of the issues in the conflict and how those issues interdepend (Körppen & Ropers, 2011).

However, emerging issues in the Zongo conflict in Nandom such as ‘majority’ versus ‘minority’ appear to be changing the dynamics of the conflict. Sensitivity to local issues is crucial in conflict resolution process (Adzahlie-Mensah & Benson, 2018). Thus, the failure of third party interveners to understand that context is a powerful element in conflict resolution (Kuupiel, 2019) contributed to the difficulty in resolving the zongo conflict. Parties that were intervening in the Zongo conflict also failed, as Körppen (2006) suggested, “to identify relevant persons and groups within the conflict [community] and support them with a range of capacity-building measures” to help them resolve the conflict themselves (p. 6). I realized in the interviews that intervening parties

at a point withdrew from making efforts to resolve the conflict when the conflict parties warned them not to come again. Intervening bodies failed to be “tough, patient and resilient”, as well as “pragmatic and confident” in approaching the issues and leaders of the two factions in the Zongo conflict (Adzahlie-Mensah & Benson, 2018, p. 11). Morake et al. (2011) indicated that people’s perception of conflict tends to affect their management or how they deal with the conflict. How conflict is perceived could determine how the conflict is approached and handled. It is therefore important that intervening efforts reflect on their own perception of the conflict they are approaching, and allow their reflection process to interact with what the local people constitute as part of the conflict. I realized in the interviews that the resolution of the zongo conflict in Nandom has been very challenging. Thus, though the management or resolution of conflicts is a contemporary necessity (PIN Points, 2002), it has come to be a new challenge that society has to deal with (Madalina, 2016).

4.4 Summary

The chapter presented the results of the study. The chapter also discussed the findings of the study and highlighted how they interact with the literature. The conflict among the people of the zongo community in Nandom is about who becomes the Imam of Nandom. The discussion reveals that the conflict was caused by remote and immediate factors. The immediate factors were responsible for the escalation of the conflict. The conflict is complex and complicated in nature. There are many actors in the conflict with varied interests and needs. The interaction among the various actors contributed to the unresolved zongo conflict in Nandom. The discussion also reveal systemic and actor level threats that constrained the resolution of the conflict. The conflict parties’ lack of

confidence and trust in third party interveners and the perceived political interference strongly decided on the resolution of the conflict. The next chapter presents the summaries, conclusions and recommendations of the study.



CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

5.0 Introduction

The previous chapter presented and discussed the results of the study. This chapter presents the summary of the findings of the study. Also, the chapter presents the conclusions of the study. Further, recommendations were made based on the findings of the study. Then the chapter ends by presenting what served as limitations to the study.

5.1 Summary

5.1.1 Research objectives

The study was guided by three objectives. They included to:

- i. explore the dynamics of the Zongo conflict in Nandom
- ii. determine the actors involved the Zongo conflict in Nandom
- iii. analyse the threats to the resolution of the Zongo conflict in Nandom.

5.1.2 Research procedure

The research was undertaken to understand the conflict over imamship in the Zongo community in Nandom Municipality of the Upper West region from the perspective of the Zongo people. The research was approached qualitatively and designed as a case study. A total of 10 respondents were purposively sampled for the study. Data was collected through semi-structured interviews and observation. Analysis of the data was qualitative through thematic template analysis.

5.1.3 Major findings

The following are the major findings of the study:

Research question 1: What are the dynamics of the Zongo conflict in Nandom?

The Zongo conflict is a struggle for or contest over the Imamship of Nandom. Remotely, the conflict was caused by the illness of both the Imam and the vice Imam around 2013. At that stage, the conflict was in latency. However, the conflict became manifests and unfolding after the death of the Imam and his vice: when people started struggling for the Imamship and disagreeing over choice of candidates; when ‘minority’ and ‘majority’ language was introduced in the conflict, and when attacks and abusive language were being visited on each other.

In terms of nature, the conflict is about a decade old. It was quite frequent from 2013 through to 2018. It was not difficult to predict or sense a confrontation or fight among the Muslim tribes in the Zongo community in Nandom. Confrontation was frequent during communal Fridays’ prayer and occurs after every resolution attempt. The conflict is an intra-sect conflict; among the orthodox Muslims in Nandom. Also, the conflict is more than a fight over Imamship; it includes a fight for recognition and to protect one’s identity. The conflict seems more complex and complicated when looked at closer than at a distance.

The conflict has strong socio-political, economic, security and religious implications on the people of the Zongo community in Nandom. The dynamics of the conflict were informed by the grievances of the conflict parties; actor interaction; conflict party’s commitment to the conflict; interdependent issues; and the management of the conflict.

Research question 2: who are the actors involved the Zongo conflict in Nandom?

There were many actors in the conflict. Apart from the conflict parties, there were state actors, traditional actors, independent actors, and group actors. The conflict parties were interested in the Imamship of Nandom while the other third party actors (intervening parties) were interested in ensuring peace. However, some of the actors who claimed to be seeking peace were viewed by some of the Zongo people as rather worsening the conflict. Thus, there were peace interests (those against the conflict) and conflict interests (those in support of the conflict) in the Zongo conflict in Nandom. The interaction of the actors in the Zongo conflict in Nandom served strongly on the resolution of the conflict.

Research question 3: what are the threats to the resolution of the Zongo conflict in Nandom?

The Zongo conflict in Nandom remains unresolved. There are several factors that have served as threats to the resolution of the Zongo conflict. There were systemic threats, actor level threats, and traditional level threats to the resolution of the Zongo conflict. Threats were also posed by spoilers and rumours. Other threats included conflict parties' lack of confidence and trust in intervening parties, failure of intervening parties to analyse the dynamics of the Zongo conflict before intervening and intervening parties' perception of the conflict. Meanwhile, the interference of politics and conflict parties' lack of confidence and trust in intervening parties served strongly on the resolution of the Zongo conflict.

There seems to be relative calm in the Zongo community now. However, that state of calmness is negative. This is because people are still living in some kind of fear and

uncertainty. There is still hatred between members of the two factions. The findings largely lend support to the literature that conflict result when grievances are unresolved (Collier & Hoeffler, 2000; Collier & Hoeffler, 2002). The results also support and strengthen the DST argument of the conflict system as dynamic and complex. The findings therefore contribute to the enrichment of the conflict theory.

5.2 Implications

This work has several implications. The implications are categorized into two main areas: theoretical and practical implications.

Theoretical implications

The study demonstrates that resolution of the conflict should be inseparably linked with addressing the conflict parties' grievances. Research has argued that conflict will persist or recur as long as grievances of parties remain unaddressed (Gates et al. 2016; Collier & Hoeffler, 2000; Collier & Hoeffler, 2002). Intervening parties should not treat the grievances of the conflict parties in isolation of the resolution process. Addressing the parties' grievances is resolving the conflict. The drawing in of identity into the conflict could protract the conflict and promote conditions for the socialization of younger generations into the conflict. Research including, Adzahlie-Mensah (2007), and Penu (2016), among others have reported how the fighting of a conflict along ethnic lines resulted in the handing down of the conflict to the younger generations. Factors that caused the conflict were remote and/or immediate in nature. Focusing on addressing the immediate factors, ones that made the conflict manifest or to escalate may not ensure true resolution of the conflict and peace in the Zongo community. Resolution efforts must trace and address the root factors that caused the conflict. The conflict is complex and

complicated. Analyzing and understanding the various complexities and complications in the conflict before attempting a resolution is useful in ensuring effective resolution and securing lasting peace in the zongo community. Kuupiel (2019) noted that “a well resolved conflict is a well analysed conflict” (p. 16). Analysis of the conflict should be prime to resolution efforts into the Zongo conflict, as that will enable intervening parties to have a better understanding and appreciation of the issues involved and to be able to negotiate them. The resolution of the Zongo conflict will be difficult unless the various threats to the resolution are dealt with. The conflict will continue to be with the zongo people as long as those systemic, actor level, traditional level and other threats are undressed. Antagonism will also continue as long as the Zongo people continue to as Debrah et al. (2016) argued, regard some as minority and others as majority and seek to rule over them.

Practical implications

Intervening parties who earn the trust and confidence of conflict parties in the peace process would boost the conflict parties’ willingness to participate in the resolution process. Conflict parties may not participate or accept recommendations if they do not trust or have confidence in intervening parties or view them as being biased. Adzahlie-Mensah and Benson (2018) argued that confidence and trust building is very important in peace processes. Parties will feel committed to resolution processes and more likely to accept recommendations from such processes when the processes are just and unbiased. The Zongo conflict is not just a fight between ethnic or tribal groups in the Nandom zongo community. The conflict is also a fight among a religious sect (Orthodox Muslims) of the Muslim community in Nandom. Treating the Zongo conflict only as a fight

between ethnic or tribal groups is relegating the underlying issues involved to the background and denying the securing of lasting solution to the conflict. The conflict is also a serious religious issue and intervention efforts should recognize and treat it as such. Intervening parties that would adopt mechanisms and approach the conflict parties in a manner that is pleasing to both factions (served the common good) will engender participation in the peace process. A peace or resolution process that is participatory and inclusive and recognized the local environment of the conflict parties is more likely to produce significant outcomes (Kuupiel, 2019). As such, Kuupiel (2019) insists that “for peace to last, it must be all inclusive and contextualized” (p. 16).

5.3 Conclusion

The Zongo conflict is a contest over Imamship. The Zongo conflict is not just a fight between ethnic or tribal groups in the Nandom zongo community. The conflict is also a fight among a religious sect (Orthodox Muslims) of the Muslim community in Nandom. The conflict is rooted in unresolved grievances. Thus, the resolution of the Zongo conflict in Nandom should be inseparably linked with addressing the conflict parties' grievances. The Zongo conflict has different dynamics. It is religious, ethnic, linguistic and political. The conflict is complex and complicated with interdependent issues. Addressing the underlying grievances of the conflict parties may offer useful opportunities towards securing a resolution and lasting peace in the community. However, that is not enough. There must be a decoupling of politics from the conflict. The neutrality of intervening parties and confidence and trust of the conflict parties in them is necessary if any resolution of the conflict is to be attained. Inclusiveness and participation of everyone in peace processes promotes community ownership of and commitment to the processes.

Intervening parties that would adopt mechanisms and approach the conflict parties in a manner that is pleasing to both factions (served the common good) will engender participation in the peace process. Also, intervening parties that build the trust and confidence of conflict parties in them and the peace process would boost the conflict parties' willingness to participate in the resolution process. A successfully resolved conflict is one that has been well analysed. Although currently, there is a relative calmness in the zongo community, that should not be treated as peace. There is still some hatred, bitterness and bad blood between the two factions in the zongo conflict in Nandom. There is thus negative peace in the Zongo community in Nandom. Thus, if efforts are not put together to resolve the Zongo conflict in Nandom now, future occurrence could be characterised with more violence, and younger generations would be socialized into the conflict.

5.4 Recommendations

The following recommendations are made based on the research findings:

- i. Intervening parties seeking to resolve the Zongo conflict need to build confidence and trust in conflict parties. Conflict parties' trust and confidence in resolution processes will engender their willingness and participation in the processes. The Zongo people should own the resolution process.
- ii. Third parties seeking resolution of the Zongo conflict should first analyse and understand the dynamics of the conflict. They should allow their understanding to be informed by what the Zongo people constitute as part of the conflict.
- iii. Politics or political interference should be decoupled from the conflict. Political actors should ensure that their engagement with conflict parties is fair. They

should not conduct themselves in a manner that appears to be favouring one faction over the other.

- iv. Since the study found that the conflict parties have indicated that third parties should leave the conflict for them to handle, intervening parties should identify key individuals in the Zongo community who are opposed to the conflict and arm them with the necessary capacities in terms of conflict resolution and management and guide them to deal with the conflict themselves.
- v. Also, since communal prayer in the main mosque is currently difficult without confrontations, the study suggests that the security service in Nandom should make sure that conflict parties continue to worship separately to create windows of opportunity (calmness) necessary for procuring a resolution while state conflict resolution institutions or bodies should take steps to address the underlying issues responsible for the conflict.
- vi. Again, the security (especially the police) should also continue to surveil the Zongo community, since the conflict remains unresolved. This will ensure that the security is able to gather intelligence on and prevent planned or spontaneous attacks and confrontations which tend to jeopardize resolution efforts.
- vii. Stakeholders (District Assembly, traditional authority, religious leaders, security agencies, youth groups, and citizens of Nandom) in Nandom must treat the Zongo conflict as a common concern and its resolution as a shared responsibility. The conflict should not be treated as a Zongo people issue.
- viii. Peace groups within and without Nandom must intensify the organization of peace programs to sensitize the Zongo community on the need to be peaceful. The

study revealed that the youth of the Zongo community, who are usually made to commit the violence in the conflict, seems not to be happy with the prolongness of the conflict. Therefore, peace programs should target the youth more, so as to make them agents of peace and prevent them from being indoctrinated into the conflict.

- ix. The study also recommends that the Justice Sidney Braimah's Committee (which was set up in 2018 by the former regional minister – Alhassan Sulemana, to investigate the conflict) report should be made available to the two factions in the Zongo conflict. The 'withholding' of the report since 2018 from publication or implementation has created suspicion in many people in the Zongo community. Refusal to make the report available to the conflict parties may make parties uncooperative or not value future efforts at resolving the conflict. This is because when parties participate in peace efforts and end up not being provided with feedback in terms of what recommendations have been made or arrived at, they may demonstrate less or no interest in future peace efforts.

5.4.1 Recommendation for further studies

The following recommendations are made for the purpose of further studies:

- i. The study found that the conflict has affected trade between the two factions in the conflict. However, the study could not establish whether the reduced trade between the two factions in the conflict has affected income levels and business growth in the zongo community. Research may need to ascertain that.
- ii. The study was approached qualitatively. As such, the views of a small number of the Nandom Zongo people were sought. I focused mainly on the Zongo people in

Nandom. Therefore, further research could approach the Zongo conflict both qualitatively and quantitatively so that the views of a larger population of the community could be sought. Research could also seek the views of the people of Nandom on the conflict. Further studies could also be undertaken to explore the views of the youth of the Nandom Zongo community on the conflict.

- iii. The study did not seek views on how the Zongo people think the conflict can be resolved. Thus, research is needed to determine how the zongo people think their conflict can be resolved. The study revealed that there could be diaspora involvement in the Zongo conflict. There is need for further research to ascertain the involvement of the diaspora Zongo community in the conflict, the role they play in the conflict and how that could have decided on the resolution of the conflict throughout the conflict process. Researchers could also subject the template developed out of the research findings to other conflict situations in Ghana to ascertain or determine how that plays out in such other situations. This would aid in generalization.

5.5 Limitation of the study

The results of the study were significant to understanding the Zongo conflict in Nandom. Yet, there are some few limitations to the study. The study sought information from people who are the parties in the conflict. Thus, their preconceived ideas, knowledge and experience(s) about the conflict may have influenced the responses or information they provided to the study. Each of them may have provided the study with information that reinforced their position(s) or painted a good picture of themselves and a bad picture of the other faction. That is, their biases may have influenced the information provided in

this research. The study only sought the views of the 10 respondents. The views and perspectives of the 10 respondents may not reflect the views of the entire zongo community. The study is thus limited in its ability to generalize.



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APPENDIX A

INTERVIEW GUIDE

My name is **Chrispin Mwinkyogtaa Kuupiel**, a student of the University of Education, Winneba, pursuing MPhil Human Rights, Conflict and Peace Studies. I am conducting a study on the Zongo conflict in Nandom. I want to study the conflict to have an understanding of the dynamics involved, the actors involved and the threats to the resolution of the conflict. For that reason, I want to have a discussion with you on the dynamics involved in the Zongo conflict in Nandom. I will also be interested in the actors involved in the conflict and the threats to the resolution of the conflict. This discussion will be tape recorded after which a transcription will be made. Information gathered from you will be combined with those of other participants so that information provided by you will not be identified with your name. I will treat you and the information you provide with utmost confidentiality and anonymity. I will be happy if I have your verbal consent to continue. Please you are free to withdraw the data at any stage or to add additional information later.

1. Dynamics involved in the conflict

- i. What are the causes of the conflict?
- ii. What are the effects of the conflict?
- iii. What is the nature of the conflict (How long, frequency of occurrence, pattern of occurrence)?

2. Actors involved in the conflict

- i. Who are the actors in the conflict?
- ii. What are their interests?
- iii. What are their needs (cultural, economic, political, and sociological)?
- iv. Who are their allies and why?

3. Threats to the resolution of the conflict

- i. What are the actor-level threats to the resolution of the conflict?
- ii. What are the system-level threats to the resolution of the conflict?
- iii. What are the traditional threats to the resolution of the conflict?
- iv. What threats are posed by conflict profiteers to the resolution of the conflict?
- v. What threats are posed by finance to the resolution of the conflict?
- vi. What threats are posed by rumours to the resolution of the conflict?



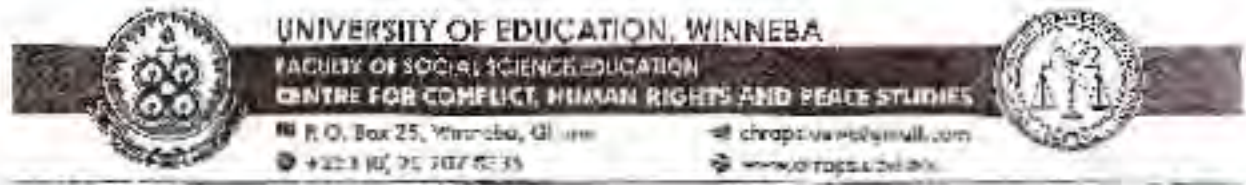
APPENDIX B

ANALYSIS TEMPLATE

- 1. Dynamics in the conflict**
- a) Causes of the conflict
- I. Remote**
- Illness of both the Imam and vice Imam
 - Vacancy of the Imam position
- II. Immediate**
- Imamship struggle and disagreement over choice of candidates
 - 'majority' versus 'minority' language
 - attacks and use of abusive language
- b) Effects of the conflict
- I. Socio-political**
- strained relationship
 - image threat
- II. Economic**
- reduced trade among the people
 - destruction of property
- III. Security**
- uncertainty and fear
 - injured people
 - 'self' restricted movement
- IV. Religious**
- lack of substantive Imam
- c) Nature of the conflict
- I. Length**
- About a decade old
- II. Frequency**
- Quite frequent
- III. Pattern**
- Confrontations could be easily predicted or sensed
- IV. Tactics**
- Blaming
 - Threats
 - Fighting and attacks
- 2. Actors in the conflict**
- a) Actors
- conflict parties
 - state actors
 - group actors
 - traditional actors
 - independent actors
- b) Interests
- I. Conflict interest**
- Imamship
- II. Peace interest**
- resolution and restoring calm
- III. Allies and why**
- The various tribal or ethnic groups in the community.
 - Because they identify with the contenders for the Imamship
- 3. Threats to the resolution of the conflict**
- a) System level threats
- perceived political interference
 - poor interaction between state systems and traditional systems and the conflict parties
- b) Actor level threat
- economic and social benefits from the conflict
- c) Traditional threat
- communal Friday prayers in the mosque
- d) Perceived presence of spoilers
- e) Rumours
- f) Others
- lack of confidence and trust in intervening parties
 - failure of intervening parties to analyse the conflict dynamics
 - perception of the conflict
- Labelling
- Irrevocable comments

Source: Author's Own Construct, 2020

APPENDIX C
INTRODUCTORY LETTER



Our Ref: CHRPS/HRP/CL-14/2019/45

Your Ref:

Date: August 6, 2020

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

LETTER OF INTRODUCTION
CHIEF/IN WINTEROGTAA EUUPRA, - 200028069

We kindly write to introduce Mr. Gbengan Mwinlogotso Kintso to you. He is a student at the Centre for Conflict, Human Rights and Peace Studies pursuing Master of Philosophy (M.Phil) at the University of Education, Winneba.

He wishes to apply this for his thesis on the topic "A study of the Ewe Conflict in Nandom".

We would be grateful if he is given the needed assistance from your office, please.

Thank you.

ROBERT ANDREW GHANEY (PhD)
As. Director, CTRAPS